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THE MESSAGE OF THE WEEK

MARCH 04, 2026 | WWW.VERMONTJOURNAL.COM

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Walpole and Langdon to vote on leaving Fall Mountain Regional School District

BY PAULA BENSON

The Message

WALPOLE, N.H. – School districts across New Hampshire have been scrambling to find creative ways to continue funding public education and programs, with some seeking to acquire more local control of their school boards. On March 10, voters in the five towns that make up the Fall Mountain Regional School District (FMRSD) aka SAU60 will be given an opportunity to voice their opinions on a proposed fix, or at least what some say is a step in the right direction.

The towns of Walpole and Langdon are asking voters to consider their withdrawal from FMRSD, mainly to reduce costs, and to gain complete control over their school administrations. The current effort now on the ballot began in March 2024, when voters of the Town of Walpole overwhelmingly approved an informal study to investigate the pros and cons of withdrawal from FMRSD and the creation of the town's own school district.

The Town of Walpole has about 29% of the student body of SAU60, its school administrative unit, but is responsible for 42% of the tax base due to the mandated state apportionment formula. For every \$1 mil-

lion included in the SAU60 budget, Walpole would be assessed about \$65,000 more annually, without receiving any additional benefits.

In March 2025, the Town of Langdon joined Walpole in conducting feasibility studies, and in Dec. 2025, the State Board of Education authorized the withdrawal plans to be presented to the voters.

In preparation for the March vote, the school board held public forums, one on Jan. 27, and another on Feb. 28. The board also put out a survey that reportedly received more than 200 responses.

At the Jan. 27 forum, held at the Walpole Town Hall in the first-floor conference room, school board member Kevin Keith was in charge of the presentation.

Alissa Bascom, school board chair, opened the meeting and introduced Keith, who she thanked for his hard work putting the presentation together. Bascom asked that voters take the question seriously. "Look at the information presented and determine whether it is feasible and suitable for yourself, your family, and your community, and then mark your vote. Nobody here is trying to tell you how to vote."

Keith reviewed the many potential scenarios should

the withdrawal pass with the required number of votes. The budget estimates included in Keith's presentation were true estimations, made "based on no structural changes, because the number of options we had was unlimited," he stressed.

If the voters approve the withdrawal, new school boards and a new administration will need to be established. Most likely additional staff will be required as well.

Once the new district(s) are formed, a special meeting to elect school board members would be held, with Langdon School District voting in three board members, and Walpole School District voting in five board members. Keith told the meeting that, if the vote passes, the formation of any new district will begin immediately.

"From about March 2026 to June 30, 2027, they will have to get everything in order, because they will take over their new district and start educating their children on July 1, 2027."

Keith mentioned one question received via the survey from many parents, especially in the Walpole area, regarding whether students would still have the option to attend Fall Mountain Regional High School should the town withdraw from the district. "The an-

swer is maybe," Keith responded, explaining that they cannot come to a definitive answer until the towns form school boards to negotiate that agreement. Keith said the high school was open to negotiations.

Each district would be tasked with developing their own budget, and obtaining their own services to handle transportation, facilities maintenance, food services, legal services, and information technology management.

After Walpole resident Craig Vickers questioned the validity of the numbers, Keith admitted, "The feasibility and suitability process is flawed."

"What I would have done," said Keith, "is...create [an interim] school board immediately upon requesting the withdrawal...which would have the ability to negotiate all of those real things and come up with real numbers," Keith stated. He acknowledged that voters want more specific numbers, but those numbers cannot



Walpole Town Hall.

PHOTO BY PAULA BENSON

be estimated currently.

Vickers pointed out that the budget options presented for Walpole's withdrawal omit "millions of dollars in aid. I think the public should be aware that there are millions of dollars in aid that will reduce what is in that withdrawal report."

Wes Vickers, of Walpole, took the mic to "remind everyone that on [March] 10th, the only thing that you're voting on is whether or not we have independent school boards in Walpole and Langdon."

Keith concluded the meeting by offering his email, kkeith@sau60.org, and inviting anyone with further questions to please get in touch before the March 10 voting day.

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DEADLINES

The deadline for all content is Thursday at 4 p.m. for the following week's publication.

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calendar@vermontjournal.com

EMAIL ADS AND CLASSIFIEDS
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EMAIL PRESS RELEASES
editor@vermontjournal.com

7 Balls Brewing opens in Bellows Falls

BY JOE MILLIKEN

The Vermont Journal

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Bellows Falls welcomes a new business to The Square, as 7 Balls Brewing is now open for business at 94 Rockingham Street, also formerly known as the historic Real Scoop building. The owners – Chris Sherwin, Paul Lawrence, and Steve Adams – have been friends since middle school, all went to high school together, and have been perfecting their home brew recipes for nearly a decade.

"I started home brewing in the late '90s when my wife and I lived in California," Sherwin said in a recent interview. "We brewed mostly for ourselves to start, all of us being connoisseurs of craft brew, especially here in New England."

"We have all driven far and

wide for special can releases and different breweries to visit. Yes, we were even part of the Heady Topper/Sip of Sunshine when you had to drive north of Barre and Montpelier on select days just to find it."

However, at this stage in their working lives, the trio wasn't necessarily looking to start a new business, but they did like the idea of trying to give back to their local community and be a part of the special revival that has taken place throughout the local business district.

"After home brewing for six or seven years and honing our skills, we started sharing our beer recipes with local townsfolk and friends, and before long, we were receiving rave reviews and people telling us we needed to make our beer more available commercially."

The trio actually started



7 Balls Brewing.

PHOTO PROVIDED

looking for a retail space a couple years ago, and were originally hoping to open at 33 Bridge Street in order to utilize the hydro power, but that plan didn't work out.

"We looked at a few other locations in town as well, [the train station, RJ's building] but when Steve and I got messages about the Scoop Shop building being

renovated, we started conversations about that space."

Utilizing the Scoop Shop building was like coming full circle in a way, as Chris' wife Cheryl worked there in high school, and Steve was often a patron there as well. The new owners even use the old Scoop Shop's menu board to display the current tap list.

7 Balls Brewing will fea-

ture eight taps for now, and will have a selection of traditional styles on tap at all times, including lagers, ales, an IPA, and a stout. They will also offer their very popular hard cider recipe, as well as growlers to go.

"We have our vinous [fruit based] license in addition to our malt license, specifically because we have been home brewing cider for several years," Sherwin added. "Additionally, we offer up a gluten-free option as well, and we'll have a tap solely dedicated to that. We are also looking to eventually offer additional prepackaged options from other vendors, such as ciders, seltzers, and mixed drinks."

7 Balls' current hours are Friday and Saturday, from 3-7 p.m.; and Sunday, from 12-7 p.m. For more information, visit www.7ballsbrewing.com.

CCCD local work group meeting

REGION – The Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD), Sullivan County Conservation District, and USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) will host the 2026 local work group meeting on Monday, March 16, from 5-6:30 p.m., at the County Farm Red Barn, 193 River Road, Westmoreland, N.H.

Local work group meetings are a yearly opportu-

nity to work with the Conservation District to offer USDA NRCS feedback on their Environmental Quality Incentives Program.

The meeting helps determine conservation priorities, which have an impact on USDA NRCS funding decisions. Your voice matters; share your feedback and conservation priorities, and help identify local funding priorities for Cheshire and Sullivan

counties.

The meeting agenda is as follows: (1) welcome and introductions, overview of districts and NRCS, and a brief sharing of the history of our relationship as parties; (2) sharing that the intention of the meeting is to gather conservation priorities for NRCS funding pools/priorities, and to shape conservation district programs/workshop offerings; (3) sticker activ-

ity – participants will be given stickers and asked to mark conservation priorities on signage in the room; (4) depending on attendee numbers, we will have an open discussion on priorities, and why folks chose their priorities, in one large circle, or have two separate circles for the counties; (5) participants will then be invited to sit with their district staff for one-on-one time: this time will be

about a half hour, and each district may choose how to spend this time; and (6) conclusion and thank-you.

Registration is required at www.cheshireconservation.org/event-details/2026-local-work-group-meeting-coffee-and-conservation.

For additional information, questions, or for assistance in registration, email info@cheshireconservation.org, or call 603-904-3011.

