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Alder Bakery eagerly anticipated —

BY PAULA BENSON
The Vermont Journal

CHESTER, Vt. – A fresh, Michelin-level culinary experience is coming to town, and residents of Chester are abuzz. The Alder Bakery and Eatery is scheduled to open during the first week of 2026.

Owners Miguel and Kirsten Calderon have taken over and revitalized the space of the former Heritage Bakery on Route 103. For the young, talented, and determined husband-and-wife team, the bakery represents the culmination of a hard-won dream they share and worked for years to bring to fruition.

For the past nearly eight years, the dynamic duo has owned and operated Calderon Dining, a private-chef service that has earned rave reviews and quickly become a local favorite. Recognized for designing intimate, elegant dinners for two, creative, family-style meals, and boutique weddings and events, Calderon Dining delivers well-presented plates, impeccable service, and a memorable experience.

Once Miguel made the decision to pursue a career as a chef, there was not much that could have stopped him. After graduating from culinary school in Florida, Miguel obtained a position with the best restaurant in Jacksonville, a French bistro called Orsay. From there, Miguel secured spots at Michelin Star restaurants in Chicago, New York City, Spain, France, and Italy.

The couple traveled the world together, often struggling, but always resolute. They found work at wineries and restaurants, nearly froze to death in Iceland, and shared a cramped studio apartment with two other couples in New York. Miguel's persistence and passion was what kept moving them forward, and Kirsten's staunch support and belief in Miguel's talent and drive held them up.

"The goal was to always open up [our own] place," relayed Miguel.

Miguel's initial vision had been of owning a fine-dining



Miguel and Kirsten Calderon.
PHOTO PROVIDED

restaurant, but he came to realize that the number of hours and workload that job required was unsustainable, especially if he and Kirsten were going to start a family.

When Kirsten's sister, who lives in Andover, Vt., contacted them and suggested they check out the area, Kirsten was persuaded to visit. Miguel recalled, "Once she got on the train, something inside of me was like, 'you should be with her.'" After failing at trying to get himself fired, Miguel quit his job in New York City, and joined his wife and in-laws

in Vermont in 2017.

After a freak wakeboarding accident and a broken knee that put Miguel out of work for five months, and the welcoming of a new baby, Kirsten asked, "What's your dream?" Miguel considered the question.

Suddenly, his vision became clear. "We need a space. We need staff so we can take on bigger events." They had been looking at commercial properties for almost three years, and had seen the Heritage Bakery in April.

"The bakery had the perfect footprint," Miguel reported. "We almost took it as a sign."

Kirsten encouraged, "If you want that bakery, you go get it."

Things moved quickly at that point, until they didn't. It took less than a day and a half for Miguel to raise the capital, for which he is eternally grateful to his friends and community.

Initially the couple hoped to open in October, but they spent several months deep cleaning, doing construction and redesigning, and install-

Puzzle page winner

Congratulations to Brian Wing, of Chester, for winning our holiday puzzle page contest drawing! Brian has selected the \$75 gift certificate to Tina's Hallmark. Look out for our next puzzle page contest for your next chance to win.

Weekly SUDOKU

Answer

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

King Crossword

Answers

Solution time: 22 mins.

OR	SO	OM	G	M	C	C	C
L	I	E	U	N	E	A	A
A	P	E	T	T	R	I	C
F	A	R	R	A	H	T	R
	A	X	E	L	Y	U	M
T	R	I	N	I	D	A	D
E	O	N	S	O	U	R	S
L	O	S	S	T	R	I	P
	U	A	L	A	V	E	O
S	E	R	M	O	N	E	D
T	R	I	B	U	T	E	S
U	L	N	A	S	T	A	L
B	E	G	S	B	E	T	S

Residents come out to discuss Chester local options tax —

BY NICK GIBERTI
The Vermont Journal

CHESTER, Vt. – The Chester Selectboard meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 3, saw a number of residents come forth to give their opinions on the proposed 1% local options tax on rooms, meals, and on-premises alcohol sales which the board has been discussing now for several months.

Town manager Julie Hance reminded those in attendance that the purpose of the proposed tax would be to provide funding to the Chester Housing Commission, which is tasked with investigating and carrying out projects which will increase the availability of affordable housing in Chester. Hance said, "The

goal is to try to do some of this work without hitting the general fund." In response to a question from resident Polly Montgomery, Hance noted that the State of Vermont takes 25% of funds generated by the tax, leaving Chester with the remaining 75%. Hance also told those gathered, in response to a question from resident Debra Reynolds, that "about \$20,000 a year" is already being generated for the housing commission by short-term rental (STR) registration fees.

Several residents expressed concern about increasing taxes, with resident and STR owner Ian Montgomery telling the board that, while he understands that the town is trying to generate more housing,

"Some of us are being priced out of the market by taxes."

Conner Eklund, who, with his wife and mother-in-law, operates the Stone Hearth Inn and Eatery, said he believes that, if the tax is to be put in place, it should also be applied to retail sales. Eklund reasoned that, while the additional housing generated by the tax will be of little – or perhaps negative – benefit to inns (the "rooms" portion of the tax), new residents will almost certainly spend their money on retail purchases in town, benefitting retail stores that are not required to charge the additional tax under the current proposal.

Resident Damon Tyler was also concerned about the impacts of an additional tax on local busi-

nesses, and objected to the board's repeated assurances that, while they can make the decision on what to place on the ballot at Town Meeting, it is ultimately the voters of Chester who will decide if the tax is enacted. "A lot of these things that get brought up are easy for the 3,000 people of Chester who have no vested interest in a business, who have no idea about the costs and risks associated with that," Tyler said, adding rhetorically, "Who doesn't want to help people?" in response to the framing of the tax as intended to aid those seeking affordable housing in the area.

Resident Susan Bailey, however, attempted to put the impact on the average consumer into perspec-

tive. "I just want to point out we're only talking about one quarter, or 25 cents, per \$25," Bailey said. "We're not talking about a lot of money."

Resident Joe Karl also expressed his support for the tax, saying he believes that "as a small town, we're all in this together" regarding the issue of housing availability. "The dollars come up [Interstate] 91, and they get off at Exit 6, and they come through town," Karl said, "and we have to figure

out a way for those dollars to get distributed." Karl said that he believed that a lack of housing affects all of the town's residents in some capacity, saying, "If there's no place for a housekeeper or a waitress to live, we're in trouble."

The local options tax discussion will be continued at future meetings.

The Chester Selectboard will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 17, at 6:30 p.m., at the Chester Town Hall.

CORRECTION

The article "Chester continues Class 4 road discussion," published in the Dec. 3 edition of The Vermont Journal, identified a Chester resident and farm operator as Mike Adams. The man was, in fact, Doug Adams. We apologize for this error.

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OUR OFFICE

OFFICE ADDRESS:
8 High Street • PO Box 228 • Ludlow, VT

BILLING ADDRESS:
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PHONE NUMBER:
802-228-3600

WEBSITE:
www.VermontJournal.com

CONTACT US

SHAWN TAE WEBB
publisher@vermontjournal.com
ads@vermontjournal.com

NICK GIBERTI
editor@vermontjournal.com
calendar@vermontjournal.com

JOE MCCAFFREY
sales@vermontjournal.com

LISA STICKNEY
messagesales@vermontjournal.com

PAULA BENSON
billing@vermontjournal.com

DEADLINES

All content due **Thur., Dec. 18** for the Dec. 24 paper; **Tues., Dec. 23** for the Dec. 31 paper.

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Green Mountain Gardeners holiday cheer

REGION – The Green Mountain Gardeners of Londonderry, Weston, Landgrove, and Peru, last Monday held their annual gathering to make holiday table decorations for their homebound neighbors.

