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VOLUME 26, ISSUE 06

GMUHS inducts 13 into National Honor Society –

The GMUHS students most recently inducted into the National Honor Society.
PHOTO PROVIDED

CHESTER, Vt. – The Flamstead Chapter of the National Honor Society inducted 13 new members this winter. The induction ceremony was held on Monday, Feb. 2, at 6 p.m., in the auditorium at Green Mountain Union High School (GMUHS). Juniors and seniors who have a cumulative grade point average of 3.6 or higher are asked to apply. Candidates are considered for induction based on their scholarship, service, leadership, and character.

Pictured, back: Anna Bennett, E.V. Nicholes-Fox, Kord Hinkley, Adelaide Brown, Violet Haight, Ian Bernier, Liam Wright-Schroeder, and Arlo Schilling; front: Ezra Price-Wood, Evan Farrar, Caden Spittle, Logan Williams, Kaylee DeBartolo, Alexis Comiskey, Desi Broadley, Madison Gramling, Jaida Greeley, Sophia Cherubini, Colie Roby, and Leah Cassin; missing: Sadie Sheehan and Lainey Savoy.

Pot Belly update

A rendering showing the approved building plan for the former Pot Belly site.
PHOTO PROVIDED

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Pot Belly Pub has been demolished, and the property owners, Okemo5 LLC, have obtained permits for a proposed building plan including a ground-floor restaurant and two upper stories with two apartments each. The property is now listed for sale, with the permitting already in place, giving the potential buyer the option to begin construction immediately.

According to the listing, "The current owners have already laid the groundwork for what's next. Town site plan and conditional use approvals are in hand, and the sellers are happy to share their full vision with the next owner – including conceptual floor plans for a restaurant at street level, with four luxury residential condominiums on levels two and three. This thoughtful mixed-use concept was designed to complement the character of the village while meeting modern demand for high-end residences and vibrant commercial space. Whether you choose to carry this vision forward or bring your own ideas to life, this property offers an exceptional head start on development in one of Vermont's most desirable mountain communities."

Two seats up for election on Londonderry Selectboard

BY SHAWNTAE WEBB
The Vermont Journal

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – At their Feb. 2 meeting, the Londonderry Selectboard discussed two seats that are up for election this year, those currently occupied by Jim Fleming and Martha Dale. Dale has announced that she will not be running for reelection, but would serve another term if no one else steps up. Fleming intends to serve another term if reelected.

Resident Heather Stephenson voiced her concern about the lack of diversity on the selectboard, expressing, "Hearing that Martha will not be running again, and seeing others continue long-term service are what prompted me to reach out." Stephenson feels that people volunteer when "board culture feels open, respectful, and worth their time." She stated that the board does not reflect the diversity of the town.

Stephenson added that, "Regular turnover supports renewal, succession planning, and a healthy board." She also noted that remote accessibility could encourage others to participate in the meetings. Stephenson requested that the selectboard address not just who is not stepping forward, but why.

Board Chair Tom Cavanagh stated that the board members cannot control who runs for the selectboard positions.

Town administrator Aileen Tulloch explained that the remote piece is being addressed, with Zoom having already been added to the meetings, and assuming the budget passes, better equipment will be purchased to continue the growth of the Zoom options and meeting accessibility. She also explained that there are not term limits, and there is also no recall provision to remove an elected official.

Resident Melissa Brown suggested hosting candidate nights again, open to the community members thinking about joining any board or committee. Brown questioned what the selectboard is currently doing to fill Dale's upcoming vacant seat. As a member of other boards and committees, Brown said, "We don't wait for Town Meeting day for someone to raise their hand," as a board, they "automatically start looking."

Cavanagh, Dale, and board member Jim Ameden all said they have mentioned the vacancy, and have talked to those they felt may be interested in running for the elected position.

There was an overall sense of a limitation in regard to how many people were aware of the opening, with the news of the open seats only being spread by word of mouth. Tulloch expressed that, from experience, it is a process that "comes from the community." The community needs to be able to support their candidates, and it is important for the community to ask people to run who they feel are a good fit to represent the town.

The board agreed to look into hosting a candidate night, and said they were happy to sit down and talk to anyone interested in running. They agreed to publish the vacancy in various places, and encouraged the community to seek individuals to run. Tulloch added that even if a seat up for reelection is currently occupied, "it is not 'their' seat," implying that it is a healthy competition.

In other news, Tulloch announced that the South Londonderry Village Wastewater System Project Phase II was selected as a regional priority project by the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation. This opens the door for additional funding, such as the Northern Border Regional Commission grant for which the town intends to apply.

Resident Donna Korpi then voiced her concern about the town's winter road maintenance. She felt that there was an ineffectiveness of the salt application in low temperatures, and salt being applied before or during a snowstorm that is subsequently plowed off the roadways before it can have an effect on the snow. She questioned why the town was not following the VTrans policy, which is referenced in the town's road policy, and requested the town decrease the financial and environmental impact of salt use to the town.

Tulloch reported that updating the road policy is on her to-do list. She also clarified that Route 11 and Route 100, as referenced in Korpi's packet to the board, are maintained by the state. Cavanagh stated that road foreman Josh Dryden had all of the trucks calibrated for the right consistency of salt and sand.

The board plans to talk to Dryden and the road crews to see how they are handling the winter road maintenance.

The next Londonderry Selectboard meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 17, at 6 p.m., in observation of President's Day.

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DEADLINES

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Rotary hears from new owners of Green Mountain Sugarhouse

LUDLOW, Vt. – Josh and Jamie Rose, of Plymouth, Vt., became the new official owners of the Green Mountain Sugarhouse in early January. Since Josh was little, he's been in the sugarhouse or woods daily while his parents, Doug and Ann Rose, continued their normal work routine – Ann in the office/shop, and Doug in the sugarhouse. Ann's father Dave Harlow started the Green Mountain Sugarhouse in the 1950s, running it until 1985, when Doug and Ann stepped in and took over. Now it is in the capable hands of the third generation.

Josh stated they completed their 13,000 taps just before the big snowstorm arrived in January. They have three parcels they tap, located in Reading. Josh demonstrated the vacuum sensors and remote monitoring equipment, which are placed on the sap lines. With this equipment, he monitors the vacuum process through his smartphone, sensing any possible leaks or faulty sap lines. In this way, he can find the faulty line much quicker than having to walk all lines looking for leaks or damage.

Jamie assured the group nothing will change with maple candy, fudge, or creemes. One of her initiatives is to boost their online sales. One idea she hopes to create is a possible "subscription," allowing customers to receive maple syrup delivered on their schedule. You should expect to see the family in the office at their desks, with their three young children doing homework on weeknights if you stop by, like Josh and his sister did years ago during sugaring season.

Gift baskets, individual syrup, homemade maple products, and unique Vermont gifts can be found at the store on Route 100 North. Josh and Jamie invite everyone to stop in during sugaring season to see the operation.

As the world faces increasing challenges, the Ludlow Rotary Club is reaffirming its commitment to the dual pillars of community service, and world peace and conflict resolution. Local rotarians are inviting community members to join their mission of service above self, to create a ripple effect of positive change starting right here in the Okemo Valley. The LRC meets most Tuesdays, at DJ's Restaurant, at 12:15 p.m. For more information, visit www.ludlowrotary.com, or like the Ludlow Rotary Club on Facebook.

Josh and Jamie Rose speak to the Ludlow Rotary Club.
PHOTO BY KEVIN BARNES

Whiting Library board announces departure of director

CHESTER, Vt. – Gail Zachariah is no longer with the Whiting Library as of Jan. 31. We appreciate her contributions to the success of the library over the past two years, and wish her the best in future endeavors.