Community Closet winter bag sale

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The Community Closet Thrift Store, located in the basement of Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church Street in Bellows Falls, is having a bag sale for the month of March. You buy the bag for a low fee, and then fill it up. We have gently used, clean clothing for both cold and warm weather. We have most sizes in women's apparel, including jeans, tops, dresses, shoes, and more. For men, we have suits, sport coats,

tops, and pants. There is also some children's clothing, including snow suits. All of the proceeds from the Community Closet go back into the community at year's end. This past December, \$3,750 in \$50 gift cards from Lisa's Market were passed out by the Rockingham School District to families in need prior to the Christmas school break. Please come in and shop to help our parish carry on this outreach project. We accept donations of

clean, gently used adult and children's clothing during business hours. The thrift store is open on Wednesday and Saturday, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Presently we have enough extra-large sizes in men's and women's clothing. The Community Closet thrift store is located at 20 Church Street in Bellows Falls. It can be accessed via the driveway/parking lot around the corner from the church, at 9 School Street.

Bellows Falls Woman's Club February meeting recap

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Members of the Bellows Falls Woman's Club will meet on March 10, beginning at 1:30 p.m., at the United Church, 8 School Street in Bellows Falls. The program will be a review of essays on the topic "A Woman I Admire," written by students at the Walpole Middle School. March 8 is designated as International Women's Day.

At the Feb. 10 club meeting, Marc Cote, owner of and pharmacist at Fall Mountain Pharmacy, spoke on pharmaceuticals, vaccines, and supplements. Members brought cookies they donated for the club's annual Valentine's Day cookie distribution to area service providers, elder care facilities, and homebound residents as a thank-you gesture for the many services provided to the communities.

The club meets monthly, September through May. The local club is a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs, an international women's organization dedicated to community improvement through volunteer service. For more information, contact Membership Chairman Sally McGaffigan at 603-445-2527.

Recycling presentation at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – On Thursday, March 26, at 1 p.m., join Andy from Southern Windsor/Windham Counties Solid Waste Management for his presentation "Recycle Right: What Goes In, What Stays Out." Participants will learn what items can be recycled, which ones should not go in the recycling bin, and why recycling the right way is important. Using clear examples and pictures, this program will help people avoid common recycling

mistakes, and make better choices at home and in their community.

To sign up for a reminder, visit www.springfield-townlibrary.org/calendar.



Workers sort recyclable materials at a processing plant. PHOTO PROVIDED

Still Kickin' Line Dancing brings community together

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – What started as a few friends who loved to dance has grown into a welcoming, energetic community known as Still Kickin' Line Dancing.

The group formed with a simple idea: create a space where anyone – especially beginners – could feel comfortable learning to line dance. No partner needed. No fancy boots required. Just a willingness to step onto the floor and give it a try.

"We wanted something local, friendly, and unintimidating," Piletz said. "Somewhere people could move, laugh, and feel like they belong."

That vision has taken hold. Regular attendance now includes a strong group of local dancers

who come not just for the exercise, but for the camaraderie.

Still Kickin' focuses on clear, encouraging instruction designed especially for beginners, while also offering opportunities for dancers to grow into more challenging routines at their own pace.

Beginning March 4, the group is offering free instruction for absolute beginners from 5:30-6 p.m., for four weeks. You may come to this one time, or any time during the four weeks. This half-hour session is designed to break things down step by step, building confidence from the ground up. At 6 p.m., the evening opens into beginner dances from 6-7:15 p.m., and improver-level dances from 7:15-8:30 p.m. Still Kickin' current-

ly meets upstairs at the Springfield Community Center. Rather than charging a formal class fee, the group invites participants to make a donation to the community center, helping support the space that makes these gatherings possible.

Line dancing offers more than just a fun night out. It improves balance, coordination, memory, and cardiovascular health. Just as importantly, it builds connection. Dancers move in sync, share laughs over missed steps, and celebrate small victories together.

The message from Still Kickin' is simple: You belong here.

For weather updates or any last-minute changes, check the Still Kickin' Line Dancing Facebook page.

Written by Debra Piletz.

68th annual Ludlow Rotary Penny Sale announced

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Ludlow Rotary Club is announcing its 68th annual penny sale on Saturday, April 25, at 6 p.m., in the Ludlow Elementary School's gymnasium. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m.

This will be the 68th edition of this traditional event that features hundreds of prizes donated by area businesses and individuals, plus a cash raffle. In addition to the prizes and cash raffle, refreshments will be available.

Three rounds of more than 100 prizes for each round can be expected. Tickets for the many prizes offered in each of the three rounds will be sold individually, or at a discount in bundles of six tickets.



Ludlow Rotary Club members prepare for the 2025 Penny Sale. PHOTO PROVIDED

The cash raffle, normally conducted at the closure of the penny sale, will offer the following prizes: first prize, \$500; second prize, \$250; third prize, \$150; fourth prize, \$100; and fifth prize, \$50. Cash raffle tickets will be sold individually, or at a discount in bundles of three tickets.

Cash raffle tickets may be purchased from Ludlow Rotary Club members; at the club's website, portal.clubrunner.ca/2939; or by sending a check to LARCF Inc., P.O. Box 216, Ludlow, VT 05149. You do not have to be there to win one of these cash raffle prizes, but if you are in attendance, your award is increased by \$25.

Currently, Ludlow Rotary Club members are soliciting area businesses and individuals for donations that may be in the form of merchandise, gift certificates,

or cash.

The proceeds from the penny sale help Ludlow Rotary Club underwrite its annual scholarship program for area graduating high school seniors planning advanced educational programs. Through this program, Ludlow Rotary Club has awarded more than \$175,000 in scholarship awards during the past 25 years. The annual scholarships awarded last year totaled \$9,000 to graduating high school seniors located within the towns of Ludlow, Mount Holly, Plymouth, and Cavendish.

This is a major fundraising effort by the Ludlow Rotary Club, now celebrating its 99th year of community service in the area. Chairing the event are Kim Lampert and Jim Rumrill. Information is also available by calling Lampert at 802-228-4000.


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DINNER
From Page 1

initiatives that strengthen the community, and this event reflects their ongoing commitment to service and fellowship. For more information, please contact

the Rotary Club of Bellows Falls at bellowsfallsrotary@gmail.com. This meal is made possible by the Rotary, and with generous support from Saxtons River Market, Black River Produce, Lisa's, and Bellows Falls Moose.

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8				4	5	6	7	
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	8			6	5		7	
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12			13						14		
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ACROSS
1 Lawn coating
4 Daring deeds
9 Droid
12 "That feels so good!"
13 Host
14 Ruckus
15 Type of cable
17 Sine qua —
18 Feathery wrap
19 Garish
21 Mellow yellows
24 Winter blanket
25 Mauna —
26 Fire sign?
28 Emulate Scott Hamilton
31 Grecian vessels
33 Evergreen tree
35 "Zounds!"
36 Army doc
38 Karaoke prop, for short
40 Assoc.
41 Friendly
43 Crude dwelling
45 Brit's word of surprise
47 Where Ger. is
48 Help
49 Timepiece attachment

DOWN
1 Apply cream
2 Listener
3 "— goes there?"
4 Soft felt hat
5 Diplomat's post
6 Fed. health law
7 Camping shelters
8 Family cars
9 Something to jump on
10 Skunk's defense
11 Theater award
16 Jurist Fortas
20 Stirred
21 Grad
22 "Encore!"
23 Range of radio frequencies
27 Skirt edge
29 Like lemons
30 Jittery
32 Thailand, once
34 Gets smart
37 Embroidery yarn
39 Waterpark slides
42 Actress Loy
44 Wall St. whiz
45 Tub session
46 Queue
50 Doctrine
51 Mimic
52 Silent assent
53 Insult

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CROSSWORD

COUPON CONTEST

The Rules

Participants must complete the Crossword or the Sudoku puzzle and mail this page to The Vermont Journal, PO Box 228, Ludlow, VT 05149. Must be received by Friday, March 13, 2026. Limit one submission per person.

One participant will be selected by random drawing, and can select one coupon from participating businesses on this puzzle page. Coupons are not valid until one is chosen by drawing winner. Coupon of choice will expire on April 30, 2026, and will be mailed to the winner.

The answers to the puzzles and winner will be published the following week.

NAME: _____
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health & community

Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad VEFR class

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad (LVRS) is conducting a Vermont Emergency First Responder (VEFR) course at the LVRS squad building in Londonderry in March. To be eligible for VEFR certification, you must be 16 years of age or older.