The South Londonderry Depot was full of the smell of pine and the sounds of chatter as 20 members, dressed in holiday sweaters and their garden-club aprons, built festive, tree-shaped arrangements in small cans or holiday mugs. They attached miniature ornaments, ribbons, and even small lights to the trees, to brighten the holiday tables of the recipients.

The Wantastiquet Rotary Club delivered the gifts to local homebound people identified by local service organizations. The Weston Women's Club donated boxes of homemade cookies to



Green Mountain Gardeners members.

PHOTO PROVIDED

add to the holiday spirit.

Always part of this annual event for the garden club is a members' bake and gift sale, the proceeds of which are donated to a local organization. The homemade goodies and small gifts are always popular. This year, the proceeds will be donated to Neighborhood Connections.

The event committee put together a light lunch, and the day was capped off by a spirited auction of the last

few items in the bake sale.

This annual event is one example of how the Green Mountain Gardeners fulfill their twofold mission to spread gardening and horticultural knowledge, and to serve their communities. For more information about the Green Mountain Gardeners, please visit www.greenmountaingardeners.net.

Christmas in Weston a record-breaking success

WESTON, Vt. – This year's Christmas in Weston was a wonderful, record-breaking event overflowing with music, horse-drawn wagons, holiday crafts, cookie decorating, sheep to pet, shopping, and other family fun to enjoy. The Weston Volunteer Fire Department provided cookies for sale, fire safety education, hot cocoa, and traffic control. Many thanks to all those who assisted, including our community bakers. Visitors enjoyed musical productions at both ends of town, in the Old Parish Church and the theater at Walker Farm, along with the gazebo on the Green. A raffle drawing was held with more than

\$3,000 in prizes, and then, in dramatic fashion, with lights flashing, Santa and Mrs. Claus arrived via fire engine to cheering children. Santa lit the town tree on the Weston Green, and an outstanding fireworks show capped off the evening.

Proceeds from the event benefited the Weston Volunteer Fire Department. Raffle sponsors included Blue Sky, chef Deborah Twombly, Doris Ingram, Erskins, Gladys' Kitchen at The Hub, Grandma Miller's, Jenn Ciccone Hairstylist, La Valley's Hardware, Londonderry Hardware, Mike and Tammy's, Mildred's Dairy Bar, Napa, Smith Family Maple Farm, Taylor Farm, The New American Grill, The Vermont Country Store, The Weston,

Weston Theater Company, Vermont Butcher, Vermont Cattleman Wagyu, West Town Gallery, Weston Village Store, Weston Village Christmas Shoppe, and, last but not least, 802 Restrooms.

As we end this year, please know we appreciate the strong community support, especially following our dramatic station flooding in July 2023. If you're considering a way to support your neighbors in the new year, we are actively recruiting for members, both firefighters and administrative. We offer free training and equipment. Join us any Thursday, at 6:30 p.m., or call 802-824-3539. Best wishes from our family to yours for a safe holiday season.

Lighting of the Trees of Remembrance

REGION – On Dec. 5, the communities of Ludlow and Cavendish enjoyed a festive lighting of the Tree of Remembrance on their respective greens. Cookies, caroling, and camaraderie were in abundance as old friends met up, new friends were found, and the chilly Vermont weather reminded us winter had arrived while the newly lit trees twinkled with light through the new-fallen snow. A special thank-you is extended to Ludlow Electric Company for stringing the lights in both locations.

The Okemo Valley Woman's Club (OVWC) sponsors this opportunity to remember loved ones, and to support the club's charitable initiatives. Names will

continue to be accepted for subsequent publication in December, January, and February. To participate, please mail a list of loved ones to remember, and your donation, payable to Okemo Valley Woman's Club, to OVWC – Tree of Remembrance, P.O. Box 100, Ludlow VT 05149.

While the Trees of Remembrance only remain lit until the end of February, your gift will have a lasting impact on those in need. The two Trees of Remembrance shine brightly in memory of the following loved ones, who are always in our hearts: Joan Albert, John Bazzano, Nellie Beckman, Oscar Beckman, Ernie Belanger, Charles Bidwill, George Bitters, Mary and

Ronnie Bolduc, Earl and Edris Bonneau, Dick Brazil, Evelyn Bryant, Kim Bryant, Margarite Bryant, Roy and Marie Bryant, Stanley and Francis Bryant, Walter Camara, Charlotte Chardoney, Richard Cormier, Kathy Culhane, Lane Danyow, George and Ethelyn Dever, Kathleen Dever, Suzette Durgin, John Ewen, Paul Fehrenbach, Harry Fisher, John Foscolos, Leonard Gendron, Chizzie and Frank Geraci, Dan Gior-dano, Norm and Marilyn Gordon, Larry "Granny" Grandchamp, Jim Grossbardm, Stanley Hart, Rita Higgins, Brian Hodgeman, Jerry Jaminet, Alma Jaskey, Andy Jaskey, Armas Jaskey, Sarah Jaskey, Susan Jaskey, Hersh Klein, George and Eileen Laber, Frank Lacava, Bruce LaRoache, Peter Lawless, Charlotte LeClair, Jean Leonard, Gloria Leven, Seymour Leven, George and Rose Macintyre, Dolores Marcoux, MaryAnn Markowski, Anne and Iggy Matulonis, George and Violet Matulonis, Jim Mays, Frank "Mac" McAuliffe, Anna McKinney, Mr. and Mrs. McLean, Aaron

W. McNabb, Betty Merrill, Edward Merrill, Glen and Marilyn Miller, Tony Mirabelli, Jim Misuraca, Judd and Virginia Nelson, Emma Null, Ernest Null, Melba Null, Eleanor O'Donnell, Andrew Orie, Eva Orie, Franklin Orie, John Pappalardo, James Parker, Mary Lou and Charles Parker, Lana Parks, Dee Pavone, Marge and Frank Peters, Tony Pickowitz, Anne Price, Helen and Laval Remy, Don and Carole Robert, Carol Rowan, Roger Ryan, Roger and Lucille Ryan, Kelley Sanderson, Ronald Schauster, Helen and Allyn Seward, Caroline Spaulding, David Stearns, Larry Stevens, Donald and Vera Sullivavn, Carol Sullivan Kuk, Rick Sullivan, Terri Tabshey, Ray "Roger" Taksar, Harold and Doris Tedford, Kenneth Tedford, Rose Tedford, Joe Townsley, Mary Tredenick Gould, Bob Twombly, Ted Twombly, Chee-Chee Tyrrell, Kathy Tyrrell, Ken Tyrrell Sr., Genevieve Vincent, William Vincent, Patty Walsh, Stan Wasel, Betsy Welch, Harry Welch, Sally Whitaker, Ed Zawacki, and John Zink.

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Families of Faith Outdoors night sky viewing

BROWNSVILLE, Vt. – Please join the Brownsville Community Church, 66 Brownsville-Hartland Road, Brownsville, Vt., for the Families of Faith Outdoors event on Sunday, Dec. 21. We will meet at the church, at 6 p.m., and walk together over to the Albert Bridge School field.

Lead by Gary Barnett, we will be experiencing the grandeur of creation closer than many of us have seen before. Using his telescope, Barnett will be introducing us to galaxies, planets, and other stunning features of the night sky. An avid astrophotographer, Barnett loves to capture in stunning detail the glory of the night sky. Matthew Roberts will be leading us in a few thoughts about how the intricate detail of the creation reflects God's creativity, and points to the existence of a creator.

Pam Bernard's memoir workshop adds Zoom class

WALPOLE, N.H. – New sessions of Pam Bernard's popular eight-week memoir-writing workshop are beginning the first weeks of January. Start days and times vary from class to class.

This session, a Zoom workshop is being added to the two existing workshops, both of which have limited openings. Reach out as soon as possible if you are curious about the process of these well-known and respected writing workshops. Queries of any kind are welcome.

The governing philosophy that makes Bernard's teaching of memoir so effective is that the struggle must be to nurture a healthy relationship with the past, in order to get beyond the authorized version of oneself.