The board of trustees and staff are in the process of transitioning and covering responsibilities, and will share updates on the director search in the future.

Reinbow Riding Center welcomes new instructor

BELMONT, Vt. – Reinbow Riding Center, a therapeutic horsemanship center based in Belmont, Vt., is excited to announce the addition of Julia Adams as its new full-time instructor and program director.

Adams is an eighth-generation Vermonter with deep roots in Rutland County. She is a graduate of both Rutland High School and Castleton University, and has worked in public education for the last 13 years, in addition to running her own small business.

As a youth, Adams grew up very involved in the University of Vermont 4-H horse program, and then volunteered as a 4-H leader in Rutland County. As a leader at the state level, she coached Vermont teams in communications and Horse Bowl. Adams is an A-carded New England 4-H horse show judge, and over the last decade has traveled New England to share her equine knowledge by judging open shows, 4-H shows, and also the Interscholastic Equestrian Association, the Youth Equestrian Development Association, and the Intercollegiate Horse Shows Association. Still an open professional rider herself, Adams enjoys riding and competing with her own American Quarter Horse, Billy. She will combine her talents of teaching, coaching, and horsemanship to bring fun, educational, and holistic experiences to all of Reinbow Riding Center's participants. Reinbow looks forward to a wonderful season with Adams taking the reins of the program.

Julia Adams, new riding instructor at Reinbow Riding Center.
PHOTO PROVIDED

The mission of Reinbow Riding Center is to improve the wellbeing of individuals with unique physical, emotional, and/or cognitive challenges through a customized therapeutic equine experience. Reinbow Riding Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established in 2008, which strives to meet the needs of every individual who participates in its therapeutic horsemanship programs, mounted or unmounted, regardless of their ability to pay.

Reinbow recently earned a 2026 Platinum Seal of Transparency, the highest level awarded, from Candid, an independent organization that ranks nonprofits. To learn more about the various ways to make a contribution, opportunities to volunteer, or information about the organization and its programs, please visit www.reinbowridingcenter.org.

You can also show your support by following us on our Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn social media channels.

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Windham Regional Priority Projects announced

REGION – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC), the economic development organization for Windham County, announces the Regional Priority Projects (RPP) list for 2026. The annual list ranks the top 10 priority projects as determined by a committee made up of members from BDCC, the Windham Regional Commission, and representatives from across Windham County.

Each year, regional development organizations across Vermont gather input from planning commissions, municipalities, partner organizations, and local stakeholders to identify projects that reflect shared goals across the region. Engagement efforts include public meetings, newsletters, direct outreach, and regional convenings. The information provided in the Regional Priority Projects lists are used by the State of Vermont to inform decision making for federal and state funding opportunities, and to guide community planning processes.

The project list-development process is consistent and neutral across all of the organizations that provide Regional Priority Projects lists to the state. Projects selected often advance business retention and growth, workforce and talent development, broadband expansion, innovation in economic development, and improvements to critical infrastructure.

The Regional Priority Projects list identifies the initiatives that are most prepared to advance job creation, expand economic opportunities, and strengthen community resilience. The top-ranked projects on the Windham Regional Priority Projects list are submitted to the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). They, along with other state departments, use these lists to help inform future funding allocations for many of their programs, including Northern Border Regional Commission's annual funding.

The 2026 Windham Regional Priority Projects List is: Grace Cottage Family Health new primary care clinic building; Rockingham Industrial Park stormwater planning, design, and implementation; Route 9 water and wastewater infrastructure expansion project; Bellows Falls Intermodal Transportation Center (BFITC); South Londonderry village wastewater system, Phase II; Green Island Project, Great Falls Food Hub; Vernon Homes Greenhouse Project; WheelPad; Brattleboro Technology & Industrial Park; and the renovation project for the Old School Community Center.

BDCC collects projects across Windham and Bennington counties' Southern Vermont Economic Development Zone annually for consideration as CEDS Vital Projects, and also draws from this pool of projects for the RPP list. While there is often overlap, the RPP list requires projects to be well along in their planning and capital development, while CEDS Vital Projects may be in earlier stages. While these processes have emerged independently, BDCC will be continuing to work to bring the processes together going forward. For a list of the 2025 CEDS Vital Projects, please visit www.sovermontzone.com/cedsprojects.

Past Windham RPP list projects that have received state and federal awards include Wilmington Route 9 Infrastructure, Whitingham Sewer Infrastructure, and Chroma Slope Stormwater Protection, among many others.

The Fort at No. 4 enters new era in 2026

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – The Fort at No. 4 is a place where stories live – stories of courage, conflict, cooperation, and everyday survival on one of colonial New England's most contested frontiers. In 2026, The Fort is stepping confidently into a new chapter, one defined by expanded programming, revitalized exhibit spaces, and a renewed invitation to the surrounding community to help shape the future of this historic site.

The year begins in February, with "Midwinter at No. 4: A Day of Winters Past" on Saturday, Feb. 21. Winter was one of the most demanding seasons for colonial families and garrison communities. This program highlights how people endured cold, hunger, isolation, and uncertainty, using period skills and ingenuity, and how they enjoyed their lives and the close company of each other.

In early March, The Fort reaches beyond its walls to participate in the Colonial Trade Fair in Dover, New Hampshire, on March 7 and 8. Events like this strengthen regional connections and bring awareness of the Fort's mission to broader audiences.

April brings Clash of Cultures weekend on April 11 and 12, marking a pivotal moment in the season. Designed specifically for those curious about reenacting or volunteering, this immersive program explores the cultural intersections and conflicts of the 18th-century frontier.

Opening weekend, May 2 and 3, celebrates the official start of The Fort's public season. The air fills with movement as interpreters return, exhibits reopen, and the grounds once again come alive with activity.

Education and skill-building take center stage in mid-May, with the hearth cooking class with Becky Hendricks, on May 16 and 17. These popular classes connect visitors directly with the rhythms of 18th-century domestic life.

Later in the month, "Original Rendezvous," from May 22-24 brings together traders, reenactors, and history enthusiasts for a weekend that celebrates commerce, craftsmanship, and cross-cultural exchange.

One of the most ambitious undertakings for 2026 is a season-long exploration of the American Revolution, the "Echoes of 1776 Revolutionary War" series, a multievent exploration of the Revolutionary era as experienced on the frontier. Rather than focusing solely on battles, this series examines the war through personal, social, and moral lenses. This series will be featured on the last Saturday of the month, May through October.

Family-friendly and youth-focused programming remains a cornerstone of The Fort's mission. "Allies & Adversaries: The French & Indian War" at The Fort at No. 4, on June 6 and 7, provides context for the conflicts that shaped the region before the Revolution, while Children's Living History Day on July 18 invites younger visitors to learn through play, exploration, and hands-on activities.

The Fort also embraces creative partnerships, hosting River Theater's production of "Charlotte's Web" across two weekends: June 13 and 14, and June 20 and 21. By combining literature, performance, and historic setting, the Fort reaches new audiences and reinforces its role as a cultural hub.

Summer programming continues with John Maynard Day, on July 4 and 5, commemorating 280 years since Maynard's map creation and 250 years since the Declaration of Independence. This event blends scholarship, celebration, and reflection, reminding visitors that the stories of independence are rooted in specific places and people.

August brings specialized and culturally significant programs, including Artillery School with Jon Soule on Aug. 1 and 2, and "Abenaki at the Trading Post & Pequawket Garrison" on Aug. 8 and 9. These events deepen interpretive accuracy, and center Indigenous perspectives that are essential to understanding the region's past.

As autumn arrives, The Fort's programming shifts to reflection, transition, and tradition. "Return to No. 4: Revolutionary War," on Sept. 12 and 13, brings a reenactment of the Revolutionary War as it might have been on the banks of the Connecticut River, while "Out of Time," a unique timeline event on Sept. 26, allows visitors to move through multiple historical periods in a single day.