Taking this class is a perfect way to introduce yourself to emergency medical services (EMS) and EMS culture. The primary focus is to learn how to initiate immediate lifesaving care to critical patients. A certified

VEFR will have the skills and knowledge to provide lifesaving interventions while waiting for additional and more skilled EMS personnel to arrive. A VEFR will also be able to assist higher-level personnel at the scene and during transport.

Some of the skills taught will be administration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), use of an automated external defibrillator (AED), control of minor and severe bleeding, EpiPen administration, and naloxone administration.

The course will be taught

over three days: Saturday, March 7, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; Sunday, March 8, from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.; and Monday, March 9, from 6-9:30 p.m.

There is a fee payable to LVRS. This fee will be reimbursed to those who become VEFR certified and go on to become full members of LVRS.

To enroll, please visit www.londonderryrescuevt.org, click on “Menu,” and then click on “VEFR Course.” The deadline to apply is March 5.

Third Grace Cottage Make Tracks for Health –

TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Enjoy the beauty and joy of winter, while helping Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital in its mission to provide vital health care to our communities. Grace Cottage will host its third annual snowshoe/cross-country ski event at the Nordic

Center at Stratton Resort, on Saturday, March 7, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Participants can choose to either snowshoe or cross-country ski on the Nordic Center’s beautifully groomed trails. Rental equipment is available if you register in advance.

Afterward, reward your-

self with delicious treats and a warm beverage by the fire. It’s sure to be a fun time for the whole family. All proceeds from this event will go toward patient care.

To sign up, visit www.gracecottage.org/events. For information, email info@gracecottage.org, or call 802-365-9109.

Neighborhood Connections a benefits enrollment center

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – On Feb. 1, Neighborhood Connections received a new designation as a benefits enrollment center (BEC) by the National Council on Aging, one of 90 across the United States, and one of only two in the State of Vermont.

BECs focus on connecting Medicare beneficiaries with limited incomes to core benefits, such as Medicare Part D Extra Help and Low-Income Subsidies, Medicare Savings Programs, Medicaid, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (3SquaresVT). BECs also help adults aged 65 and older, and younger adults with disabilities to apply for other programs, such as Supplemental Security Income, State Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs, local transportation assistance, tax relief, and more.

While Neighborhood Connections already undertakes this work, the official designation raises our visibility, prioritizes our receipt of accurate and timely information related to benefit program changes, and is accompanied by an award of \$97,500 for 2026. It also amounts to national recognition for the efforts we have expended here in the Mountain Towns to help some of our most vul-

nerable neighbors.

Nationally, BECs have helped over half a million Medicare beneficiaries access money-saving programs. Identifying and applying for benefits can be a daunting process for anyone, let alone for an older adult – especially one who doesn’t have internet, cell phone access, or reliable transportation.

There is no charge for Neighborhood Connections to work with individuals to determine their eligibility for any of these benefits, or to assist with applying for them. Applicants can always be provided with assistance by making an appointment with our offices in Londonderry. If the applicant is unable to leave their home, we can provide transportation, or even provide in-home assistance. One of our team members will provide as much assistance as is needed, including help with gathering required documentation, uploading applications, and communicating with the appropriate agency on behalf of the applicant.

We encourage individuals in southern Vermont to reach out to us to learn more about which of these programs they might qualify for by calling our offices at 802-824-4343. Neighborhood Connections promotes choice, independence, dignity, and wellbe-

ing through a range of services that help people remain independent and healthy for as long as possible.

This project was supported by the Administration for Community Living (ACL), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$13,504,196 with 100% funding by ACL/HHS. The contents are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by ACL/HHS or the U.S. government.

Mount Ascutney Hospital mammography accreditation

WINDSOR, Vt. – The Department of Radiology at Dartmouth Health’s Mount Ascutney Hospital and Health Center (MAHHC) has been awarded a three-year accreditation in mammography by the American College of Radiology (ACR). MAHHC has held this accreditation from the ACR since 1994. This designation recognizes MAHHC’s continued commitment to providing the highest standards of clinical

quality, safety, and patient care.

ACR accreditation represents the gold standard in medical imaging, awarded only to facilities that meet the organization’s rigorous benchmarks. Each accreditation follows an in-depth peer review conducted by board-certified radiologists and medical physicists, evaluating image quality, staff qualifications, equipment performance, and quality control practices.

“Ensuring consistent accreditation in mam-

mography drives us to the highest standards in our imaging services, delivering evidence-based, high-quality care,” said Matthew R. Foster, CEO and president of MAHHC. “This achievement is a testament to the expertise of our clinical team and our continued dedication to ensuring patients receive accurate, timely, and compassionate support.”

To learn more about ACR’s mammography accreditation process, visit www.go.d-h.org/7y2jgs.

HCRS celebrates staff

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), southeastern Vermont’s nonprofit community mental health agency, recently hosted staff recognition events to celebrate the staff whose commit-



HCRS staff recognized for five years of service. PHOTO PROVIDED

Lunar New Year celebrated in Springfield

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – On Feb. 17, Springfield Tai Chi teachers Jo Bregnard, Karen Gautney, and Sue Rubel ushered in the Lunar New Year with about 30 tai chi participants at the Springfield Unitarian Universalist Meeting-house. Since 2026 is the Year of the Fire Horse, participants were introduced to exercises that included maintaining a horse stance, as well as

learning some authentic tai chi walking, and doing a run-through of the fall-prevention tai chi form that is taught in their classes. Participants also made Lunar New Year decorations, and wrote wishes to attach to a traditional Chinese dragon. Refreshments were provided in colors that represent good fortune, such as red, orange, and yellow.

The Year of the Fire Horse only occurs every 60 years, and is considered a fast-paced, dynamic period focused on independence, forward momentum, and significant change. Because it’s a fire horse year, it brings intense energy, passion, personal growth and, at times, impulsivity. These characteristics are particularly true for those who were born in a horse year: 1930, 1942, 1954, 1966, 1978, 1990, 2002, 2014, and 2026; and especially for those born in the fire horse years, 1966 and 2026.

ment, expertise, and compassion sustain care across the region.

The January events honored years of service, peer-nominated excellence, and the steady presence that strengthens communities throughout Windham and Windsor counties.

“Our work is built on relationships,” said CEO George Karabakakis. “Behind every service we provide is a staff member showing up with professionalism, heart, and deep commitment to the people we serve. Taking time to recognize that matters.”

Award recipients are as follows: for 25 years of service or more, Jan Bellville and Kevin Houston; for 20 years of service, Alice Bradeen, Lance Cutler, and Timothy Wood; for 15 years of service, Annette Buskey, Nickie Godin, and Ashley Wohlford; for 10 years of service, Melisa Beaulieu, Joshua Buchman, Laurel Denny, Patricia Eslin, Christine Fields, Jillian Hill, Brooke Kearney, Libbi Keith, Barbara Parizo, Briana Plante, Christa Porter, Sophie Reed, Miriam Schuldenfrei, Deborah Shaw, Danielle Southwell, and Robert Withrow; and for five years of service,

Alexander Belliveau, Shawn Bobar, Lindsey Boulter, Karen Chandler, Amanda Clarke, Patrick Carroll, Jennifer Coke, Jade Hodgdon, Eric Jacobson, Kah Jarvis, Caleb Kerr, Erika Korb, Jennifer Lynch, Melanie Murphy, Alena Pardoe, Elizabeth Reis, Sarah Rogers, Manuel Soares, Jessica Stehle, and Knowles Wentworth.

Together, these staff represent 410 combined years supporting people and families. Their milestones reflect more than longevity; they represent relationships built over time, leadership through change, advocacy for people in need, and the daily choice to remain committed to community-based care.

HCRS also presented its 2025 Encore Awards, peer-nominated honors recognizing staff whose leadership, integrity, and compassion stand out to the colleagues who work alongside them every day.

2025 Encore Award recipients are Lindsey Boulter, Laura Fairbanks, Lauren Iraci, Kah Jarvis, and Michelle Ovitt. These individuals were nominated by colleagues for the meaningful impact they bring to their teams and to the people HCRS serves – often quietly, but always significantly.

“Our staff carry complex work with professionalism and deep care,” Karabakakis said. “Recognizing their contributions is not just a celebration – it’s a reflection of who we are as an organization.”

HCRS provides community mental health, substance use, and developmental services throughout southeastern Vermont, serving thousands of people each year.