The central paradox of this kind of writing is that a memoirist must rely on memory, though, at best, memory is mutable and utterly fallible. Memoirists learn to honor artful leaps of dramatic presentation in order to create a narrative nimble enough to fully and convincingly reveal a life.

Retired Judge Patti Whalen, of Putney, Vt., explains how the workshop has helped her process and eventually find a way into difficult material. She says, "Pam's workshop is the highlight of my week. Pam leads each session with skill and warmth, bringing the process of memoir writing alive with support and creativity. As I began to write and to identify the deeper themes, I realized with great relief that I had a way to shape hard truths into a story I could share. I could only have done this with Pam's caring but rigorous guidance, and within the supportive and generous community of writers she has created."

A retired professor of writing, Bernard is an author, editor, writing mentor, and instructor. She works also one-on-one with writers of nonfiction and poetry in a variety of ways. Bernard is the author of four books, the latest a novel in verse titled "Esther." She received her Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from Warren Wilson College, and her bachelor's degree from Harvard University. Her awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Her collection "Across the Dark" was a finalist for the National Poetry Series.

Workshops are hybrid, using the Owl meeting device, to accommodate those who must attend remotely. The Owl makes the experience for the participant much more realistic. For more information, including days and times, please visit Bernard's website at www.pambernard.com, email www.pambernardwriter@gmail.com, or call 603-439-1809.

SEVCA seeks volunteers for tax assistance program

REGION – Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is actively recruiting volunteers to join its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, offering free tax preparation services, as well as assistance with homestead declarations, property tax credit claims, and renter credit claims, to residents across Windsor and Windham counties. With appointments available at multiple locations, SEVCA is looking to expand its volunteer base to meet the growing demand for this vital service.

Volunteers will help individuals and families with low to moderate incomes, persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers file their taxes accurately and efficiently. The VITA program aims to help people understand their tax returns and maximize their refunds, a critical boost for many households.

"Volunteering with VITA is a chance to make a real difference in our community," says Emily Strasser, VITA program coordinator.

"Not only do you assist people with filing their taxes, but you also play a vital role in helping them gain a better understanding of their finances, and make informed decisions for their future."

VITA volunteers are essential to the success of this program. They come from diverse backgrounds, and receive comprehensive training to ensure they are well-equipped to assist with tax preparation. Volunteer tax preparers must pass an annual IRS certification exam to demonstrate proficiency in tax law and electronic filing, but there are other roles where this is not required. Foreign language or American Sign Language skills are also in great demand.

Joshua Davis, SEVCA's executive director, adds, "This program is centered on making tax assistance accessible to everyone, and our volunteers are essential to its success. By recruiting more volunteers, we can reach more people and amplify our positive impact on the community."

Volunteering with VITA is a rewarding way to give back and gain valuable skills. Training is provided, and volunteers can choose to assist with tax preparation, intake, or provide general support. No prior experience is necessary, and flexible scheduling is available to fit volunteers' availability.

For more information about becoming a VITA volunteer, visit www.sevca.org/volunteer, call or text the VITA program directly at 802-428-3032, or email estrasser@sevca.org.

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obituaries

HEALTH

Chair yoga at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join us online or in person at the Springfield Town Library, every third Friday through September 2026, for a 60-minute chair yoga practice. You'll learn movements that you can do right from your seat, leaving you feeling mobile, grounded, and focused. In addition to boosting our brains and soothing our nervous systems, at the December class we'll acknowledge the turning of the year with fun,

accessible rotations, and we'll soothe ourselves with nourishing self-massage and acupressure points, useful after snow shoveling. Walk into the library and join us live in person for free; there is no need to preregister. For online access, which includes all recordings, follow the link to choose from among a variety of registration options. Enjoy other chair yoga class recordings as soon as you sign up at studio.jobregnard.com/product/88980.

Eugene G. Adams, 1938-2025

PERKINSVILLE, Vt. – Eugene G. Adams, 87, died Tuesday morning, Dec. 9, at his home. He was born Aug. 16, 1938, in Randolph, Vt., the son of Theron and Lucy (Flint) Adams. He graduated from Springfield High School, Class of 1958, and the co-op program, and went to work in the machine tool industry, on the night shift. Gene left the machine tool shop and opened his own business at Downers Four Corners; he moved from the Four Corners business to just up the road, where he owned and operated his automotive business until he sold it in 1987. Gene and Alice purchased the property on Stoughton Pond Road in 1987, where he built a new garage and opened another automotive business, which

has been the hub of the community for almost 40 years. Gene and his team ran the safety crew at the Canaan Raceway and the Claremont Speedway every Saturday night for many years. He served on the West Weathersfield Volunteer Fire Department, and ran a wrecker service as well for many years. Gene had a love of cars and racing, and could talk cars all day long. On any given day you could find him with the boys in the shop. The shop became the gathering place for the community to stop by and chat and shoot the breeze. In his later years, he developed an interest in model electric trains. He had trains and train tracks that took up half the basement of his home. Gene was always tinkering; he was a fixer. If something was broken, he would figure out a way to fix it. If he didn't like the way it worked, he would modify it to work

better. He loved family, and the highlight of his week was having supper and playing cards on Saturday nights. He missed it when we had to skip a week. He will be greatly missed by his family and the community. He is survived by his children from his first marriage to Lucinda Adams (deceased), his son Richard Adams, of Springfield, and his daughter Joy Fletcher (Shannon), of Red Boiling Springs, Tenn.; his sister Maralyn Jillson, of Brattleboro; stepdaughters Barbara Slaton (Robert), of Springfield, Beverly Lauren, of Chester, and Bette Matulonis (Jeff), of Springfield; as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife of 38 years Alice Gilman Adams in 2016. Memorial contributions may be made to the Gene Adams Memorial Scholarship Fund, 703 Maple Street,



Eugene Adams, 1938-2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

Perkinsville, VT 05151. The scholarship is being set up in Gene's memory to assist a student seeking training in automotive repair. Visiting hours will be held on Friday evening, Dec. 19, from 5-7 p.m., at the Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield, Vt. A memorial service will be celebrated on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 3 p.m., at the North Springfield Baptist Church. The Rev. Joanne Thomas will officiate. Burial will be at a later date at the Mountain View Cemetery in Braintree, Vt.

Gilbert E. Stuart Jr., 1962-2025

HANCOCK, Vt. – Gilbert "Skip" Stuart passed away on Nov. 26, after a three-year battle with brain cancer. He is survived by his sons Elijah and Marley; his siblings Jeffrey, Marc, and Kimberlee; and many beloved friends. Skip grew up in West Hartford, Conn., and in southern Vermont, where he became a formidable skier. He went on to ski for MSU's ski team in

Bozeman, Mont., while earning his mechanical engineering degree. Skip's values informed his work; as a LEED-certified PE, he held positions at Bread Loaf Corporation, van Zelm, Saint-Gobain, and others, where he helped implement sustainable systems for buildings like Killington Resort's new K-1 lodge and Harvard's award-winning science and engineering



Gilbert Stuart, 1962-2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

complex. He settled in Hancock, Vt., coaching youth skiers at Middlebury's Snowbowl, and mountain biking with friends. After his glioblastoma diagnosis, Skip fought cancer with the resolve of a lifelong athlete. He was the first patient at Dartmouth Cancer Center to receive Gamma-Tile implants, and in 2023 contributed to a clinical trial with an Optune TT-Field device, which he wore while skiing deep powder in Utah and riding his bike in the Green Mountains. Skip was brilliant, scrupulous, eccentric, and, above all, kind. He understood that kindness, like energy, abides the laws of thermodynamics; it cannot be created or destroyed, work must be done to move it around, and if you fail to do that work it will be lost. If you knew Skip, you knew his way. He left the world a kinder and more interesting place. Now it's up to us. Donations in Skip's memory may be made to The Prouty, Dartmouth Cancer Center's outdoor sports-based fundraiser for life-saving research and support services. For more information, or to share stories and photos of Skip with the family, email skipstuart1@gmail.com.