October features "Homestead 1777" on Oct. 10, and the ever-popular Harvest Dinner on Oct. 17, a special ticketed event that blends food, history, and community. The season concludes with Native Heritage Weekend on Nov. 7 and 8, honoring Indigenous histories and living cultures with respect and depth.

Behind the scenes, just as much energy is being devoted to updating exhibit spaces as to expanding programming. Visitors will notice improved interpretive signage, refreshed interiors, and exhibits designed to be more interactive and inclusive. The goal is not to modernize for its own sake, but to make The Fort's stories clearer, richer, and more engaging for today's audiences.

None of this work happens without people. Volunteers are the lifeblood of The Fort at No. 4, and 2026 represents an open invitation to the community to get involved. Volunteers assist with interpretation, education, maintenance, gardening, events, research, and visitor services.

Whether as a visitor, volunteer, or supporter, The Fort invites everyone to step inside and be part of its next chapter. Keep an eye on our website, www.fortat4.org, or our Facebook, @fortat4, for the most updated events and schedules.

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health

North Star Health carnation sale fundraiser

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – North Star Health will host a community carnation sale to celebrate National Doctors Day, inviting individuals and businesses to recognize local health care providers while contributing to accessible care in the region.

From Feb. 9 – March 12, community members can purchase red carnations, a symbol of National Doctors Day, to acknowledge the providers who serve patients and families across North Star Health's service area.

Carnations can be purchased online through North Star Health's website, or in person at any North Star Health location. Carnations will be delivered directly to the providers on National Doctors Day.

Proceeds from the sale are tax-deductible, and will support North Star Health's patient-centered primary care, dental, vision, and behavioral health services, ensuring access to care regardless of insurance status or ability to pay.

"This fundraiser gives our community a new way to share appreciation for our providers while directly supporting the care they deliver every day," said Jessica Everlith, director of communications and development.

National Doctors Day, celebrated annually on March 30, is a national day of observation to recognize the contributions of physicians. North Star Health's carnation sale provides an opportunity to participate and strengthen local, community-based health care.

To purchase carnations, visit www.northstarfqhc.org/love, or stop by any North Star Health location.

Grace Cottage's Cabin Fever online auction

TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Grace Cottage's Cabin Fever online auction is a perfect way to bring fun and joy to your winter. You'll find items that are practical, delectable, delightful, and inspirational. Bidding takes place Feb. 13-24.

Each year, Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital's Cabin Fever online auction includes exotic vacations, Vermont foods, local gift certificates, handcrafted items, jewelry, art, and more. Generous local businesses and individuals donate this fantastic array of items. With a wide variety of offerings, there's something for everyone, whatever your interests or budget.

This year, all proceeds go toward the construction of our new primary care clinic building.

You can visit the auction website now to register, browse the selection, and plan your bidding. Visit www.32auctions.com/GraceCottage2026 to register so you can hit the ground bidding.

For more information, visit www.gracecottage.org/auction, or email info@gracecottage.org.

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HEALTH CONTINUED

obituaries

Senior Solutions executive director to retire

Retiring executive director of Senior Solutions Mark Boutwell.
PHOTO PROVIDED

REGION – The board of directors of Senior Solutions announces that executive director Mark Boutwell has submitted his notice of retirement. He will remain in his role during a planned transition period.

Boutwell has been with Senior Solutions for 12 years, serving as executive director for the past five. During his tenure, he has provided steady and compassionate leadership, guiding the organization with a calm demeanor and deep commitment to its mission. His leadership has brought stability to Senior Solutions, and helped the organization navigate challenging times while continuing to serve older adults, clients, and families with care and integrity.

While this announcement is bittersweet, the board is deeply grateful for Boutwell's years of service, leadership, and devotion to Senior Solutions. We also appreciate his willingness to remain in his role for up to six months while the board conducts a search for a suitable successor, helping to ensure continuity and a smooth transition.

The board of directors will commence a comprehensive search for Senior Solutions' next executive director, and will share updates as appropriate.

On behalf of the board, we extend our sincere thanks to Boutwell for his many contributions, and his lasting impact on Senior Solutions and the community we serve.

Yoga at Rockingham Library

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – On Saturday, Feb. 14, from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., please join the Rockingham Free Public Library for an hour-long yoga class.

A lovely Valentine's Day treat for yourself, this yoga class will take place at the library, and be led by Yoga on Main, of Saxtons River. No yoga experience is necessary, and newcomers are welcome and encouraged to attend. The Rockingham Free Public Library has a limited number of yoga mats and blocks available; participants are also welcome to bring their own yoga mats, if they would like. Attendees are invited for snacks and hot beverages afterwards. The class is free and open to the public.

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

Neighborhood Connections offers snowshoeing for seniors

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – As a result of a new Exercise is Medicine Community Wellness Grant by the Vermont Governor's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports, Neighborhood Connections is able to offer a brand new, limited program to help seniors learn the basics of snowshoeing at Viking Nordic Ski Center in Londonderry, at no cost to participants.

Outings start and end at Viking Nordic, 615 Little Pond Road in Londonderry, and will take place on four Fridays: Feb. 20, Feb. 27, March 6, and March 13, weather permitting, from 12-3 p.m. About half of that time is a professionally guided walk on 1.5-mile trails. Specific trails will be chosen based on the abilities and interests of the group. The remainder of the time is meant to get you fitted and set up in snowshoes (provided free), and to give you time for coffee, soup, or a sandwich at the ski shop afterwards. Restrooms are available. You may sign up for one, several, or all four sessions.

This is the perfect way to get your exercise while unable to engage in normal walking activities due to icy conditions, and to learn a new activity.

Each session is limited to 12 individuals, so please reserve a spot early by calling 802-824-4343. Liability releases will need to be signed at your first session. If in doubt that this program is appropriate for you, check with your medical provider.

Chair yoga at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – February's monthly chair yoga class at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street, on Friday, Feb. 20, at 10 a.m., honors the high-spirited energy of the fire horse, this year's animal from the Chinese zodiac. Join in person at or online to learn accessible movements that you can do right from your seat, leaving you feeling mobile yet grounded for the year ahead, with attention to brain boosting and nervous system nourishment.

Jo Bregnard leading a class.
PHOTO PROVIDED

Chair yoga meets the third Friday of every month for a 60-minute practice. This month's session will feature guided acupressure and self-massage, with the goal of creating a focused route for the fire horse, ready to race ahead.

Classes are led by Jo Bregnard, a 500-hour certified yoga teacher with additional certifications in tai chi, acupressure, meditation, and more. She leads group and private sessions through her virtual studio, where she enjoys weaving lessons learned from the natural world into practice time, giving folks the support they need so they can continue doing the things that bring joy and connection.

Simply walk into the library and join live in person for free; there's no need to preregister for this option.

Springfield Town Library cardholders can contact the library at 802-885-3108 or stlib@vermontel.net to receive a coupon code for free online access. Those without a library card can visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/88980 for complete details on additional pricing options, and to sign up for online access. Either way, you'll get access to five chair yoga videos recorded at the Springfield Town Library as soon as you register.

If you need further information, email Bregnard at jo@jobregnard.com.

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Lisa L. Simmons, 1962-2026

Lisa Simmons, 1962-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Lisa Lynn Simmons, of Bellows Falls, Vt., died peacefully at home on Jan. 17, 2026, in the company of her wife and family. She and her wife had moved recently to Vermont, after decades of residing in and around Millsboro, Del.

Lisa was a kind and caring soul, whose life was guided by compassion, creativity, and an adventurous spirit. Known for a gentle presence and a deep love for both people and nature, Lisa touched many lives through her years of service with Kiwanis, with her art and friendship.