For more information about HCRS and its services, visit www.hcrs.org.

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OPINION

obituaries

Shirley Y. Cooper, 1925-2026

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Shirley Y. Cooper, 100, died on Wednesday, Feb. 25, 2026, at Valley Regional Hospital in Claremont, N.H. She was born Nov. 4, 1925, in Springfield, Vt., the daughter of Sidney R. and Ethel (Shippy) Young. She attended Springfield Schools, graduating from Springfield High School, Class of 1943.



Shirley Cooper, 1925-2026. PHOTO PROVIDED

On June 14, 1947, she married Maurice E. “Bill” Cooper in Springfield, Vt. He predeceased her in 2013.

Shirley was proud to be a lifelong resident of Springfield. She was a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church and the Ladies Aid Society with the church. She was also a member of the 29ers, the RSVP, the Springfield Hospital Auxiliary, and served on the Springfield Senior Center Board, as well as belonging to the senior center knitting group called The Knit Wits. She was a community poll worker, and a Red Cross volunteer. Her hobbies included skiing, knitting, sewing, ceramics, and cooking. For her recent 100th birthday party, Shirley was honored with resolutions from the Springfield Selectboard, and from the Vermont House of Representatives. She also received a letter from the governor of Vermont, and a card from the president of the United States honoring her for her 100th birthday

and her community service.

She is survived by her daughter Deanna C. Dexter (Buddy); and three grandchildren Meredith D. Kelley (Patrick), Richard “Deke” Dexter (Jacqueline) and Jennifer Cooper Hunt (Kurt). Shirley had five great-grandchildren Finnegan and Gwendelyn Kelley, Natalie Dexter, and Henry and Levi Hunt; daughter-in-law Linda Cooper; as well as several nieces and nephews; and one sister-in-law.

She was predeceased by her husband Bill, her son Curtis E. Cooper, and by her six siblings Sidney E. Young, Bernard S. Young, Francis A. Young, Robert P. Young, Barbara Y. Ross and Richard C. Young.

A funeral service will be held at on Sunday, March 15, at the Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield, Vt. Visitation will be held from 2-3 p.m. Burial will be in the Oakland Cemetery, at a later date.

Louis E. Ehrhard Jr., 1935-2026

WESTON, Vt. – Louis Edward Ehrhard Jr., 90, passed away peacefully at his home in Weston on Jan. 13, 2026, surrounded by family. Born on March 21, 1935, in Port Jervis, N.Y., Lou’s life – and his final days – served as a testament to love, courage, and devotion to family.



Louis Ehrhard Jr., 1935-2026. PHOTO PROVIDED

Lou often called himself the luckiest man in the world, a sentiment rooted in his 68-year marriage to DD. Together, they built a legacy of trust and warmth that extended through their four children and 13 grandchildren, who affectionately knew him as “Gus.”

A natural athlete with a competitive spark, Lou channeled his energy into a storied 40-year career as an arbitrage trader. He thrived in the fast-paced environment of the New York Stock Exchange, where he cherished the camaraderie and legendary “high jinx” of the trading floor.

Upon retiring to his beloved Weston, Lou dedicated his time to the community he called home. He was a familiar and active face at the Weston Theater Company, the Weston Historical Society, and the Wantastiquet Trout Club, where he was happiest teaching his grandkids to fish and enjoying quiet afternoons on the lake.

While his professional and

community achievements were many, Lou’s spirit truly shone in his role as “Gus.” He shared a unique, individual bond with each of his 13 grandchildren. He was famous for his “Gussie-isms” – unique pearls of wisdom and wit – and his colorful stories that could command any room. Whether he was offering life advice, or simply asking about their day, Gus made sure every grandchild knew they were loved.

Lou’s friendliness and generous spirit will live on in the hearts of everyone he touched. He showed those around him how to live with zest, and how to leave the world with grace.

A celebration of Lou’s life is planned for late June, in Weston. The family requests that contributions in Lou’s honor be made to the Weston Theatre Company, www.westontheater.org.

Frances M. Stevens, 1952-2026

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – Frances Moreen Stevens, born on Nov. 10, 1952, passed away peacefully, surrounded by loving family, on Feb. 20, 2026, after a long battle fighting the effects of cancer. Throughout her illness, she demonstrated the same strength and grace that defined her life.



Frances Stevens, 1952-2026. PHOTO PROVIDED

She shared 53 years of marriage with her husband Howard Stevens. She was a proud and loving mother to her son Matthew Stevens and her daughter Audrey Pratt. She was a cherished mother-in-law to Melissa Stevens and Jeffrey Pratt. Her greatest joy was being “Grammie” to her beloved grandchildren Klara, Matthew, Christopher, Andrew and James, who were the light of her life.

Family meant everything to her. She never missed a sporting event or school activity. Whether cheering from the stands or volunteering at school functions, she was always present, offering encouragement, warmth, and unconditional love.

She worked faithfully in her local school district, where she was known for the dedication and care she offered everyone she worked with. She was well loved by everyone who had the privilege of knowing her.

She found happiness in life’s simple things: sitting at the beach, listening to the Rolling Stones, collecting and admiring images of angels, and spending time working on puzzles. Above all, she believed that Jesus died for her sins, and she took great comfort trusting in His promise of eternal life. She will be remembered for her loving heart, her selflessness, and the countless ways she put her family first.

There will be no public services. A private goodbye was held with her immediate family.

Though she will be deeply missed, her legacy of love and devotion will live on in the hearts of all who knew her.

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

LTE: Chuck Gregory gives thoughts on deer hunting

Dear Editor,

The white-tailed deer was hunted to near extinction in Vermont by 1900, and the state undertook to reintroduce them. Today, they are so plentiful here that a hunter can get up to four permits to take a deer in season. Some suburban areas in other states have too many deer, with individuals suffering from starvation. Hunters are hired to thin out the population in order to help it survive.

In 2024, Springfield-area bow hunters bagged more deer (53) than rifle hunters (45), but youth hunters (6) and the October- and December-season muzzle-loaders (55) tipped the scales in favor of firearms. It’s quite surprising that archers do so well, when you consider that, due to the force of gravity, when fired horizontally, an arrow will hit the ground 60 feet away, while a bullet typically lands 735 feet away.

Might this indicate that

archers have to be more serious hunters than gun hunters? They clearly have to get closer, and that means that they probably spend a lot of preseason time scoping out the terrain, checking for signs of foraging areas and well-used trails, and finding good perches well ahead of time. Dennis Jensen, who wrote about hunting in Vermont for decades, pointed out that these gun hunters had distinct advantages over the non-serious hunter, who might spend a whole week freezing in the early dawn in hopes a buck would come within scope range.

But all hunters are motivated at least in part by the tradition of providing food for the family, just like their ancestors did 800 years ago in the vast forests of their time.

Sincerely,
Chuck Gregory
Springfield, Vt.

LTE: Open letter to TRSU community

Dear Editor,

As Vermont debates education reform under Act 73, communities face tough questions about school size, consolidation, and sustainability. These are conversations that demand honesty, transparency, and a clear understanding of what drives costs.

In the Two Rivers Supervisory Union (TRSU), recent budget data across multiple fiscal years tells a consistent story: school-level budgets have remained relatively constrained, while overall education costs have risen sharply. The primary driver is not classrooms or instructional programs, but central office and district-level costs that are not directly voted on by local communities.

From fiscal year 23 to fiscal year 2026, Green Mountain Unified School District (GMUSD) and Ludlow-Mount Holly Unified Union School District (LMHUUSD) budgets rose more than 30%, while non-tax revenues fell 36%, widening the taxpayer gap. Fiscal year 2026 shows the sharpest budget hike and revenue drop.

At the school level, spending patterns are mixed but largely explainable, reflecting enrollment changes, special education needs, and staffing realities. Central office costs dominate. In GMUSD, they equal half of school spending; in LMHUUSD, it’s 1.6 times school operating costs.

This disparity cannot be explained as simply inefficiency at the school level. It reflects how supervisory union costs are structured and allocated, particularly disadvantaging the small, two-district models within it that lack economies of scale. When viewed holistically, these allocation methods make our small districts appear “expensive” when, in fact, the underlying issue is structural – specifically at the central office level. In fiscal year 26, TRSU central office personnel costs, especially benefits, rose roughly 25%, far outpacing salary growth. This unexplained trend raises questions about sustainability.