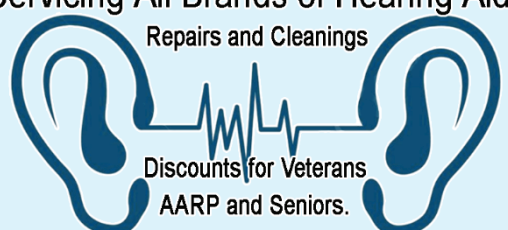


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Pamela Barnes, 2025

READING, Vt. – Pamela Barnes, 59, of Warwick, R.I., and Reading, Vt., passed away peacefully on Nov. 28, 2025, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer, surrounded by her loving family.

Born in Providence, R.I., Pam grew up in Barrington, R.I., and graduated from Branford High School in Branford, Conn. She later earned an associate's degree in accounting and computer science from Ethan Allen College and the Community College of Vermont.

Pam's early career in hospitality was spent in Vermont, where she worked at the Kedron Valley Inn, Echo Lake Inn, and then as event coordinator at Okemo Mountain Resort, before becoming resort manager at Hawk Mountain Resort. In 2020, she founded New England Hearing, proudly serving communities across Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and

Vermont with hearing aid sales and care.

In 1986, she married the love of her life Kevin P. Barnes. Together they settled in Reading, Vt., and filled their home with love and countless family memories. Pamela cherished every moment with her family, especially the many adventures they had on their trips together. Yes, she was a tropical destination and Disney girl. Pam also loved maintaining her many flower gardens, as well as relaxing on beaches near and far. She also enjoyed boating, scuba diving, kayaking, biking, hiking, and sipping frozen margaritas by the pool.

She is survived by her devoted husband Kevin P. Barnes; her sons Kyle Barnes, of Warwick, R.I., and Matthew Barnes (Amy Gagnon) of Berkley, Mass.; her brother Edwin Alan Turner (Coreena), of Warwick, R.I.; her brothers-in-law Richard Barnes, Tim Barnes (Mary),



Pamela Barnes, 2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

and Lewis Barnes; her sisters-in-law Julie Hoy (Tom) and Kathy Gardner (Bryan); and nieces and nephews Ian, Jack, Hannah, Ethan, Corey, Ryan, Andrew, Aleasha, Danielle, Amity, and Michael. Pam is preceded in death by her parents Edwin J. and Patricia E. Turner, and her niece Rachel.

Pamela's generous spirit, infectious laughter, and boundless love for family and friends will be deeply missed and forever remembered by all who were fortunate to know her.

Bette J. Holt, 1934-2025

ROCKINGHAM, Vt. – Bette Jane Holt, of Bellows Falls, passed away peacefully on Nov. 19, 2025, at home, with family around her. She was born in Bethlehem, N.H., on July 5, 1934, to Inez Quimby Norman and William Norman.

Born and raised on a large farm, Bette developed an appreciation for self-sufficiency. During childhood, she enjoyed picking berries and spending time outdoors. As a student at Bethlehem High School, Bette excelled in academics, and enjoyed playing basketball and softball.

Shortly after graduation in 1952, Bette married the love of her life, Lloyd Holt. The couple eventually settled in Rockingham, where they built a home, developed the land, and raised their children. Bette always had an abundant vegetable garden, sharing the bounty with family and friends. Bette and Lloyd shared a passion for ballroom dancing. Together they learned the art, and often spent weekends dancing at nearby venues.

Following her husband's sudden and tragic death in a work accident, Bette sought employment initially as an Avon representative, and later for a local dentist, where she worked for many years.

Bette was a devoted sports fan, cheering for the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots through thick and thin. Though she loved New England, she had a notable dislike for winter, the only exception being the joy she found in feeding the birds and cooking. She enjoyed many trips throughout the Caribbean with friends. Bette also spent several weeks every summer camping at York Beach, Maine. Locally, Bette was a longtime member of the TOPS chapter. Bette had a keen eye for a bargain, and enjoyed searching for treasures at local yard sales.

Bette's warmth, generosity, and strong spirit will be deeply missed by all who knew her. She leaves behind a legacy of love, hard work, and a life well-lived. Bette is survived by her children



Bette Holt, 1934-2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

Victor Holt, Bradley Holt, Steven Holt (Tanya), and Valerie Barry (Stephen); eight grandchildren; nine great-grandchildren; her sister Laura Jean Cornell (Bob); and many cousins, nieces, and nephews. Bette was predeceased by her husband Lloyd, her grandson Daniel, and an infant daughter Debra Lee.

A Celebration of Bette Holt's Life will be announced and held in the spring.

Memorial donations may be made to the Springfield Humane Society, or to the Bellows Falls Area Senior Center.

Brownsville Community Church, 66 Brownsville-Hartland Rd., Brownsville, Vt.

The Brownsville Community Church will hold a Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 9:30 a.m. A Christmas Eve candlelight service will be held on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 7 p.m. Both services can be attended in person and via Facebook livestream at www.facebook.com/brownsvillecommunitychurch.

Tyson Community Church, Corner of Route 100 and Dublin Rd., Ludlow, Vt.

There will be a Christmas candlelight service on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 6 p.m. Readings from the Bible of Jesus' birth and favorite hymns played by our musician, Erik Johansson, followed by cookies and hot

chocolate.

Ludlow Baptist Church, on the Green, 99 Main St., Ludlow, Vt.

There will be a Christmas Eve candlelight service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 6:30 p.m.

First Congregational Church of Westminster, 3470 U.S. Route 5, Westminster, Vt.

The First Congregational Church of Westminster will hold its Christmas Eve service on Wednesday, Dec. 24, at 5:30 p.m. All are welcome to join us. There is additional parking at the Westminster Institute. The Rev. Rich O'Donnell serves as pastor, and welcomes you.

Union-St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 133 Old Church Rd., Claremont, N.H.

Christmas Eve service will be held Dec. 24, at 7 p.m. A beautiful traditional service that was historically the first gathering by candlelight in the area. The community service is held in the historical church, which is decorated with boughs of evergreen and lit by the warm glow of dozens of real candles. The service includes the readings of the Christmas story and carols. The service will also be available on YouTube, live or on demand, at www.youtube.com/@unionchurchnh.

Request for Bids (RFB)

The Town of Andover, VT is seeking bids from qualified General Contractors for energy improvements to the Andover Town Office, Town Hall & Town Garage. The project also includes ADA improvements to the Town Office & the Town Hall. A detailed RFB for this project can be found on the Andover Town website <https://www.andovervt.org> Deadline for submission of sealed bids is Monday, January 26, 2026 at 3:00 PM at the Town Office (953 Weston-Andover Road).

obituaries

Mary Bigelow, 1937-2025

LANDGROVE, Vt. – Mary Elizabeth Nutting Bigelow passed away Dec. 8, 2025, in Landgrove, Vt. May was a beloved figure in the Mountain Towns of southern Vermont, known for her gregarious, fun-loving, and nurturing personality.

She was born in Lebanon, Pa., on Feb. 20, 1937, to Marion Heminway and Harry Otis Nutting II. Her early childhood in Lebanon was marked by the absence of her father while he fought in the Philippines during World War II. Between helping in the family victory garden, and collecting aluminum for the war effort, she developed habits of thrift she retained for life.

She was a scholarship student at Northampton School for Girls, and met her husband David S. Bigelow III while working as a counselor at Mamie Ogden's Landgrove camp during Smith College's

summer break. May joined Dave on a peripatetic career that led them to England, Canada, Brazil, and France; she became fluent in French, and adored France for its art, architecture, and her friends there. In her early 50s, she returned with Dave to Landgrove, where she lived until her death.