Lisa always loved nature and spending time outdoors. She worked as a naturalist at Trap Pond State Park in Laurel, Del., during several summers. Later, she worked at The Department of Natural Resources, helping to promote Delaware State Parks. She always said her favorite job had been with the Delaware Tourism Department, where she got to explore other destinations, and she and her wife traveled extensively in their camper van before settling down to create their new lives in Vermont in 2022. Lisa loved food – researching recipes and inventing her own, cooking and eating from a wide variety of cultures – and had plans to start a food-based cottage industry in Vermont. We called her the Queen of Herbs & Spices.

Lisa expressed her healing intentions through music, hosting and participating in drumming circles, finding connection and peace in rhythm and community. A nurse and practitioner of reiki healing, she believed in holistic wellbeing and the power of healing energy, offering comfort to many. Her most recent job as a school bus driver allowed her to dedicate her breaks and summers to caring for her parents in Maryland.

Above all, Lisa lived with an open heart, a curious spirit, and a love for life's journey. Lisa will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by all who knew and loved her. She was a light.

Lisa Simmons is survived by her beloved wife Mary Ann Benyo, mother Sally Simmons, sisters Kathy Lingo (Jay) and Kim Willoughby (Rex), nephews Jordan and Connor, niece Sara, grandniece Lucy, and numerous friends and acquaintances both in Vermont and Delaware, and beyond. Her father Lloyd Simmons predeceased her.

Please join us in honoring Lisa in a Celebration of Life, planned for Saturday, Feb. 21, at 1 p.m., at the Rockingham Public Library in Bellows Falls, Vt.; and on Saturday, April 25, at 11 a.m., at the Unitarian Universalists of Southern Delaware in Lewes, Del.

In lieu of flowers, please inquire about making a donation to Bayada Hospice Fund at philanthropy@bayada.org. They were extraordinary in helping Lisa to make a safe and peaceful journey to the other side.

OBITUARIES:
A 200-word obituary is $100, and $0.60 per word thereafter. A black and white photo is an additional $20. Email to 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.

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calendar

FEB. 14 –
BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – The Tri Town Collectors Club will continue its summer seasonal shows featuring comic books, coins, paper money, vintage and modern sports cards, Pokémon, postcards, and other collectibles on Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Brattleboro Holiday Inn, 100 Chickering Drive. There will be a special quiz for collectors. There is no admission charge. Anyone wishing to set up to sell their material may contact Joe Fuller at 802-379-2353 or pepsijoseph@yahoo.com.

S. LONDONDERRY, Vt. – The South Londonderry Free Library is celebrating Valentine's Day with a special workshop for all ages on Saturday, Feb. 14, at 10:30 a.m. Join art teacher Casey Junker Bailey for "Drawn Together," featuring a book that illustrates how art can overcome barriers to communication while bringing us all together. We will make art to give as valentines, and each family will receive a free copy of the book to bring home. Both kids and grown-ups are encouraged to attend, because we all need love and glitter. For more information, contact the library at 802-824-3371.

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – The Tri-Mountain Lions Club of Londonderry, Vt., invites everyone to a Valentine's Day celebration on Saturday, Feb. 14, from 1-3 p.m., at the offices of Neighborhood Connections, 5700 Route 100 in Londonderry. Bring your friends, your mom, your daughter, or your grandmother for a traditional tea. There will be tea and cookies, conversation, camaraderie, and fellowship. For more information or to RSVP, please call Neighborhood Connections at 802-824-4343 to reserve a spot.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Rick Redington & Tuff Luv, and Gypsy Reel will play a concert on Saturday, Feb. 14, at the Ludlow Town Hall auditorium. Doors open at 6:30 p.m., show begins at 7 p.m.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – On Saturday, Feb. 14, the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, will hold a Valentine's Day dance and social evening from 6-9 p.m. Bring your family and friends to hear the music of The Flames. This event is free and open to the public. Hors d'oeuvres and punch will be served.

FEB. 15 –
W. TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Shiloh, of The Serendipitous Shepherdess, will present a yarn-spinning workshop on Sunday, Feb. 17, from 4-7 p.m., at the West Townshend Country Store, 6573 Vermont Route 30. Even if you have some previous experience, you're sure to pick up new ideas and have fun along the way. You can register by stopping by the store. This class will start with some history of this craft before moving onto how to use a drop spindle as well as a single and double treadle wheel. Experienced spinners may bring their wheels and spin along. All students will bring home their drop spindle and the yarn they make in class.

FEB. 17 –
SPRNGFIELD, Vt. – Tai Chi Vermont-certified teachers Sue Rubel, Karen Gautney, and Jo Bregnard will lead a variety of movement practices online and in person, on Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., at the Springfield Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 21 Fairground Road, for a fun, free Lunar New Year celebration, sponsored by Senior Solutions. All are welcome. For access to the livestream or recording, visit studio.jobregnard.com/buy/product/91748 to sign up.

FEB. 18 –
SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Senior Center, 139 Main Street, will hold a Valentine's Day party on Wednesday, Feb. 18, beginning at 1 p.m. Music will be provided by Terry Ryan and Rick Monarch. There will be a signup sheet out for refreshments. For more information, contact executive director Lori Johnson at 802-885-3933 or lorijohnsonssc@gmail.com.

FEB. 20 –
SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join online or in person at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street, at 10 a.m. every third Friday, for a 60-minute chair yoga practice. Learn accessible movements that you can do right from your seat, leaving you feeling mobile, grounded, and focused. This month's class will take inspiration from the fire horse, the Chinese zodiac animal for the Lunar New Year. Walk into the library and join live in person for free – there's no need to preregister. For online access, which includes all recordings, visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/88980 to choose from among a variety of registration options.

SUNDAYS –
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 –
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.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, holds chair yoga every Monday morning, at 9:30 a.m., with Brianna Renner. Free for members, small entry fee for nonmembers. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

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

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Senior Center, 139 Main Street, will hold drop-in corn hole games every Tuesday, at 1 p.m. For more information, contact executive director Lori Johnson at 802-885-3933 or lorijohnsonssc@gmail.com.

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

THURSDAYS –
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Genealogy enthusiast Wayne Blanchard will be at the Rockingham Library on Thursdays, from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. If you own a laptop, please bring it along. Both beginners and seasoned genealogists are welcome.

GRAFTON, Vt. – A free playgroup for children from newborns to age 5 will be held at Grafton Elementary School on Thursday mornings, from 9:30-10:30 a.m. Activities will include songs, games, and arts and crafts. Contact Heather with any questions at 802-843-4792.

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.

FRIDAYS –
SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join us online or in person at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street, at 10 a.m. every third Friday through September 2026, for a 60-minute chair yoga practice. You'll learn accessible movements that you can do right from your seat, leaving you feeling mobile, grounded, and focused. Walk into the library and join live in person for free; there is no need to preregister. For online access, which includes all recordings, visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/88980 to choose from among a variety of registration options.

LEGAL NOTICES

TOWN OF CHESTER
WARNING
NOTICE OF TOWN MEETING

The Legal Voters of the TOWN OF CHESTER are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Chester Town Hall, Second Floor in said Town of Chester on Monday, March 2, 2026, at 6:00 pm., to act on the following Articles. Voting on Article 1, 2, and 3 will be by Australian ballot on March 3, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Chester Town Hall Second Floor.

ARTICLE 1: To elect Town Officials for the ensuing year as provided by the Public Laws of Vermont. Voting by Australian Ballot.

ARTICLE 2: Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Chester in an amount not to exceed Four Hundred Thirty Thousand Dollars ($430,000), subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid, be issued for the purpose of financing the construction of upgrades to the existing sidewalks at an estimated cost of $1,800,000. These funds will provide the required 20% match for an awarded Bicycle & Pedestrian Grant. Voting by Australian Ballot.