Act 73 is often framed as a mandate to close or merge schools. But focusing reform solely on school buildings risks missing the core objectives of the reform intent. Focusing on the closing of a school does not automatically reduce superintendent costs, business office expenses, special education coordination, compliance staffing, or governance overhead. Those costs tend to persist, being absorbed and redistributed across the districts, and with possibly fewer students.

Concentrating on school closures won’t deliver savings, yet this is the superintendent’s approach, consuming public meetings without clear outcomes. Without corresponding reductions in central administration, closures can increase per-pupil costs, while eroding trust and destabilizing our commu-

nities.

True reform must begin where growth is occurring. A “central office first” approach does not oppose Act 73, it strengthens it. Before recommending school closures or mergers, TRSU should be required to present a clear, time-bound plan showing how administrative staffing, benefits, and governance will scale proportionally with consolidation. The elected board members should be demanding this approach. If schools within TRSU are being asked to change, TRSU central office administration must change as well.

Reform should also distinguish compliance from leadership. Waiting for state-imposed solutions risks harsher outcomes and less local control. I cannot support the superintendent’s “wait for the state” approach. School boards that act proactively, with transparency and intention, preserve more agency and public trust. Now is the time to be true leaders for our education community.

Equity matters. Cost allocation methods should be reviewed so smaller districts aren’t unfairly burdened by centralized costs beyond their control. Without this acknowledgment, the current approach of the superintendent risks deepening divisions rather than resolving them.

This ask is not anti-reform. It is not anti-administration. And it certainly is not anti-education. This is a simple request for structural honesty: an approach in our district region where costs align with classrooms, where savings are real and verifiable, and where reform improves outcomes rather than displacing costs.

Vermonters want lasting reform that prioritizes students and quality, and so should we. For that reform to take hold, it must start upstream, where costs are growing, accountability is opaque, and public visibility is lowest. This is where real reform begins.

Sincerely,
Denise Reilly-Hughes
Cavendish, Vt.

OBITUARIES:

A 200-word obituary is \$100, and \$0.60 per word thereafter. A 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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LEGAL NOTICES

UPCOMING

MARCH 6 – BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The First Baptist Church of Bellows Falls, 9 Church Street, will hold this month's First Friday Fundraiser on March 6. This will be to benefit the Free to Read book program. The menu includes chicken, baked potato, vegetables, green salad, beverages, and dessert. Serving from 5-6:30 p.m. There is a small suggested donation.

MARCH 7 – LUDLOW, Vt. – Join The Boot Pro on Saturday, March 7, from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., at Solitude on Okemo, for our next free on-snow ski demonstration of the season. Test the latest men's and women's skis from top brands, meet manufacturer representatives, and find your perfect match before models and sizes sell out. The event begins at Village Run Trail, on the skier's right when approaching Solitude Day Lodge. Registration and a credit card deposit are required. Preregister at www.bit.ly/3Ziu1za. Sponsored by The Boot Pro and Mary W Davis Realtor & Associates.

NEWPORT, N.H. – There will be live country music on Saturday, March 7, from 2-5 p.m., at the Newport Moose Hall, 18 Golf Club Road.

MARCH 9 – LUDLOW, Vt. – There will be a scam awareness and prevention presentation at the Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street, on Monday, March 9, from 12:30-1 p.m., presented by the River Valley Technical Center Criminal Justice Level 2 class. All ages are welcome. Come support area students and learn how to stay safe. For more information, call 802-228-7421.

MARCH 10 – N. SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join the Springfield Area Parent Child Center (SAPCC) on Monday, March 16, from 5:30-8:30 p.m., at the SAPCC Workforce Development & Training Center, 51 Jack and Jill Lane, for a comprehensive CPR training session designed to empower you with the knowledge and hands-on skills to respond effectively in life-threatening situations. Register before March 9 at www.tinyurl.com/SAPCCPR. An email from Sales Force at American Red Cross will be received by March 10 with the online portion of the class. The online portion must be completed prior to the in-person class. For more information, contact arielr@sapcc-vt.org or 802-886-5242.

MARCH 16 – LUDLOW, Vt. – The

American Red Cross will hold a blood drive at the Ludlow Community Center, 37 Main Street, on Monday, March 16, from 12-5 p.m. To make an appointment, visit www.redcrossblood.org or call 800-RED-CROSS. Sponsor code: Ludlow.

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street, will serve a community lunch on Monday, March 16, at 12 p.m. The menu will be hearty beef stew, homemade rolls, and chocolate mint dessert. Please make reservations by calling 802-228-7421. Free cash bingo will follow. All ages are welcome.

MARCH 18 – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Songsters will perform a concert at the Springfield Senior Center, 139 Main Street, at 1 p.m. For more information, please contact executive director Lori Johnson at 802-885-3933 or lorijohnsonssc@gmail.com.

RECURRING

SUNDAYS – CHESTER, Vt. – Six Loose Ladies hosts Odd Bobbins Spinners the second Sunday of each month from 1-4 p.m. at their location on the Common in Chester.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Catamount Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol meets Sundays, from 3:30-5:30 p.m., at Hartness Airport in Springfield. The Civil Air Patrol is the auxiliary unit of the U.S. Air Force tasked with the mission of supporting America's communities with emergency response, diverse aviation and ground services, youth development, and promotion of air, space,

and cyber power. Cadets as young as 12 and senior members of any age make up this diverse group of volunteers.

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.

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

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

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

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Sew What is held Tuesday afternoons, from 2-4 p.m., at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street. Spend your Tuesday afternoon working on sewing projects in a relaxed

and welcoming space. Bring your own supplies and enjoy time to sew, learn, and have fun with others. Sewing machines are provided, or you can bring your own if you prefer. Both groups are free to attend and open to all skill levels. For more information, visit www.springfieldtownlibrary.org, or call the library at 802-885-3108.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Head to the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse in Springfield, Vt., 21 Fairground Road, on Tuesdays, at 10 a.m., through March 24, 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 – CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, holds bingo every Wednesday afternoon. You must be at least 55 years old, and purchase your cards by 12:45 p.m. Games begin at 1 p.m. Concessions are available until the game begins. We average around 30-40 seniors who love to attend, visit with their friends, and try to win a little extra money.

THURSDAYS – LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Memory Cafe is held on the second Thursday of each month, at the United Church of Ludlow, 48 Pleasant Street, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. The memory cafe is free to attend, snacks included, and offers a safe and comfortable space where caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia or Alzheimer's can

socialize, listen to music, play games, and enjoy other appropriate activities. This is a program of Black River Good Neighbor Services. For more information, contact Vicki at 802-376-3388, or Krey at 802-228-3663.

LUDLOW, Vt. – A gentle flow yoga class for all levels to improve balance and flexibility, relieving tension from your day, will be held Thursdays, from 6-7 p.m., at the Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street. Mats and blocks provided. Contact Lori Wright at 603-401-8123 or loriwright163@gmail.com to register, or with any questions.

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

CLAREMONT, N.H. – If you are interested in playing or learning the game of mahjong, please come to the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, on Fridays, at 1 p.m. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – Come show off your masterpieces at the Claremont Senior Center Knitters Group, on Fridays, from 1-3 p.m., at 5 Acer Heights. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

SATURDAYS – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield VFW Post 771, 191 River Street, will host burger nights on the first and third Saturdays of every month, from 5-7 p.m., downstairs in the canteen. These events are open to the public.

TOWN OF MOUNT HOLLY, VERMONT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Mount Holly Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at 5:30 PM on Tuesday March 17th 2026, at the Mount Holly Town Office and via Zoom to consider an Application for a Minor Subdivision, PC-2025-04

Property Owners: Maria and Michael Gilbert
Property Location: 180 Straight Road
Application for: Minor Subdivision of an approximately 10 Acre lot into 2 lots of 1.9 +/- acres and 8.1 +/- acres)

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83559573810?pwd=50RzZGJXdFpzTjVdL3FOemhyZGwvQT09>

Passcode: 524721. Link to the Zoom meeting can be found on the web site: <http://www.mounthollyvt.org/planning-commission/planning-commission-meeting-agendas/>

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

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

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF GREENVILLE

IN THE FAMILY COURT

Matthew N. Saunders, Plaintiff,
-vs-
Alyssa Rivera, Defendant.