May contributed to every community she was a part of, and her activities included fundraising for the Friends of Old French Houses, leadership roles in the historical societies of Landgrove and Weston, and serving as a commissioner of the Landgrove Cemetery. She loved classical music and other arts, tennis, skiing, gardening, reading, and travel.

She is predeceased by her husband, and son David. Survivors include her sister Nancy and her brother Harry; children Seth (Mel-



Mary Bigelow, 1937-2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

va), Hope (John), and Jonathan (Tove); grandchildren David, Andrew, Kira, Leo, George, Ira, Holt, James, Sam, Anna, Mary Sofie, Magnus, and Helena; and great-grandson Cameron.

A memorial service will be held on Dec. 27, at 2 p.m., at Burr and Burton's Mountain Campus in Peru. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to Neighborhood Connections or the Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Douglas Neet, 2025



WEATHERSFIELD, Vt. – Doug Neet, of Weathersfield, Vt., passed away on Dec. 1, 2025, at the age of 72. Born to Charlie and Marjorie Neet, he was raised in Babylon, N.Y. He was a graduate of East Stroudsburg State College (now University) in Pennsylvania. A lifelong athlete, Doug played football and baseball in high school, and football and lacrosse in college. He continued his athleticism as a soccer and lacrosse referee into his 60s. An avid gamer, Doug was also a founding member of New England's Carnegie gaming group, assisting with organizing and planning their annual convention for more than 25 years. He was also a proud second lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps; Semper Fi!

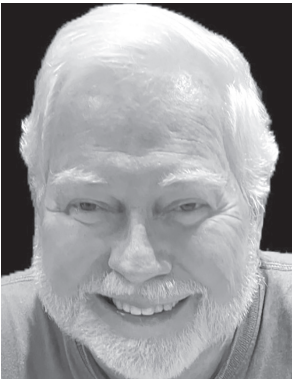
Doug had two professional careers: business management and teaching. He worked for Roadway Trucking Company in several Northeast locations, and then for Coca-Cola in New Jersey. He later entered the teaching profession, working as a physical education teacher in Mount Holly, Windsor, and Springfield, Vt. He thoroughly enjoyed both professions, and built lifelong friendships with coworkers and associates in both fields.

Doug is survived by his wife of 25 years Julie; children Allison, Maura, Liam, and Meiya (Meg); son-in-

law Shawn; grandchildren Maeve and Lochlann; brother Chip and sister-in-law June; mother-in-law Theresa; several sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law; nieces; nephews; cousins; and countless friends across the country.

Memorial contributions can be made in Doug's memory to the Lustgarten Foundation, which conducts research into pancreatic cancer, and the Hand to Heart Project, which provides massages to cancer patients and their partners. Loved ones are encouraged to participate in or donate to The Prouty, an annual summer fundraiser for the Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center (DHMC) Cancer Center.

Doug's family is grateful to the staff at the DHMC Cancer Center and Palliative Care Clinic, and Visiting Nurses & Hospice of New Hampshire/Vermont, who provided such good



Douglas Neet, 2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

care to him during his final year. A Celebration of Life will be held on Saturday, April 25, at 11 a.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse in Springfield, Vt.

Doug loved life and had an indomitable will to live. Doug's immortal legacy is the community of family and friendships he built and sustained across his more than 70 years. Please honor his memory by cherishing time with friends and family, sharing food, music, love, and laughter.

PROJECT LISTING
SPRINGFIELD, VT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Project: VCT Flooring Replacement – Springfield High School

Location: Springfield High School, 303 South St., Springfield, VT.

Description: Install VCT Flooring & Cove Base

Specifications available from Martha Tarbell, 802-885-5120

Proposal Due Date/Time: Monday, January 5, 2026, at 2:00 p.m., submitted to owner (below) in a sealed envelope marked "SHS Tile Project" on the outside of the envelope.

Mandatory site inspection and walk through must be scheduled through Tim Bixby, 802.282.3434 no later than Wednesday, December 31, 2025.

Documents Required: Proof of Insurance, Details per Specifications

Owner/Contact:
Springfield School District
Richard Pembroke
301 South Street Springfield, VT. 05156
Telephone: (802) 885-5120
rpembroke@ssdvt.org

calendar

LEGAL NOTICES

DEC. 18 – PERKINSVILLE, Vt. – Join us on Dec. 18, from 6:30-7:30 p.m., at the Perkinsville Community Church, 35 Church Street, for a festive evening of classical Christmas music with pianist Jacob McLaughlin. The concert will conclude with a singalong of “Silent Night.” This is a free event, but donations will be accepted to go towards a local charity.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Women to Women group will meet on Thursday, Dec. 18, from 1-3 p.m., in the Mozden Room at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights. This is an opportunity for women to get together and talk and share life stories. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

DEC. 19 – CLAREMONT, N.H. – The next Quilting Bee at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, will be held Friday, Dec. 19, at 10 a.m. Come tell your story with the quilting skills you want to share with other quilters. You don’t have to be a quilter to attend. Bring your own project. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

DEC. 20 – CLAREMONT, N.H. – On

Saturday, Dec. 20, a turkey dinner will be served at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights. The menu will be turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, squash, cranberry sauce, dinner rolls, and cherry pie. Please call 603-678-0433 to order a meal any time until 3:30 p.m. the day of the dinner, and specify whether dine-in or takeout. Dining in will begin at 4:30 p.m., and takeout meals will be available at 5 p.m. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

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.

PLYMOUTH, Vt. – The Plymouth Historical Society, at the former Plymouth Elementary School, 35 School Drive, will be open the first and third Sunday of each month, from 2-4 p.m., from November 2025 – April 2026. Watch for the “open” flag.

MONDAYS – 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.

TUESDAYS – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Head to the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse in Springfield, Vt., 21 Fairground Road, on Tuesdays, at 10 a.m., from Nov. 11, 2025 – March 24, 2026, to learn from and practice with Tai Chi Vermont-certified teacher Jo Bregnard. Classes are 60 minutes, and will also be livestreamed via Zoom, as well as recorded for those who can’t make it to the meetinghouse. To learn more or register, visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/90038.

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

THURSDAYS – CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, holds computer clinics on the third Thursday of every month, from 1-3 p.m. Bring your computer or laptop in if you need help with it. This is for seniors only. Emily and Luke will help you troubleshoot any problems you are having, or help you to better understand your computer. You are responsible if any parts need to be purchased, but that is not usually the case. They can also help you with your cell phone, especially if it is an Android. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

Town of Plymouth, Vermont
Part-Time Treasurer

Job Description

Directs and performs duties involving the daily operations of the Treasurer office; develops office procedures and documents, reviews, prepares and administers departmental budget and works with Town Clerk.

Maintains effective working relationships with Town officials, staff, and members of the community. Meets and speaks with taxpayers, the public, municipal or other business associates to provide answers, address complaints and requests, deal with errors or other job-related issues.

Manages the bills and collects all monies for the Town including real estate property, fees, charges, bills, and revenues committed to the Treasurer.

Works with the Delinquent Tax Collector to prepare municipal lien certificates, delinquency notifications and all other documents as required in the collection of taxes.

Works with Delinquent Tax Collector and Town Attorney to assist with Tax Sales.

Works with the Town Clerk to oversee the collection, deposit and reconciles bank statements for all Town accounts; prepare reports for Town’s annual audit; and balance cash, receivables, and debt monthly.

Manages debt including the borrowing of funds for the Town, compliance with all reporting requirements, timely payment of debt obligations, preparation of all financial documents including continuing disclosure.

Back-up to the Town Clerk to manage payroll, ensures that employees are properly enrolled in the system; maintains earnings records for all employees. Prepares and files W-2 information and all other third-party required reports.

Perform other duties as required by the Select Board or as the situation dictates.

Additional Duties

Financial liaison: Communicate financial information clearly to board members.