ARTICLE 3: Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Chester in an amount not to exceed Three Hundred Thousand Dollars ($300,000), subject to reduction from the receipt of available state and federal grants-in-aid, be issued for the purpose of paving Flamstead Road, River Street, Library parking lot and patching Depot Street at an estimated cost of $300,000?

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town of Chester will vote to approve borrowing for the purchase of a police cruiser for the Police Department in an amount not to exceed $70,000. This equipment is replacing existing equipment at the end of useful life and is not an addition to the town inventory.

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town of Chester will vote to approve borrowing One Hundred Thousand Dollars ($100,000) to fund the town's grant match for Route 35 construction and the town's match on Thompson Road easement purchase and preliminary design.

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise $4,461,054.94 to be paid to the Chester Town Treasurer on September 15, 2026, to pay current expenses and any part of the Town's indebtedness.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the voters establish a 1% Local Options Tax on the sale of Rooms, Meals and Consumed Alcohol for a period of 10 years. Revenue from the Local Options Tax will be used to fund the Housing Reserve Fund which is used to support the production of housing and increase opportunities for families and individuals to access affordable homes in Chester.

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THIRTEEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SEVEN DOLLARS ($13,807) to help support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes and in community settings by the Visiting Nurse Association & Hospice of VT and NH, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 9: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND AND FORTY FOUR DOLLARS ($3,044) to help support outpatient, mental health and substance abuse services by the staff of Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, Inc, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 10: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND FORTY DOLLARS ($3,040) to Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to assist Chester in responding to the emergency needs of the community and providing all available and applicable services to families and individuals in need, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 11: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of NINE HUNDRED DOLLARS ($900) to the Women's Freedom Center for general budget support to provide services to women and their children who are experiencing emotional, physical and/or sexual abuse and are residents of the Town, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 12: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of $2,400 to Senior Solutions, the nonprofit Area Agency on Aging serving southeastern Vermont, to serve older Vermonters and younger disabled Vermonters with nutrition and wellness programs, application assistance for state and federal benefit programs, Medicare enrollment guidance, long term care Medicaid program care coordination, Volunteer Visitor programs, and more, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 13: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of $2,250 (two thousand two hundred fifty dollars) for the support of the MOOver Rockingham to provide transit services to the residents of the Town of Chester, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 14: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of $800 (eight hundred dollars) to support Windsor County Mentors, for youth mentoring services provided to children in Windsor County, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 15: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of $400 (four hundred dollars) to Green Mountain RSVP & Volunteer Center of Windsor County to develop opportunities for people age 55 and older to positively impact the quality of life in the community of Chester through volunteer service, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 16: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED DOLLARS ($1,800.00) toward the support of the Community Cares Network of Chester and Andover, Inc. a non-profit organization which provides services to senior citizens, helping them to stay in their homes longer safely, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 17: Shall the Town of Chester appropriate the sum of $4,000 (four thousand dollars) to Meals on Wheels of Greater Springfield, Inc. for continued support and services to the citizens of the Town of Chester in accordance with 24 V.S.A. § 2691?

ARTICLE 18: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of FIVE THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED SEVENTY DOLLARS ($5,570) to Neighborhood Connections, Inc. and Mountain Town Connector to cover the cost of providing services in Chester in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691?

ARTICLE 19: Shall the town appropriate the sum of $5,000 to the Black River Area Community Coalition for continuing to work within the Chester community preventing youth substance/alcohol misuse in accordance with 24 V.S.A. 2691?

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town of Chester will appropriate the sum of THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS ($3,000) to assist in the services of the Chester-Andover Family Center for individuals and families in need, in accordance with 24 V.S.A. §2691.

Dated at Chester, Vermont on this 21st day of January 2026.

/s/Lee Gustafson, Chairman
/s/ Arne Jonynas
/s/ Tim Roper
/s/ Peter Hudkins
/s/ Arianna Knapp

LEGAL NOTICES

classifieds

AARP free tax preparation

REGION – Beginning Feb. 3 and continuing through April 13, the AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program provides free individual tax assistance and preparation for low- to moderate-income taxpayers, especially those 50 years old and older; however, all ages are welcome.

Appointments are required at all sites; the following information is for your convenience in contacting the host sites. When making your appointment, you will be given information on what types of documents you need to bring with you. Depending on the nature of your tax return, it may be determined to be out-of-scope for this program. We make every effort to make this determination as early as possible in this process.

Locations and times at which tax preparation is provided are as follows.

White River Junction, Vt. – St. Paul's Episcopal Church, 749 Hartford Ave, Thursdays and Fridays. Call 866-444-4211 (NH 211) for appointments. Pick up intake packets at Bugbee Senior Center, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Woodstock, Vt. – Thompson Senior Center, 99 Senior Lane, Mondays, 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Call 802-457-3277, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Ascutney, Vt. – Proctor Library, 5181 U.S. Route 5, Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Call 802-875-2418 and leave a message.

Londonderry, Vt. – Second Congregational Church, 2051 North Main Street, Mondays, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Call Neighborhood Connections at 802-824-4343, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Springfield, Vt. – Springfield Senior Center, 139 Main Street, Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. Appointments start at 9 a.m. Call 802-885-3933, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m., or call 802-345-5415 any time and leave a message.

Chester, Vt. – Chester Town Hall, 556 Elm Street, Wednesdays, starting at 9 a.m. Call 802-875-2418 and leave a message.

Claremont, N.H. – Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, Fridays, 9 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Call 802-345-5415 and leave a message.

We look forward to assisting you during the upcoming tax season.

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.

CLEAN OUTS + MORE

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.

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FOR RENT

PLYMOUTH, Vt. – Active woman in her 70s with an extra bedroom would like to share her home on Ludlow/Plymouth border. $400/month plus some help organizing. 802-863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO.

TRIP

Atlantic City Bus Trip, April 19-21, 2026. For more information, Call Simone at 802-463-3573 or 802-463-3992. Leave message if no answer.

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TOWN OF ROCKINGHAM
Notice of Annual Report Availability

Town reports will be available starting February 13, 2026. They will be placed at Lisai's Market, Town Hall, and the Library in Bellows Falls, and at the Saxtons River Market in Saxtons River. Town Meeting will be held in the Opera House in Bellows Falls February 28, 2026, starting at 2:00 PM.

TOWN OF GRAFTON
INVITATION TO BID – FY2027 SAND BID

The Town of Grafton, Vermont is accepting bids for approximately 2,000 yards of 9/16 sand, to be delivered to the Town Garage at 220 Bell Road by November 1, 2026. Please contact the Town Administrator at townadmin@graftonvt.org to receive the bid instructions and specification sheet. Returned sealed bids must be received by the Town Administrator by 3:00 P.M. on Monday, March 2, 2026. The Town of Grafton reserves the right to accept or reject any and all bids and has the right to accept any other than the lowest bid if determined to be in the best interest of the town.

Southern Windsor/Windham Counties
Solid Waste Management District
State Approves District Plan for 2026 – 2031

The State of Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation recently approved the Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management's Solid Waste Management Plan (SWIP) for 2026 – 2031. The SWIP is a mandatory, five-year regional plan that guides how solid waste districts meet State requirements for waste reduction, recycling, and food scrap diversion. The plan aligns with the State's broader Materials Management Plan (MMP) and Act 148 (Universal Recycling Law). The SWIP details local strategies for managing waste streams (recyclables, food scraps hazardous waste, etc.), increasing diversion through education, expanding composting, and managing events. The District's approved SWIP may be read on its website, www.vtsolidwastedistrict.org.

Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management District is a union municipal district dedicated to providing solid waste management authority, services, and planning to its fourteen-member towns in Vermont. The District was chartered in 1982.

For more information, contact: Mary T. O'Brien, Recycling Coordinator at mobrien@marcvt.org.

Town and Village of Ludlow
Public Hearing #1 Notice
Proposed Plan of Merger of the Town and Village of Ludlow, Vermont
Thursday February 12th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (Town of Ludlow)
Tuesday February 17th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (Village of Ludlow)
Hybrid Meetings – Heald Auditorium/Zoom

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §1484, notice is hereby given of a public hearing by the Town of Ludlow's Board of Selectman and Village Trustees to hear comments regarding a proposed plan of merger of the Town and Village of Ludlow, Vermont. Approval of the plan will result in charter changes in both the Town and Village.

The public hearings will take place on Thursday, February 12th for the Town of Ludlow and Tuesday, February 17th for the Village of Ludlow. Meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. You may attend the Public Hearings in-person at the following location/address:

Ludlow Town Hall
37 Depot Street
Ludlow, VT 05149

Or virtually on Zoom using the following links or Meeting IDs/Passcode:
Select Board Public Hearing- Proposed Merger Plan
Meeting ID# 982 7571 0032 **Passcode**: 327480

Village Trustees Public Hearing - Proposed Merger Plan
Meeting ID# 949 1802 1794 **Passcode**: 533752

Purpose of the Hearings: The purpose of each hearing is to take public comments regarding the proposed Plan of Merger of the Town and Village of Ludlow. Written comments may also be submitted, via email, to Ludlow's Town/Village Manager, Penny K. Wu. Her email address is: pwu@ludlow.vt.us

Summary of the Plan of Merger for the Town and Village of Ludlow and Charter Changes: The Plan of Merger ("Plan") proposes that the Village of Ludlow merge into the Town of Ludlow, with the Town of Ludlow as the sole surviving municipal corporation. It establishes the name of the Town (Ludlow) and declares that all the former Village property, including that associated with the Electric Light Department and Sewer Plant, are transferred to the Town. The Town will assume all the former Village's debts and will perform all the former Village's duties and obligations owed to third parties. The Plan repeals the charters of both the Town and the Village and replaces them with the substance of the Plan as the charter for the Town. The Plan names the officers of the Town and their manner of election or appointment, the form of governance, the powers of the Selectboard, the establishment and organization of the Water and Sewer Board, the governance and operation of the Electric Department and authority of its Board, transitional provisions, and other matters related to the proposed merger and legal operation of the Town thereafter.

Materials Available: The proposed plan of merger and resulting charter changes, and supporting documentation are available on our online website, https://www.ludlow.vt.us An official copy of the plan of merger and charter changes is on file for public inspection in the Town Clerk's office in the Ludlow Town Hall located at 37 Depot Street, Ludlow, VT 05149. Copies thereof will be made available to members of the public upon request.

Town and Village of Ludlow
Public Hearing #2 Notice
Proposed Plan of Merger of the Town and Village of Ludlow, Vermont
Thursday February 26th, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (Town of Ludlow)
Tuesday March 3rd, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. (Village of Ludlow)
Hybrid Meetings – Heald Auditorium/Zoom (February 26th, 2026)
Howard Barton Jr. Conference Room (March 3rd, 2026)

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §1484, notice is hereby given of a public hearing by the Town of Ludlow's Board of Selectman and Village Trustees to hear comments regarding a proposed plan of merger of the Town and Village of Ludlow, Vermont. Approval of the plan will result in charter changes in both the Town and Village.

The public hearings will take place on Thursday, February 26th for the Town of Ludlow and Tuesday, March 3rd for the Village of Ludlow. Meetings will begin at 6:00 p.m. You may attend the Public Hearings in-person at the following location/address:

Ludlow Town Hall
37 Depot Street
Ludlow, VT 05149

Or virtually on Zoom using the following links or Meeting IDs/Passcode:
Select Board Public Hearing #2 - Proposed Merger Plan
Meeting ID# 996 3488 0881 **Passcode:** 167183

Village Trustees Public Hearing #2 - Proposed Merger Plan
Meeting ID# 995 7692 3564 **Passcode:** 538920

Purpose of the Hearings: The purpose of each hearing is to take public comments regarding the proposed Plan of Merger of the Town and Village of Ludlow. Written comments may also be submitted, via email, to Ludlow's Town/Village Manager, Penny K. Wu. Her email address is: pwu@ludlow.vt.us

Summary of the Plan of Merger for the Town and Village of Ludlow and Charter Changes: The Plan of Merger ("Plan") proposes that the Village of Ludlow merge into the Town of Ludlow, with the Town of Ludlow as the sole surviving municipal corporation. It establishes the name of the Town (Ludlow) and declares that all the former Village property, including that associated with the Electric Light Department and Sewer Plant, are transferred to the Town. The Town will assume all the former Village's debts and will perform all the former Village's duties and obligations owed to third parties. The Plan repeals the charters of both the Town and the Village and replaces them with the substance of the Plan as the charter for the Town. The Plan names the officers of the Town and their manner of election or appointment, the form of governance, the powers of the Selectboard, the establishment and organization of the Water and Sewer Board, the governance and operation of the Electric Department and authority of its Board, transitional provisions, and other matters related to the proposed merger and legal operation of the Town thereafter.

Materials Available: The proposed plan of merger and resulting charter changes, and supporting documentation are available on our online website, https://www.ludlow.vt.us An official copy of the plan of merger and charter changes is on file for public inspection in the Town Clerk's office in the Ludlow Town Hall located at 37 Depot Street, Ludlow, VT 05149. Copies thereof will be made available to members of the public upon request.

opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Subject to space. May be edited for clarity, grammatical errors, and libelous statements. Must be kept under 400 words. Must include name and town for publication. Viewpoints do not necessarily reflect the views of The Vermont Journal.

Hi to all in Ludlow, Mount Holly, and Shrewsbury,

This is Kevin Winter, your Republican representative to the Vermont House. I have been in Montpelier for several weeks now, working diligently, supporting the efforts of Gov. Phil Scott, and working to fulfill the promises I made to our community of no more taxes, no to all unnecessary spending, no more band-aids, and yes to fixing the root-cause issues. Thanks to Republican support, we have successfully put an end to the Clean Heat Standard for now, which threatened huge increases on our heating bills in Vermont, and more is on the way! Feel free to email me with any questions or comments on issues that you feel are important this legislative session.

Respectfully,
Rep. Kevin Winter
Rutland-Windsor District
kwinter@leg.state.vt.us

Dear Editor,

We, of Quaker City Unity Friends Meeting, prayerfully create and endorse statements of faith, called "minutes." These clarify our corporate beliefs according to divine guidance. The Religious Society of Friends, aka Quakers, stand in the gap for those who experience injustice in local, regional, national, and international communities, as a witness to our faith. This has been our practice since our founding in the mid-1600s. We grieve for the physical, emotional, and moral injury and trauma of the people of the Palestinian and Israeli territories. Violence begets violence. This is our minute about the unjust crisis continuing today that is funded by the U.S. government with taxpayers' dollars.

"Palestine Minute," approved Sept. 2025: As members of the Religious Society of Friends, we recognize that there is that of God in each person. We revere the sanctity of life. We, of Quaker City Unity Friends Meeting, are deeply disturbed by the genocide occurring in Palestine, and are moved by the Spirit to speak out clearly about the genocide the Israeli government is committing against the Palestinian people with the full complicity of the United States government. We urge the United States government to stop funding the Israeli military's aggression in Gaza, and demand that the government of Israel lift the blockade on humanitarian aid for Palestinians. We also request that the U.S. representative to the United Nations support holding the Israeli government accountable for their violations of international law. To make this work, the United States government would have to agree to follow and be accountable to international law, too. We support the many peacemaking groups of the Israeli people and Palestinian people, who continue to work for a permanent ceasefire and a just peace.