AMENDED SUMMONS
C.A. No.: 2024-DR-23-3992

TO THE DEFENDANT ABOVE NAMED: Alyssa Rivera YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and required to answer the Amended Complaint in this action, a copy of which is herewith served upon you, and to serve a copy of your Answer to said Amended Complaint on the subscribers at their office, 310 Mills Avenue, Post Office Box 9754, Greenville, South Carolina 29604, within thirty days after the service hereof; exclusive the day of such service; and if you fail to answer the Amended Complaint within the time aforesaid, the Plaintiff(s) will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in said Amended Complaint.

Pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 63-9-730(e), Notice given pursuant to this section must include notice of the following:

- (1) within thirty days of receiving notice the person or agency shall respond in writing by filing with the court in which the adoption is pending notice and reasons to contest, intervene, or otherwise respond;
- (2) the court must be informed of the person's or agency's current address and of any changes in address during the adoption proceedings; and
- (3) failure to file a response within thirty days of receiving notice constitutes consent to adoption of the child and forfeiture of all rights and obligations of the person or agency with respect to the child.

IN THE EVENT THAT YOU ARE AN INFANT OVER FOURTEEN YEARS OF AGE OR AN IMPRISONED PERSON, you are further summoned and notified to apply for the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem to represent you in this action within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Notice upon you. If you fail to do so, application for such appointment will be made by the Plaintiff(s) herein.

IN THE EVENT THAT YOU ARE AN INFANT UNDER THE AGE OF FOURTEEN YEARS OR ARE INCOMPETENT OR INSANE, you are further summoned and notified to apply for the appointment of a Guardian ad Litem to represent said infant(s) under the age of fourteen years of age, or said incompetent or insane person, within thirty (30) days after the service of this Summons and Notice upon you. If you fail to do so, application for such appointment will be made by the Plaintiff(s) herein.

HOWARD LAW FIRM, P.A.
MILFORD O. HOWARD, III
Attorney for Plaintiff
P.O. Box 9754, Greenville, South Carolina 29604
Phone: (864) 233.5672 Fax: (864) 642-6822

Dated: August 28, 2025

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS Construction Management Services for Miss Bellows Falls Diner Project Bellows Falls, VT

Rockingham for Progress, the nonprofit that owns the Miss Bellows Falls Diner, is requesting proposals from qualified firms to provide Construction Management Services for restoring the historic diner car and building a new addition to support the diner's operation.

The Construction Management services for this project will include but not be limited to planning, bidding, coordination, management, oversight and closeout.

The project must adhere to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200). All work on the project must meet the Secretary's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, and follow the plans approved by the National Park Service.

The full RFP is available upon request by emailing Andrew Dey (Owner's Project Manager) at andrew@andrewdey.com. Proposals are due by 5pm on April 3, 2026.

TOWN OF LONDONDERRY

The Town of Londonderry seeks a self-motivated, detail-oriented person for the position of Parks Maintenance employee for seasonal maintenance of Londonderry's various parks between the months of April and October, weather permitting.

Work involves significant physical labor, use and maintenance of tools, and maintaining a valid driver's license.

Maintenance tasks include but are not limited to: Lawn mowing, weed whacking, landscaping, trash pick-up and removal, picnic table upkeep, dog park facility maintenance, water testing at Memorial Park, checking on porta potty conditions, park trail maintenance, playground repair, woodchip raking, sports facility repairs, maintenance of park signage, tree trimming, picnic pavilion clean up, spring clean-up, fall clean-up, garden maintenance and assisting the MT Rec director as requested.

Salary: \$20-\$30/hour depending on experience.

To apply, please visit the Employment page on the Town of Londonderry's website: <https://www.londonderryvt.gov/employment> and fill out an employment application. The application can be email to Aileen Tulloch at townadmin@londonderryvt.org or mailed to

Aileen Tulloch
Town Administrator
100 Old School Street
South Londonderry, VT 05155

Town of Chester Opportunities to Serve

Looking for an opportunity to serve your community? The Town of Chester has open volunteer positions for appointments to the Local Cannabis Commission, Connecticut River Authority Board, and Senior Solutions. Interested parties should submit a letter of interest to julie.hance@chestervt.gov or Town of Chester, P.O. Box 370, Chester, VT 05143.

GREEN MOUNTAIN PRESCHOOL Enrolling for the '26-'27 school year

If your child will be 3 or 4 years old by August, 31, 2026, we would love to have you join us!

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TOWN OF CHESTER NOTICE OF HEARING FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Green Mountain Union High School has applied for a Conditional Use Permit to erect an EMD Sign on the property located at 716 VT RT 103 South in the Town of Chester.

The Town of Chester Development Review Board will conduct a site visit at 5:45 PM on Monday, March 23rd 2026 at 716 VT RT 103 South and will hold a hearing on this application at 6:00 PM on Monday, March 23rd 2026, at the Chester Town Hall at 556 Elm Street in Chester. The application, exhibits and additional information may be obtained from the Zoning Administrator.

Participation in this hearing in person, via Zoom videoconference, or in writing is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

A link to participate in this hearing via Zoom videoconference may be found on the Town of Chester website home page at www.chestervt.gov.

Dated at Chester, Vermont this 26th day of February 2026.

Hugh Quinn
Zoning Administrator
(802) 875-2173
zoning@chestervt.gov

REAL ESTATE

classifieds

A more affordable energy future for Vermont

REGION – The cheapest energy is the energy we don't use. This simple fact has guided Efficiency Vermont for more than two decades. It remains critical for Vermont's energy future.

As Efficiency Vermont plans for the years ahead, we're listening to feedback from Vermonters. Our latest three-year proposal to the Vermont Public Utility Commission is informed by surveys of nearly 900 residents and hundreds of businesses. That proposal sharpens our focus on affordability, and removes \$3.75 million from our proposed budget.

Half of the Vermonters surveyed told us they believe the state is unaffordable. At the same time, more than 70% said energy-efficiency programs make Vermont more affordable. Nearly nine out of 10 agreed that an independent organization like Efficiency Vermont is essential to reducing energy costs.

Vermonters know efficiency is a solution to high costs. Since our work began in 2000, Vermonters will save more than \$3.5 billion over the lifetime of the efficiency investments our state has made. Without these investments, our homes and businesses would be buying 15% more electricity than they do now.

Understanding efficiency reveals why it's one of the most powerful tools we have to keep energy bills affordable.

Almost every home or business in Vermont connects to our shared electric grid. The grid sends the electricity we need to run a refrigerator, control our thermostats, and connect us to the internet.

Making electricity costs money. Power plants burn fuel to generate electricity, or they rely on sophisticated equipment like hydroelectric dams, wind turbines, or solar panels. Skilled workers ensure there's safe, reliable power at all hours of the day. Moving that

electricity through transmission lines, poles, and wires also costs money. This network requires constant maintenance and investment. As electricity demand rises, expanding this system costs money, too.

When we pay our electric bill each month, our bills cover the costs of running the entire electricity system. Efficiency is key to keeping those costs low, because it's cheaper to use less electricity than it is to make and distribute more of it. Efficiency allows us to get more out of the system we've already paid for.

Efficiency isn't just about lower costs. It's about living better with lower costs. It means a more comfortable home with more affordable bills through weatherization and efficient appliances. At work, it means lower costs and a stronger bottom line thanks to optimized equipment.

More efficient homes and buildings cost less to keep running. They're more resilient to extreme weather, like winter storms or floods. They're better prepared to switch from fossil fuels to cleaner technologies like EVs and heat pumps. Efficiency lowers Vermont's greenhouse gas emissions, and reduces power use when the grid needs it most. That makes electricity cheaper, and expands capacity for things we want, like more homes, new business opportunities, and economic development.

Weatherization makes homes and businesses more comfortable while reducing energy costs. That's why weatherization is a major focus in our new proposal. Federal funding has supported this work in recent years – but no longer. Vermont policymakers wisely devote our state's Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) revenues to weatherization. This provides critical, dedicated funding for this work. As



Peter Walke giving an Efficiency Vermont Button Up campaign speech, with Gov. Phil Scott and others. PHOTO PROVIDED

other states look to redirect RGGI revenues for short-term initiatives, Vermont's approach ensures we'll continue to support the long-term affordability that weatherization provides. In our proposal, we'll bring the comfort, savings, and climate benefits of a weatherized home to more Vermonters with our rebates and programs. We'll also strengthen our partnerships with Vermont's weatherization assistance programs by directing an additional \$1.5 million each year to support projects for the low-income households and apartments they serve.