Risk management: Identify and work to minimize financial risks.

Cost reduction: Find strategies to reduce organizational costs and improve efficiency.

Recommended Qualifications

Degree in business administration, finance, accounting, or related field preferred; at least two years of experience in business or financial management preferably in a municipal Treasurer and/ or Collectors office; or an equivalent combination of education and experience.

The compensation range for this role is \$25.00 –\$30.00 per hour, dependent on experience, education level, and specific skill sets.

Please mail your resume and/or a completed application to the Plymouth Town Clerk’s Office at 68 Town Office Road, Plymouth, Vermont 05056 or email clerk@plymouthvt.org.

The Town of Plymouth is an equal opportunity employer.

Town of Plymouth
Public Notice of the Planning Commission and Zoning Board of Adjustment Conditional Use Hearing, Continued

A public hearing will be held Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 6:00 PM. at the Town Municipal Building, 68 Town Office Rd., Plymouth, Vermont, to continue a Conditional Use Hearing for the following applicant:

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/9788686006?pwd=RVyz9U64hLsWIG8ggUHFc9asaobTF1&omn=96136223282>
Meeting ID: 978 868 6006
Passcode: 565333

One tap mobile
+13092053325,,9788686006#,,,,*565333# US
+13126266799,,9788686006#,,,,*565333# US (Chicago)

Dial by your location
• +1 309 205 3325 US
• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

Applicant: Jennifer Milano
Property Owner: Christian Sundahl, Two Cees Realty
Property Address: 32 Route 100, Plymouth, Vermont, 05056
Project: Rural Small Enterprise and Non-Formula Restaurant in Village Zone

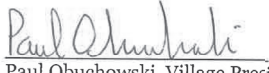
WARNING
SPECIAL VILLAGE MEETING
VILLAGE OF BELLOWS FALLS
January 12, 2026 & January 13, 2026

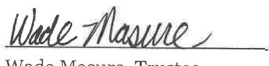
The legal voters of the Village of Bellows Falls are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Town Hall Lower Theater in said Village on Monday, January 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. for an informational meeting, and then to adjourn to the Bellows Falls Fire Department (170 Rockingham Street) in said Village from the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 13, 2026, to vote by Australian Ballot on Article 1 and Article 2 as set forth below.

ARTICLE 1: Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Village of Bellows Falls in an amount not to exceed Eight Hundred Twelve Thousand Five Hundred Dollars and Zero Cents (\$812,500.00) be issued under Chapter 53 of Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated, payable from the Village’s water fund, derived from the revenue from the provision of water over a period not to exceed thirty years, and subject to reduction by available grants-in-aid or other funding sources, be issued to finance the Village’s cost of Kissel Hill and Colony Road Water Line Improvements (the Project)?

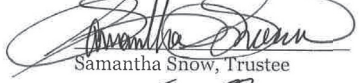
ARTICLE 2: Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Village of Bellows Falls in an amount not to exceed Three Hundred Thousand Dollars and Zero Cents (\$300,000.00) be issued under Chapter 53 of Title 24, Vermont Statutes Annotated, payable from the Village’s sewer fund, derived from the revenue from billing for sewer service over a period not to exceed thirty years, and subject to reduction by available grants-in-aid or other funding sources, be issued to finance the Village’s cost of Laurel Avenue Sewer Improvements (the Project)?

Adopted and approved at a meeting of the Trustees of the Village of Bellows Falls, duly called , noticed, and held on December 2, 2025.

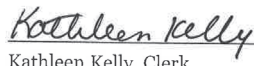

Paul Obuchowski, Village President


Wade Masure, Trustee


Susan MacNeil, Trustee


Samantha Snow, Trustee


Taylor Pichette, Trustee


Kathleen Kelly, Clerk

RECEIVED FOR THE RECORD
ROCKINGHAM TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
December 2, 2026
Recorded in Book 34B Page 210

ATTEST:
Kathleen Kelly, Town Clerk

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT
Windham

Unit

PROBATE DIVISION
Docket No.: 25-PR-06931

In re ESTATE of : Robert J. Collins, Jr.

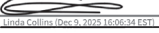
NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Robert J. Collins, Jr. _____, Decedent

late of Londonderry _____, 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: Dec 9, 2025

Signature of Fiduciary

Linda Collins (Dec 9, 2025 16:00:34 EST)

Executor/Administrator Linda S. Collins, Administrator		Mailing Address c/o Law Offices of Amanda L. S. George, PO Box 578
Phone Number 802-875-7777	Email chaffee@amandageorge.law.com	City, State, Zip Chester, VT 05143

Name of Publication: The Vermont Journal

Publication Date: December 17, 2025

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court - Windham Probate

Address of Probate Court: 30 Putney Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301

LEGAL NOTICES

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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EZ-Dump Enterprises has a 15-yard dump trailer available.

We're also here for heating equipment, appliance removal, home/storage unit clean outs, stump grinding, and refinishing/repairing gravel driveways. Serving Springfield, Vt. area. Call/text 802-376-1168 or email ezdump.bl@gmail.com.

FOR SALE

GRAFTON, Vt. – 2005 GMC Serria, SLE 2500HD DSL, 4dr/4wd, Inspected, good condition, \$8500. Call 802-732-8494.

GRAFTON, Vt. – 2020 GMC Sierra SLT 2500HD DSL. Loaded.

4dr/4wd, Fisher V-plow, 5th wheel set up, side tool boxes, \$38,000. Call 802-732-8494.

GRAFTON, Vt. – 2020 GMC Sierra SLT 2500HD DSL, Loaded. 4dr /4wd, 2025 Fisher V-plow w/2025 Fisher Sander, 5th wheel set up, \$48,000. Call 802-732-8494.

HELP WANTED

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.

SNOW PLOWING

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

CLASSIFIEDS

Start at \$20 per week for 4 lines of text. Buy 3 get 1 Free! Email ads@vermontjournal.com with your listing today

Town of Springfield - Selectboard Notice of Public Hearing January 12, 2026

The Town of Springfield will hold a Public Hearing at 6:00 PM on Monday, January 12, 2026 for the purpose of receiving public input concerning the July 1, 2026- June 30, 2027 Springfield Town Operating Budget. This will be a hybrid meeting. The Public Hearing will be held at 96 Main Street, Springfield, Vermont. It will also be possible to attend via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81054139257 Meeting ID: 810 5413 9257

One tap mobile +13126266799,,81054139257# US (Chicago) +16465588656,,81054139257# US (New York)

Kristi C. Morris, Chair Springfield Selectboard

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

Looking for a career with great Pay & Benefits? Look no further!

Come work for the Town of Charlestown!

We're seeking motivated, passionate individuals to join our team. With competitive pay, excellent health and dental benefits, retirement plans, and more, this is more than just a job—it's your future!

Positions Available: Highway Dept. Driver/Equipment Operator/Laborer - FT Water/Waste Water Licensed Superintendent - FT FT Police Officers Building Inspector – PT/On Call

Don't miss out! Start your career with us today. Apply now and take the first step toward a brighter tomorrow!

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

Town of Londonderry, Vermont PLANNING COMMISSION NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING Regarding: Unified Development By-Laws

Monday, January 12, 2025 - 6 P.M. Londonderry Town Office 100 Old School Street South Londonderry, VT 05155

The Planning Commission solicits public comment on the proposed update, as well as comments from the Planning Commissions of abutting municipalities and from the Regional Planning Commission regarding the compatibility of their respective regulations with the proposed Londonderry Unified Development Regulations. These changes aim to make bylaw adoption more efficient and to keep bylaws current, relevant, and in compliance with municipal plans. The regulations apply to the entire Town of Londonderry.