Sincerely,
June Goodband
Nelia Sargent
Larry Marcotte
Jim Contois
Jenny Wright, co-clerk
Reb MacKenzie, co-clerk

To the People of Minnesota,

Your presence on the streets of Minneapolis, and the tragic losses you have suffered, bring to the minds of us New Englanders the patriots of Lexington and Concord.

Millions of others who believe in your struggle are standing strong with you, but you, amazing people of Minneapolis, are at the center of the struggle right now.

Each of us will be next, unless as a people we stand with you and declare, as Thomas Paine did 250 years ago, that it is "in unity…that our great strength lies." The Declaration of Independence declared that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive…it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it."

The reign of terror being inflicted upon you is unconscionable, and must be stopped. Let us all join together to form a more perfect union for our times, where compassion, community, courage, and dignity are guiding principles, rather than arrogance, corruption, and disregard for human rights.

In friendship and solidarity,
Members of Indivisible Greater Falls and Win-Win Third Act
Local groups in Windham and Windsor counties

Dear Editor,

The Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) murders we witnessed in Minneapolis over the last two weeks are only the tip of the ICEberg! We haven't heard much of some of the others, because those are people of color and the press doesn't cover that.

ICE is on track to have 100 deaths if they keep up the pace they have this year.

People say, "How can you call them 'Nazis' or 'Gestapo?'" Simply look at the videos; they attack innocent bystanders, American citizens, people driving down the street.

Their behavior has been despicable, unlawful, unconstitutional, and inhumane.

Professional law enforcement doesn't behave the way ICE has behaved.

I doubt that J.D. Vance would suggest that his wife, a woman of color, drive down to Main Street in Minneapolis with their children in the car.

The federal paramilitary army invading Minneapolis needs to be withdrawn, and all enforcement by ICE needs to stop until it can be truly addressed against people who have committed crimes.

This is not the America we ever imagined, nor should we tolerate.

Sincerely,
Tony Petrillo
Springfield, Vt.

POLITICAL LETTERS Due to the volume of political letters we receive during elections, and the increased cost of adding pages to the paper to print them all, political letters are charged at the rate of $75 for 200 words, and $0.50 per word thereafter. Political letters include endorsing, electioneering, or campaigning for, or against, a specific candidate or party.

LEGAL NOTICES

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Great River Hydro, LLC **Project No. 1904-078**
Project No. 1855-050
Project No. 1892-030

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE VERNON, BELLOWS FALLS, AND WILDER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECTS

(January 30, 2026)

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (Commission) regulations, 18 C.F.R. Part 380, the Office of Energy Projects has reviewed the applications for relicense for the Vernon Hydroelectric Project (Vernon Project) (FERC No. 1904), Bellows Falls Hydroelectric Project (Bellows Falls Project) (FERC No. 1855), and Wilder Hydroelectric Project (Wilder Project) (FERC No. 1892) and has prepared a final environmental impact statement (EIS) for the projects. The projects are located on the Connecticut River in Windsor, Windham, and Orange counties, Vermont, and Sullivan, Cheshire, and Grafton counties, New Hampshire.

The final EIS contains staff's analysis of the applicants' proposals and the alternatives for relicensing the Vernon, Bellows Falls, and Wilder projects. The final EIS documents the views of governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, affected Native-American tribes, the public, the license applicant, and Commission staff.

The Commission provides all interested persons with an opportunity to view and/or print the final EIS via the Internet through the Commission's Home Page (http://www.ferc.gov/), using the "eLibrary" link. Enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits in the docket number field, to access the document. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, or toll-free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, (202) 502-8659.

You may also register online at https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCOnline.aspx to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

For public inquiries and assistance with making filings such as interventions, comments, or requests for rehearing, contact the Office of Public Participation at (202) 502-6595 or OPP@ferc.gov.

For further information, contact Steve Kartalia at (202) 502-6131, or stephen.kartalia@ferc.gov.

(Authority: 18 CFR 2.1)

Debbie-Anne A. Reese,
Secretary.

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(12/9/26 - 52)

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Watercolor Skills with Kim Eng Yeo 3/21 & 28 10-12
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(03/18/26 - 13)

PROS TO KNOW real estate

The lighter side of the world of real estate

REGION – Real estate is often portrayed as all power suits, marble countertops, and serious negotiations conducted in hushed tones. But anyone who has spent more than five minutes in the industry knows the truth: real estate is many times accidentally hilarious. From listing descriptions that stretch the limits of imagination, to home tours that feel like improv comedy, the funny parts of real estate are everywhere – you just have to know where to look.

The creative writing Olympics

Real estate listings deserve their own literary award category. Agents are masters of euphemism, turning even the most questionable features into "charming opportunities."

For example, "cozy" means you can touch both walls without extending your arms; "delicious" to describe anything other than food is wrong; "needs TLC" means bring a contractor, a priest, and emotional support; "original condition" means nothing has been updated since the Carter administration.

And then there are the listings that go full poetic chaos: "sun-drenched" rooms that never see direct sunlight, or "open concept" homes where someone just removed a door in 1994 and called it a day.

Photos that raise more questions than answers

Listing photos are another gold mine. There's the classic wide-angle lens that turns a half bath into what appears to be a ballroom. Then there are the mystery items – a random mattress in the kitchen, a single chair facing the wall, or a refrigerator inexplicably located on the back porch.

Let's not forget pets. Cats lounging proudly on countertops. Dogs photobombing every room like they pay the mortgage. A pot-belly pig that lives in the basement or chickens free ranging the entire first floor (we are in Vermont, after all).

Bonus points for the agent who didn't notice themselves reflected in a mirror mid-photo, crouched like a gremlin.

Open houses

Open houses are where real estate becomes performance art. You'll meet the neighbor who "just wants to see what it sold for last time"; the couple loudly critiquing the house as if the walls can't hear them; and the person who uses the open house as a bathroom break during their walk or ski.

The emotional roller coaster

Real estate is dramatic. Deals fall apart over $500. Appraisals ruin weekends. Inspections uncover things no one emotionally prepared for ("Wait…the house is missing what?").

Everyone is calm until they're suddenly not. We are people, and sometimes spiral over light fixtures, drapes, and rose bushes.

Why we love it anyway

Despite the chaos, real estate's humor is part of its charm. It's a people business, and people are wonderfully unique. No two real estate transactions are alike. We are human; we have questions, concerns, phobias, anxiety, fear of heights (and remember after climbing a ladder to a second-story home at a construction site). Buyers, sellers, people should ask questions, and lots of them. As professionals, we don't always have the answers at our fingertips, but we know where to get them, and we don't stop until we do. We are a trusted source for our customers, clients, and community for all things real estate.

At the end of the day, real estate is about homes, dreams, stress, money, and emotion all colliding at once. Of course it's funny. Sometimes you laugh so you don't cry. Sometimes you laugh because someone staged a bathroom with three identical soap dispensers and six ferns. Finding humor in the simple, ordinary stuff in our everyday real estate transactions is part of what keeps us on our toes. We are lucky enough to meet and help people with sometimes scary big decisions, and many times lighthearted fun ones. We realtors are up for it all.

Written and submitted by Suzanne Garvey, owner/broker at Mary W. Davis Realtor & Associates.

Building home equity, generational wealth

REGION – For many families, a home represents stability today and opportunity for the future. Beyond having a place to live, homeownership can help you build equity over time, which is one of the most common ways people grow long-term generational wealth.

What's the difference between renting and buying? When you rent, your monthly payment covers housing for now. When you own, those payments contribute toward something you can build on. Equity grows as you pay down your loan, and as your home value changes, creating flexibility you can use later for other goals.