The next three years also demand deeper investments in energy efficiency across Vermont's economy. We're updating our heat pump programs to deliver more comprehensive heating solutions. We'll also prioritize business projects with big impacts on our shared energy system, like improved industrial processes; refrigeration systems; and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning upgrades. This will help businesses invest in improvements, while strengthening our shared

energy system.

We'll achieve these goals without increasing costs for Vermonters. In fact, we've removed \$3.75 million in spending from our proposal. Streamlining our budget helps us focus on impactful projects, while supporting affordability for all Vermonters.

By focusing on these goals in the years ahead, we'll continue to help Vermonters reduce their household energy costs. We'll weatherize more homes and businesses, support more cost-saving projects, and strengthen the investments Vermonters have made in our shared grid over the last 25 years.

But you don't have to wait; efficiency is a solution available today. Call 888-921-5990 to speak with our energy advisors about your home or business. Everyone can share the benefits of efficiency now – and, with this new proposal, for years to come.

Written by Peter Walke, managing director, Efficiency Vermont.

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Workshops galleryvault.org/workshops

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- Beginner Pysanky with Shannon Wallis 3/14 1-4:30
- Watercolor Skills with Kim Eng Yeo 3/21 & 28 10-12
- Dot Mandala Workshop with Antje Ruppert 3/28 2-4 p.m.
- Spectacular Flowers in Watercolor w/Rob O'Brien 4/11 9:30-4
- Turkish Map Fold Book with Deborah Stuart 4/18 11:30-1:30
- Realistic Animal Features in Watercolor w/Joanna Alix 4/25 11-2 (04/15/26 - TFN - 13)

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history/outdoor **PROS TO KNOW**

CCCD tree and shrub identification workshop

WALPOLE, N.H. – The Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD), in partnership with the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Cooperative Extension, Antioch University New England, Long View Forest, and the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service is excited to announce a forest stewardship workshop, to be hosted Monday, March 9, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Participants will meet at 77 Peachblow Road, Alstead, N.H.

Identifying trees during the winter can be a challenge. Join UNH Cooperative Extension foresters Dode Gladders and Steve Roberge to learn some of our cold-weather identification tips and tricks. We will focus on bark, buds, and branching, and we will go over some of our favorite books and smartphone apps as well.

Be prepared for an easy two-hour walk in the woods. Be sure to dress appropriately, wear warm boots, and bring any snacks and drinks that you may need. Because parking is

limited, we will limit registration to 15 people, so be sure to sign up soon.

Registration is free. Donations to the sponsoring organizations are welcomed and encouraged. Register at www.cheshireconservation.org/event-details/tree-and-shrub-winter-identification-workshop.

For additional information, questions, or for assistance in registration, contact Nina Halsted at info@cheshireconservation.org or 603-904-3011.

Chester Community Greenhouse encourages starting seeds

CHESTER, Vt. – While we wait for yet another snowstorm to grace our garden plots with a layer of snow, the Chester Community Greenhouse and Garden folks say the best way to chase away the winter blues is to start planning your garden.



Herbs growing in a garden bed.

PHOTO PROVIDED

The seed catalogs have long since arrived in the mail, and you have no doubt picked out your favorites. Starting seeds at home is easy, and can save money.

You just need a good, sunny, warm spot on a windowsill or table, some seed-starting soil, and containers. Some flower varieties that are good to start indoors are snapdragons and pansies, as they can tolerate cooler temperatures and can be put out before the danger of a late frost date. Zinnias are another favorite of the community garden, and they usually like a four to six week head start. Perennials such as lavender and echinacea require a longer start, making them perfect

for starting in February and March. On the vegetable side of things, peppers and eggplants can be started eight to ten weeks before the last frost date. Broccoli, cabbage, kale, and Brussels sprouts start five to seven weeks before last frost, and tomatoes can be started six to eight weeks before frost.

There are a lot of ways to start your seeds indoors, but it's most important to have good light so the plants won't get too leggy. A great way to upcycle your plastic salad greens con-

tainers is to fill them with potting soil, sow your seeds, and pop the cover closed to make a perfect moist mini-greenhouse for seed germination. As the plants get bigger, you can transplant if needed. The Chester Community Greenhouse and Garden has several plots devoted to growing vegetables for the local food shelf, and there are still plots available for Chester residents. Scholarships are also available. For more information, visit www.chestercommunitygreenhouseandgardens.org.

SoVerA presents “Journey to a Comet”

REGION – Join the Southern Vermont Astronomy Group (SoVerA) for their upcoming meeting on March 10, at 7 p.m. The meeting will be held via Zoom, and you can join from the SoVerA website, www.sovera.org, or at www.zoom.us/j/94691230307.

The topic for the meeting is “Journey to a Comet,” and the speaker is Gregory T. Shanos. Sha-

nos is a NASA solar system ambassador. He first became interested in astronomy in 1985, when he witnessed the apparition of Halley's Comet. Four decades later, the internet is ablaze with the recent passage of interstellar Comet 3I/ATLAS, raising awareness for the general public. Shanos will discuss the composition of comets, and the six spacecraft that have visited various comets, with a focus on organic

molecules that have been discovered.

Shanos earned a double baccalaureate in both pharmacy and chemistry from the University of Rhode Island in 1984, a Master of Arts in teaching from Rhode Island College in 1989, and a Doctor of Pharmacy degree from the University of Florida in 1999. In 1990, Shanos married and relocated to Sarasota, Fla., where he currently resides.

“Thirty-Eight: The Hurricane That Transformed New England”

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – On Wednesday, March 11, at 5:30 p.m., join Stephen Long at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street in Springfield, Vt., for his presentation “Thirty-Eight: The Hurricane That Transformed New England.”

A hurricane will never surprise us again. But that's what happened to the people of New England on Sept. 21, 1938.

Without any warning, the most destructive weather event ever to hit the Northeast pummeled the coast, and blasted its way to Vermont and New Hampshire with torrential rain, flooding, and sustained winds over 100 mph.

Long tells the story of New England's Katrina, focusing on the devastation to the region's forests and the daunting challenge facing New Englanders still in the throes of the Great De-

pression. His presentation is richly illustrated with archival photos of storm damage and the unprecedented recovery operation, making the storm and its aftermath come alive. A journalist and cofounder of Northern Woodlands magazine, Long is the author of “Thirty-Eight: The Hurricane that Transformed New England.”

To sign up for a reminder, visit www.springfieldtownlibrary.org/calendar.

Anne Frank reenactor at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – On Thursday, March 12, at 6 p.m., join Anne Frank, portrayed by Sheryl Faye, at the Springfield Town Library.

Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany, on June 12, 1929. She lived most of her life in or near Amsterdam, having moved there with her family at the age of 4, when the Nazis gained control over Germany. By May 1940, the Franks



Sheryl Faye portrays Anne Frank.

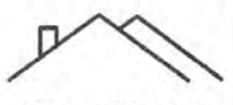
PHOTO PROVIDED

were trapped in Amsterdam by the German occupation of the Netherlands. As the hatred for Jewish people increased in July 1942, the family went into hiding in some concealed rooms behind a bookcase in the building where Anne's father worked.

From then until the fam-

ily's arrest by the Gestapo in August 1944, Frank kept a diary she had received as a birthday present, and wrote in it regularly. Our story starts on July 6, 1942, in the secret annex, and gives you a taste of what life was like for her. In this world where there is a lot of hate, this excellent program about perseverance, hope, and love leaves us all with a stronger message.

To sign up for a reminder, visit www.springfieldtownlibrary.org/calendar.



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arts & entertainment

Beginner pysanky and watercolor workshops

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Back by popular demand, Gallery at the Vault is delighted to offer beginner pysanky with Shannon Wallis, on Saturday, March 14, from 1-4:30 p.m.

Learn the ancient Ukrainian Easter egg art of pysanky. Since pagan times, Ukrainians have decorated eggs to welcome spring. In this hands-on class, you will learn how to divide the provided chicken egg, use hot beeswax applied with a kistka funnel to draw on the egg over a succession of aniline dyes, and blow out the egg to create a beautiful, one-of-a-kind keepsake. Materials will be provided. Do wear clothes on which you can spill dye, and reading glasses if needed.

The cost of the class is discounted for gallery members. Register by Wednesday, March 11.

Develop your watercolors with Kim Eng Yeo through Gallery at the Vault on two Saturdays, March 21 and 28, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., at Eng Yeo's studio in Townshend.