The Table of Contents includes:

- General Standards
- Exemptions and Limitations
- Prior Applications, Approvals, and Uses
- Nonconformities
- Zoning Districts
- Base Zoning Districts
- Overlay Zoning Districts
- General Zoning Rules
- Site Design and Performance Standards
- Specific Use Standards
- Subdivision Standards
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) Standards
- Conservation PUD
- Neighborhood PUD
- Multi-building, Multi-use PUD
- Administration and Enforcement
- Fees and Filing Requirements
- Zoning Permits
- Commercial and Multifamily Home Development
- Appeals
- Notice, Hearings and Decisions
- Violations and Penalties
- Definitions

A full copy of the proposed Londonderry Unified Development Regulations is available for public review. It is available at the Londonderry Town Office, Londonderry, Vermont, and on the town's website at https://www.londonderryvt.gov/.

AGENDA

1. PUBLIC HEARING Unified Development By-Laws: Call to Order a. Opening Statement
- b. Comments and Concerns from the Public
- c. Adjourn

Art Crafts Gifts

CREATE TOGETHER AT FLETCHER FARM

Community Art Center offering Workshops, Equipped Studios, Camps, and More

611 Rt.103S, Ludlow, VT 802-228-8770

www.CreateTogetherVT.org (12/9/26 - 52)

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Art, Crafts, Gifts, Exhibits & Workshops Holiday Shopping at its best!

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Nonprofit acquires and protects 341 acres of forest

ATHENS, Vt. – The southern Vermont community-based nonprofit Bull Creek Common Lands (BCCL) has placed 341 acres of remote land in Athens and Townshend under the permanent protection of a conservation easement with the Vermont Land Trust (VLT), the two organizations announced today. The conserved land is the headwaters of Bull Creek, a special place that many in the local community know and appreciate.

The newly conserved land contains many wetlands and different forest types that are home to beavers, moose, deer, bears, foxes, ducks, and songbirds, as well as rare and endangered plant species. There are also several cellar holes and evidence of past farming.

Public access for non-motorized recreation is currently available from Sam Farr Road in Athens, with a pull-off parking area. The primary existing trail on the property is a section of the Legal Town Trail along Bull Creek. BCCL is planning a new trail that will connect Sam Farr Road to the other side of the property in Townshend.

Those interested in visiting the land from the Townshend side should visit the BCCL website for information. Visitors are also welcome to hike off-trail on the property.

“BCCL protected this land so everyone, your children and grandchildren, can enjoy it and appreciate the benefits of healthy forests, clean water, and plentiful wildlife,” said Andrew Toepfer, board

member of Bull Creek Common Lands. “We do this work because we love our neck of the woods in the same ways other Vermonters do. We want to uphold the rural Vermont tradition of keeping land open for the community to roam on, balance recreation and wildlands, and restore ecosystem health to benefit all.”

The land includes a section of Bull Creek along with the creek’s headwater tributaries, numerous wetlands, five vernal pools, beaver ponds, large swamps, and peatlands. It lies less than a half mile west of the Raymond Bemis Community Forest, which BCCL established in 2023.

“The protection of the headwaters meets values that many in the community share,” said VLT’s Jen-

nifer Garrett, who worked with BCCL on the project. “We’re gratified to support BCCL in the conservation of critical habitat and watershed features in southeastern Vermont, in a way that brings together care for the landscape with people’s needs and wishes.”

Community members in the area already use the headwaters land for hiking and hunting. BCCL plans to manage it for both public access, as well as the health of the land and water. The nonprofit has already done some work to stabilize soils on old logging roads, and thus reduce erosion caused by rain and snowmelt. They have also begun managing non-native plant species in some areas, to reduce pressure on existing flora and protect biodiversity.

BCCL worked over sev-

eral years to protect the land, which was previously split across three contiguous parcels of 188 acres and 42 acres in Athens, and 110 acres in Townshend.

BCCL thanked the many supporters and partners who contributed to the success of this project.

The effort was funded by the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board (VHCB), Open Space Institute (OSI), Davis Conservation Foundation, Fields Pond Foundation, Windham Foundation, and numerous generous donors.

“Communities know their landscapes best, and Bull Creek Common Lands proved that here,” said Gus Seelig, executive director of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board. “They saw what needed protecting in their corner

of Vermont, and made it happen. VHCB was glad to support work that protects clean water, keeps habitat intact, and ensures public access forever. This is Vermont conservation at its finest.”

“OSI was honored to support Bull Creek Common Lands’ initial acquisition of 110 acres – an ecologically rich landscape of forests, wetlands, and streams,” said Sarah Wells, Open Space Institute’s New England program manager. “It’s inspiring to see how that first step set the stage for protecting the entire headwaters, helping safeguard water quality, reduce flooding, and provide vital habitat for wildlife. This achievement reflects the vision and persistence of BCCL, Vermont Land Trust, and every partner who made it possible.”



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Dear Editor,

Each December, America lights up – not with reverence, but with neon sales, frantic shopping, and countdowns to the next shipment from Amazon. For Generation Z especially, Christmas has increasingly drifted into a glittering spectacle of trends, wish lists, and content creation. The nativity story, the breathtaking moment when eternity stepped into time through the birth of Jesus Christ, is being drowned out by noise, convenience, and commercialization. This world-shaking miracle has been pushed to the margins of relevance within the cultural bubble that much of secular America, and even many believers, now inhabit.

Though no single generation caused this shift, the effects of our lost focus are now surfacing most dramatically in America’s under-30 population. A December 2022 Ipsos poll

of 1,023 adults, drawn from their probability-based KnowledgePanel, found that three-quarters of Americans believe the true meaning of Christmas has been forgotten.

Secular culture has been slowly sanding down the sacred edges of Christmas for decades. We need to acknowledge the urgency of the moment. Gen Z is coming of age in a culture that has nearly severed Christmas from Christ himself. Many young people today know Christmas as a vibe, an aesthetic, or an event, but not a holy day. Not a divine interruption. Not the miracle of the savior of the world arriving in the humblest, most unthinkable way.

As real, devout, Bible-believing, and Spirit-led Christians, we cannot be passive observers of this cultural drift. We are called to be stewards of truth in a generation starving for

meaning, even if they don’t yet realize it. If we do not intentionally teach the true story of Christmas, the world will gladly substitute something cheaper, louder, and spiritually empty.

Christmas began in a manger, not a mall. It began with a virgin girl saying “yes” to God, with shepherds trembling before angels, with Joseph choosing obedience over reputation, and with a child whose first crib was a feeding trough. The holiness of that night is not fragile, but our collec-

tive memory of it is. It must be protected, taught, and proclaimed.

This season, I urge every believer to speak boldly and consistently about the miracle of Christ’s birth. Re-iterate it to yourself. Tell it to your children and grandchildren. Teach it in your churches, your workplaces, your living rooms, and your everyday conversations. Let the next generation hear not only what happened in Bethlehem, but why it matters – that the God of

the universe took on flesh as Jesus Christ to save us wretched sinners from our otherwise endless pit of darkness and death.

If we reclaim Christmas, not as nostalgia, nor as just tradition, but as worship,

we are fulfilling our calling to continuously reignite the flame of truth in a culture desperately in need of light.

Sincerely,
Maya Wright
Cavendish, Vt.



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holiday & events

Antje Duvekot, Seth Glier

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present contemporary folk singer-songwriters Antje Duvekot and Seth Glier on Saturday, Dec. 20, at 7:30 p.m., at Next Stage.

Duvekot is a German-born, American-raised singer-songwriter whose work is celebrated for its hard-won wisdom, dark-eyed realism, and street-smart romanticism. Her bicultural upbringing and relative newness to English shape her strikingly original poetic voice, fueling the powerful empathy at the center of her writing. She has received top songwriting honors, including the grand prize in the John Lennon Songwriting Competition, the Kerrville Folk Festival’s New Folk Award, and the Boston Music Award for Outstanding Folk Act.