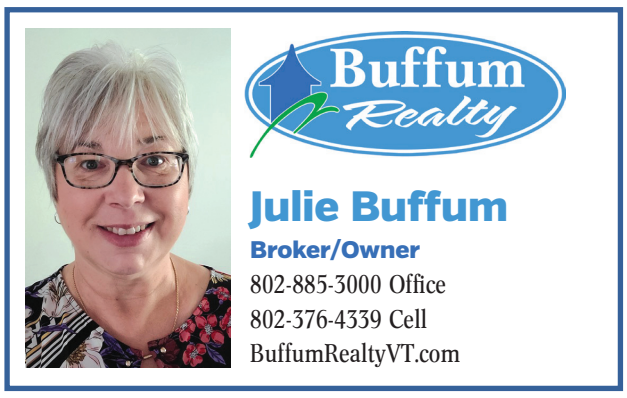
Buying a home can provide more than just square footage. It can mean monthly payments that work toward ownership rather than a temporary expense; the ability to personalize your space and put down roots; and equity that can support future plans, whether that's moving up, reinvesting, or helping the next generation.

For many buyers, the biggest question isn't whether homeownership is worthwhile, but how it fits their specific situation. Understanding price ranges, monthly payment scenarios, and available options is often what turns uncertainty into clarity.

Homeownership looks different for everyone. That's why having clear information matters. I can help you understand what buying could look like for you, what options may be available, and what a realistic next step might be.

If you're weighing whether buying makes sense, or simply want a clearer picture of your options, that conversation can help you move forward with confidence and shape what comes next.

Submitted by Victoria Blodgett, Prime Lending, Ludlow, Vt.



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Cross-country skiing event

W. TOWNSHEND, Vt. – All this beautiful snow has made for some excellent cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Weather and snow permitting, the West River Community Project is holding a cross-country ski tour, in conjunction with Tasty Tuesday, on Feb. 17. Join Sally Newton for a ski along the West River Trail in West Townshend. We will meet at the trailhead, at 4 p.m., ski for an hour or so, and then congregate at the West Townshend Country Store for food and music. The West River Trail has very gentle terrain, so all levels of skill on skis are welcome. If you are a total beginner, reach out to Newton for a possible lesson beforehand. There is a limited amount of equipment available to borrow. Kids are encouraged to attend.

Contact Newton at sally.newton123@gmail.com or 802-874-7141 with any questions, and to RSVP for this fun community event.

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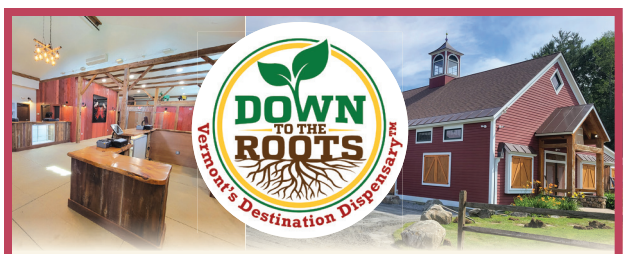

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Paintings by Finn Campman

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts is proud to announce the opening of "Home Land," a solo exhibition of paintings by Putney-based artist Finn Campman. The opening reception will be held on Sunday, Feb. 15, from 3-5 p.m., at the Next Stage Gallery, 15 Kimball Hill in Putney, Vt.

In "Home Land," Campman explores the intimate relationship between place, memory, and artistic practice. "My process is about the act of reaching out to make sure I know where I am – to check my coordinates, to mark a signpost for my memories – as if to say, 'This is where I am now,'" he explains. His paintings serve as a tether to land, time, and mood, affirming a profound connection to the environment around him. Through these works, Campman invites viewers to witness the landscape as both a personal and universal homeland.

Painting by Finn Campman, part of "Home Land," on view at Next Stage Gallery.
PHOTO PROVIDED

Campman's multifaceted career spans visual art, theater, music, and education. A Putney School alumnus, he studied printmaking, poetry, and literature at Sarah Lawrence College. Campman joined Sandglass Theater in 1991, and later founded Company of Strangers, whose production "Moth and Moon" earned a UNIMA Citation of Excellence in 1999. He has toured internationally, contributed video work for the Brattleboro Music Center, presented at three Puppetry in the Green Mountains festivals, and collaborated with Bodel Dance Arts on "Forecasts & Findings." Currently, he focuses on painting, electronic music with his band The Brothers Chorizo, and teaching English and art at Hilltop Montessori School, where he has taught for 25 years.

"Home Land" will remain on exhibit through May 10. The Next Stage Gallery is open during events, by appointment with the artist, or by contacting Next Stage at info@nextstagearts.org or 802-387-0102.

For additional information and to RSVP for the opening reception, visit www.nextstagearts.org.

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Bradley Jackson's "Celebrate the Spirit of Nature"

A painting by Bradley Jackson on display at the VAULT.
PHOTO PROVIDED

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Galley at the VAULT is proud to present "Celebrate the Spirit of Nature," a show of beautiful paintings by Bradley Jackson, on display from Feb. 11 – March 25. There will be a reception on Saturday, Feb. 21, from 12-1:30 p.m.

The radiant beauty of the natural world comes to life through the acrylic paintings of acclaimed wildlife artist Jackson. Known for his bright, airy compositions and masterful attention to detail, Jackson's work captures the serenity of nature scenes and the delicate presence of wildlife with striking realism.

Jackson is widely recognized for his distinctive technique and photorealistic style. He begins each piece with a softly blended background, with his subjects then added using full-strength acrylic paint, rendering them in crisp, vivid detail. The result is a compelling contrast between impressionistic surroundings and highly realistic wildlife. He enjoys creating an impressionistic background with a very detailed and realistic subject.

Jackson's paintings celebrate the wonder of wildlife and the natural world, earning him a following across the United States. His paintings are held in numerous private collections. Jackson's art is also widely licensed and published, with partnerships including Bradford Exchange, Danbury Mint, and several nonprofit wildlife organizations. His artwork is published by MBJ Fine Arts.

Original paintings and fine art prints are also available through his website, www.bradleyjackson.com.

Gallery at the VAULT is located at 68 Main Street in Springfield, and is open Wednesday-Saturday, 11 a.m. – 5 p.m. For more information, call 802-885-7111, email galleryvault@vermontel.net, or visit Facebook, Instagram, or www.galleryvault.org. Gallery at the VAULT is ADA accessible.

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Info – 802-228-3238

chester winter carnival

Horse-drawn sleigh rides from Iron Kettle Farm.

PHOTO PROVIDED

SATURDAY, FEB. 14, 2026

CHESTER, Vt. – The 2026 Chester Winter Carnival will be held on Saturday, Feb. 14, beginning at 10 a.m., featuring fun activities for the whole family. A full schedule of activities is listed below.

10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
Kids snowmobile rides from the Chester Snowmobile Club, at Buttonwood Farms, across from the Pinnacle.

10 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Horse-drawn sleigh rides from Iron Kettle Farm, of Walpole N.H., at Buttonwood Farm, across from the Pinnacle.

12 p.m.
Sledding and ice skating at the Pinnacle.

12-2 p.m.
S'mores table at the fire pit by the ice rink at the Pinnacle, as well as a chance to win a gift card to the Southern Pie Cafe by guessing the amount of candy.

5 p.m.
Fire and snowshoe hike at Brookside, guided by the Chester Conservation Committee. Snowshoes if conditions are favorable, or microspikes/Yaktrax required if limited snow. A headlamp or flashlight is also required. Meet behind the Chester Academy building, at 5pm.

Ice skating and sledding at the Pinnacle.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Kids snowmobile rides with Chester Snowmobile Club.

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