Watercolors can be chal-



Pysanky eggs.
PHOTO PROVIDED



Watercolor painting.
PHOTO PROVIDED

lenging, and those who master them have developed many techniques that use color, water, and brush on paper to maximum effect. The purpose of this workshop is to help develop those skills for those who wish to continue their creativity in this medium.

Eng Yeo brings her experience as an artist and designer to this workshop. She has taught watercolor to children and adults of all ages. The cost of the class is discounted for gallery members. A materials list will be supplied, but she has spare materials on hand to help. Register by Wednesday, March 11.

Eng Yeo is a celebrated watercolor artist, known for

her vibrant floral and nature scenes, dividing her time between New York and Vermont, where she's a prominent figure in the local art scene. She captures the transient beauty of nature with international acclaim. For more information, visit www.kimengyeo.blogspot.com.

Gallery at the Vault is located at 68 Main Street in Springfield. For more information, call 802-885-7111, email galleryvault@vermontel.net, or visit www.galleryvault.org, Facebook, or Instagram. Gallery at the Vault is accessible.

Upstairs at Town Hall presents The Poor Cousins

CHESTER, Vt. – On March 14, at 7 p.m., Upstairs at Town Hall presents The Poor Cousins. The duo, Naomi Morse (fiddle and voice) and Emmet McGowen (guitar, bodhran, voice) describe their concert as “a journey through Irish music and song, past and present.” Doors open at 6:30 p.m.



Poor Cousins.
PHOTO PROVIDED

A son of Dublin, McGowen

breathes life into Irish song with historical context and stories. On fiddle, Morse finds sounds both fiery and flowing. Hold onto the hems of your skirts, there'll be nine centuries of rebellion, poetry, blood, hunger, whisky, and craic.

Admission is free; donations are appreciated to help Upstairs at Town Hall continue to bring unique arts and cultural events to the beautifully restored Chester Town Hall Theater.

Upstairs at Town Hall is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit community group.

Fingerstyle guitar class with Hiroya Tsukamoto

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Internationally acclaimed fingerstyle guitarist Hiroya Tsukamoto will lead an intimate, informal masterclass for players of all levels of ability and accomplishment at on Sunday, March 15, at 11 a.m., at Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge Street in Bellows Falls, Vt., in advance of his 2 p.m. concert. This workshop is limited to 10 participants; register at www.stage33live.com.

Tsukamoto will demonstrate fingerstyle techniques, including chords and basic theory, breaking down elements such as tone and rhythm, explaining how to apply them to a practice routine. Wisdom on scales, tunings, improvisation, and more to help players improve and expand their talents will be presented with kindness, patience, and easy laughter by one of

the best fingerstyle players in the world. Questions will be warmly received. Bring your own instrument. A discounted class-plus-concert bundle is available.

Feel free to bring a lunch to eat after the class, or to pop out to a local restaurant before the concert.

Born and raised in Kyoto, Japan, Tsukamoto received a scholarship to Berklee College of Music and came to the U.S. Since then, he has been performing internationally, including at the United Nations, the Blue Note in New York, and on Japanese national television. He is a dizzyingly agile fingerpicker, who chooses beauty over bombast. His concert performances are an eclectic, immersive, and mesmerizing impressionistic journey filled with earthy, organic soundscapes rich in subtle detail.

Art at the Barn reception for Evan Musgrave

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – West River Coffee Barn invites the community to the next installment of its Art at the Barn series, featuring photographer Evan Musgrave. An opening reception will be held on Thursday, March 5, from 5:30-7 p.m., at the Coffee Barn, located at 2309 North Main Street in Londonderry.

Musgrave's work explores place, memory, and the emotional resonance of landscapes shaped over time. Through patient observation and a deep familiarity with the region, Musgrave captures the quiet character of Londonderry and

Weston, revealing the atmosphere, history, and personal connections embedded in the land.

“We want West River Coffee Barn to be a place that celebrates and showcases the incredible talent connected to this community,” said owner Kristin Nelson. “Evan's work beautifully reflects the landscapes and landmarks that mean so much to the people who live here and return here.”

The exhibition features striking images of the region, including local landmarks such as Magic Mountain, historic sites along the West River, Vermont's iconic stone walls, the familiar presence of the Vermont Country Store, and sweep-

ing seasonal landscapes and night skies. Each image invites viewers to slow down and consider not just how Vermont looks, but how it feels, and how it stays with us.

Musgrave's photography will be displayed on the Coffee Barn's gallery wall through April, with all pieces available for purchase.

The community is warmly invited to attend the opening reception to meet the artist, connect with neighbors, and enjoy light refreshments.

Local artists interested in participating in future Art at the Barn exhibitions can apply by completing the application available at www.wrcbvt.com.

Kalos with If You Must Know

PUTNEY, Vt. – Twilight Music welcomes two of the most exciting voices in contemporary Celtic music to Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill in Putney, Vt., on Friday, March 6, when the acclaimed trio Kalos shares the stage with the adventurous duo If You Must Know. The evening promises high-energy traditional folk infused with bold innovation, featuring pipes, fiddle, guitars, harp, and inventive arrangements that push tradition forward while honoring its roots. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., with the performance beginning at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available at www.nextstagearts.org.

Kalos (Eric McDonald, Ryan McKasson, and Jeremiah McLane) are masters of the traditional Celtic repertoire who thrive in its shadowed edges. Their music is rhythmically driven, richly textured, and alive with spontaneity and joy. Drawing from Scottish, Breton, American, and other traditions, the trio forges a contemporary sound marked by deep artistic integrity and thrilling interplay.

Opening the evening, If You Must Know (harpist Rachel Clemente and piper Dan Houghton) bring a gritty, avant-garde edge to Scottish traditional music. Firmly grounded in tradition, yet unafraid to challenge its boundaries, the duo blends original compositions with reimagined

melodies, placing them at the forefront of New England's Celtic folk scene. Both musicians are award-winning performers and composers with international touring and teaching experience, and their performances are marked by intensity, imagination, and fearless musicianship.

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Garden club scholarship

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Members of the Springfield Garden Club are delighted to share that they are accepting applications for their 2026 Springfield Garden Club Scholarship. Students who are eligible to apply include graduating seniors who are attending or are eligible to attend (i.e., the student is being homeschooled) one of the following Vermont high schools: Springfield High School (Springfield), Green Mountain Union High School (Chester), Windsor High School (Windsor), or Bellows Falls Union High School (Westminster). This

scholarship may be awarded to someone who has received the Springfield Garden Club's scholarship in previous years.

Students to be considered should be studying in the fields of forestry, horticulture, landscape design, natural sciences, environmental studies, or related fields. Further education can include two-year or four-year college/university/technical college, certification, or internship programs.

There will be two \$2,000 scholarships available for 2026. Interested students are encouraged to speak with their guidance offices

at their school for details, or to visit www.springfieldgardenclub.org to download an application. Applications are due May 1.

For more than 100 years, the purpose of the Springfield Garden Club has been to provide a social framework for education and community service in the areas of gardening, beautification, and conservation, and to coordinate the activities of the club with those of the Federated Garden Clubs of Vermont in order to advance our mutual aims.

BDCC Leadership Series

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) will host the next session of the Windham County Leadership series on Thursday, March 12, from 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m., at the North Barn, 136 Farmhouse Square, Brattleboro, Vt. The event, titled "The Blueprint for Growth: Financing and Managing Local Development," will focus on practical strategies to advance housing and infrastructure in Windham County through coordinated state and local ac-

tion. Register at www.brattleborodevelopment.com/event/wls-housing.

Vermont is at a crossroads, where the demand for housing and modern infrastructure meets the reality of rising costs and complex regulations. This session of the Windham Leadership Series is designed to provide local leaders with tools and an in-depth exploration of topics including strategic financing, infrastructure and policy, state alignment, the municipal "playbook," and innovative delivery.

Featured panelists include State Treasure Mike Pieciak; Jessica Hartleben,

of the Vermont Economic Progress Council; Alex Farrell, commissioner of the Department of Housing and Community Development; Dominic Cloud, city manager of Saint Albans; and Miro Weinberger, executive director of Let's Build Homes.

Each session features a speaker who is achieving results, someone with practical experience, strong data, or insights that help us see new possibilities for Windham County. The series will support practical learning and encourage participants to compare notes with peers navigating similar decisions.

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