Her debut studio album, “Big Dream Boulevard,” was voted the No. 1 folk release of 2006 by the Boston Globe, and named a top 10 release of the year by NPR’s Folk Alley. Since then, Duvekot has toured extensively across the U.S. and Europe, performing at major festivals including Newport, Mountain Stage, Philadelphia, Falcon Ridge, Great Waters, and Ker-ville.

Glier, a five-time Independent Music Award winner, Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, and producer, brings a visionary voice to modern folk. Driven by curiosity and a deep desire for human connection, he uses his musical craft as a vehicle for both. Glier has served as a cultural diplomat for the U.S. State Department, collabor-

ating with musicians in Ukraine, Mongolia, China, and Mexico. He has shared stages with Ronnie Spector, James Taylor, Ani DiFranco, and Glen Campbell, and recorded with Richard Shindell, Dar Williams, and Cyndi Lauper. Committed to songwriting as a force for positive change, he has worked with students in Park-land, Fla., on the Park-land Project, cowritten with soldiers at Walter Reed, and is a passionate advocate for autism awareness, citing his autistic brother Jamie as a profound influence.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill, Putney, Vt. Tickets are discounted in advance at www.nextstagearts.org. A beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar will be available. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

Community Art Garden Vacation Art Camp

CHESTER, Vt. – Community Art Garden in Chester, Vt., is offering its first vacation art camp over the holiday break, Monday, Dec. 29 – Wednesday, Dec. 31, from 9:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. each day. This fun, process-art centered program includes lantern making,

origami, snow and ice art, and shadow puppet play. Camp is designed for children ages 5-13, and is geared towards play and child-centered creativity. Campers will have the chance to learn how to take everyday materials like sticks, tissue paper, and glue, and create their own lanterns that re-

ally glow. With lots of outside time sprinkled into the fun, it is a breath of fresh air mid-holiday break. Register online at www.communityartgarden.com/camps, or email emily@communityartgarden.com for more information. Space is limited, so early registration is recommended.

Free screening of “Shrek”

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Project ACTION Crime & Safety Committee is excited to host a special community event featuring a free screening of the classic movie “Shrek” at Springfield Cinemas 3, on Tuesday, Dec. 29. Arrival time is 10 a.m., with the movie beginning promptly at

10:30 a.m. Admission is free for all students enrolled in the Springfield School District or the River Valley Technical Center, and includes complimentary popcorn and beverages. Attendees will also have the chance to win free gas cards through our raffle.

The Springfield Project ACTION Crime & Safety Committee remains committed to addressing community concerns through proactive and creative initiatives. We strive to foster pride in Springfield, and encourage students to take an active role in their community. This program is designed to strengthen community connections, offer a safe and fun activity during the school break, and give Springfield residents the

opportunity to learn more about the fantastic things Project ACTION and its initiatives are inspiring.

Please come enjoy this great local cinema, watch a classic movie, and learn more about Project ACTION. Advanced registration is appreciated, to ensure we do not exceed capacity. Register at forms.gle/qBoQFQQerdZjqwcq8. The event can also be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/share/1TqunTm57J.

“Painting the Winter Landscape in Watercolor” at VAULT—

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Explore painting the beautiful New England winter landscape in watercolor with popular artist Rob O’Brien on Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026, from 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Glazing techniques and layering of the subtle tints of snow will be introduced. Value, composition, and painting light and shadow will be emphasized. You will work from a photo reference that you bring, and learn to create a finished painting with hands-on guidance provided by O’Brien. A critique will be held at the end of the session. Open to all levels, with some watercolor experience suggested.

The cost of the class is discounted for gallery members. Register by Saturday, Jan. 3. The workshop will be held at the Great Hall in Springfield. Directions will be provided along with a materials list at registration.

Gallery at the VAULT is located at 68 Main Street in Springfield. For more information, call 802-885-7111, email gallervault@vermontel.net, or visit www.gallervault.org or Facebook and Instagram. The gallery is ADA accessible.



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holiday happenings

Starry, Starry Night

CHESTER, Vt. – Chester will come alive with light, festive decor, and community spirit during Starry, Starry Night, on Friday, Dec. 20, from 4-7 p.m. Luminaries will line the streets as local shops, galleries, artists, and restaurants welcome residents and visitors for an evening of holiday shopping, seasonal treats, and extended hours.

Browse, shop, and enjoy special events from artists and makers. Sample baked goods, maple treats, hot cider, wine, and more.

Participating businesses include Collected LTD, 92 Vermont Route 11; DaValia Art and Interiors, 39 North Street; DyakCraft/Linda Diak Quilts, 339 Main Street; Fischer Arts, 102 The Common; The Inn Between & Which Way Tavern, 1834 Simonsville Road, Andover; Kit Kats Embroidery, Gifts, Souvenirs & More, 78 The Common; Matilda and Three Bears, 26 The Common; Rose Arbour Tea Room, Gifts & Art Studio, 55 School Street; Sage Jewelry and Gifts, 78 The Common; Sharon's on the Common and Chester Candy Com-

pany, 80 The Common; Smitty's Chester Market, 526 Depot Street; Songbird Wellness, 12 The Common; Stone Hearth Inn & Eatery, 698 Vermont Route 11; Sugar Bob's Finest Kind, 92 Vermont Route 11; and Wisdom River Designs, 220 South Main Street.

This year's celebration will also coincide with the Okemo Valley Holiday Express Train, departing from the Chester Depot, and featuring a festive ride complete with Santa and his helpers.

Yuletide caroling at Meeting House

ROCKINGHAM, Vt. – The Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission invites members of the twin-state community to gather for yuletide caroling at the historic Rockingham Meeting House, on Sunday, Dec. 21, at 1 p.m.

This beautiful and historic building provides a perfect setting to celebrate the season and bring



Holiday cookies and doughnuts. PHOTO PROVIDED

the community together in song. Participants are encouraged to dress warmly, as the meeting house is unheated – aside from the warmth of shared voices, good cheer, and perhaps a wool sweater or blanket.

Song lyric sheets will be provided, and celebratory cider and donuts will be served following the caroling.

For more information, please contact 802-463-3964, Ext. 1112. All are welcome.

Next Stage Winter Solstice Celebration

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts invites the community to celebrate the winter solstice with an afternoon of festive activities, creative fun, and joyful singing on Sunday, Dec. 21, from 2-4:30 p.m., at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill in Putney, Vt. The event is free and open to all, and attendees are encouraged to RSVP at www.nextstagearts.org.

This family-friendly celebration offers something for everyone.

Festive cookie swap – Community members are invited to bring a batch of their favorite cookies to share. Drop off two or four dozen cookies and a recipe card between 2-3 p.m., then return to pick up a beautifully mixed box of treats

between 4-4:30 p.m. Bakers may sign up in advance at www.nextstagearts.org.

Luminaria-bag decorating – From 2-3 p.m., participants of all ages can decorate luminaria bags that will line the outdoor walkway, adding warmth, artistry, and light to the solstice season.

Holiday community singalong – Join musician Rich Grumbine on guitar from 3-4:30 p.m., for a lively and heartwarming community sing. Attendees can sing from a 60-song holiday songbook featuring traditional classics, secular tunes, and songs for kids. Lyrics will be projected on the main theater screen, making it easy for everyone to raise their voices together.

“Winter Solstice is a perfect moment to gather, share traditions, and brighten the darkest day of the year,” says the Next Stage team. “We’re excited to welcome neighbors of all ages for cookies, music, and community connection.”

Warm refreshments, holiday cheer, and plenty of singing will fill the space as Next Stage marks the turning of the season.

For more details or to RSVP, visit www.nextstagearts.org.

SAPA TV eighth 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, Reading, 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 car-

toons, 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). Thursday religious programs will air at their usual times, but on the government/education channel.

Viewers without cable, or who live outside SAPA's service area, can watch SAPA's livestream online at www.sapatv.org.

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\$869

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