



THE Vermont Journal

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Ludlow DRB considers demolition of 136 Main Street

BY PAULA BENSON
The Vermont Journal

LUDLOW, Vt. - Toga5 LLC, represented by Reeves Consulting, of Chester, appeared before the Ludlow Development Review Board (DRB) on Monday, March 9, to present their plans for the properties located at 130 and 136 Main Street in Ludlow.

The application from Toga5 asked for approval to remove the existing building at 136 Main Street, the former Book Nook location, to construct a three-floor, six-unit residential structure, with two two-bedroom units on each floor. The plan proposes to

tear the building down to its foundation. Next door, the Pot Belly Pub, which stood empty at 130 Main Street for years, was demolished on Dec. 16, 2025, and the vacant lot is up for sale.

Although the same group technically owns both properties, the ownership is through two separate LLCs, according to Ted Reeves, of Reeves Consulting.

The applicants provided the DRB with an index of documents submitted for their review, including floor plans, building elevations, and a parking plan. The parking area will be divided between the two properties. The petition-

ers have reviewed their plans with Fire Chief Ben Whalen and Erin Ladd, the planning and zoning director for Ludlow.

DRB member Doug Sheehan asked if a "police letter" was required, to which Ladd responded, "I will make that a condition of the permit."

One resident voiced his concern about what will or will not happen after the building is torn down. "I'm not sure what's better, to leave the building, or tear it down and leave chain link fence around it," the man stated, referencing the demolition of the old pub. "I don't think it looks good for the town."

Although the DRB questioned the parking plan, which would require co-occupants of both properties, the hearing was adjourned without further pushback. No further inquiry into plans for 130 Main Street was pursued. The permit proposal was approved by the board, pending receipt of the requested letter from the police department.

Puzzle page winner

Congratulations to Mike Kohler, of Springfield, for winning our puzzle page contest drawing! Mike has selected the \$75 gift certificate to Leslie's Tavern. Look out for our next puzzle page contest in our April 8 paper for your next chance to win.

Weekly SUDOKU									King Crossword										
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Chester votes down local options tax at Town Meeting

BY NICK GIBERTI
The Vermont Journal

CHESTER, Vt. - Chester's 2026 Town Meeting was held on the traditional first Tuesday in March, with many Chester voters turning out to vote on the controversial 1% local options tax proposed by the selectboard.

First, however, voters heard from Rep. Thomas Charlton, Chester's delegate to the Vermont House of Representatives. Charlton expressed some frustration with what he perceived as the state legislature's inaction on education reform. "There is a lot of hesitance in Montpelier...almost a resistance to changing the way we do [education] funding," Charlton said, emphasizing that he "will not vote for an education budget that does not include funding reform."

Charlton also explained that he has coauthored a bill to complement the Community and Housing Infrastructure program passed in the last legislative session, which he said was useful to larger municipalities, but "enormously complex when it comes to rural communities." Charlton explained that a part of his bill "involves a program to bulk purchase off-site manufactured homes, because that is how we get a better price," and then distribute smaller numbers to contractors who can place them where they are needed several at a time.

Sens. Joe Major and Alison Clarkson also spoke at the meeting, giving similar commentary to that which they gave in Ludlow, also addressing the issues of education reform and health care costs. Clarkson also announced her upcoming retirement at the end of the legislative session.

Voting on the floor then began with Article 4 - Articles 1-3 were to be voted on by Australian ballot the following day, March 3.

Article 4 proposed to purchase a new police cruiser

at the cost of \$70,000, to replace one "at the end of [its] useful life." With minimal discussion, the article passed.

Next was Article 5, asking voters to approve \$100,000 for continued repaving of Route 35, as well as the purchase of an easement on Thompson Road. Town manager Julie Hance explained that two bridges need to be widened and replaced on alignment with Route 103, as they create dangerous intersections, and are narrower than the river channel that runs below them, creating ice jams. The article passed.

Article 6 was the town's general fund budget, in the amount of \$4,461,054.94, what Hance described as a "level service budget," maintaining the services the town currently provides, without adding or removing any. This represents an increase of approximately \$285,453, or 7%, over the previous year's budget. Hance said that this increased amount was "not a number we're in love with," but explained she believes that, due to increasingly volatile markets, the town's budget margins have been too narrow in the past. The town ended 2025, Hance said, with a \$250,000 deficit, a number which has not yet been audited. "If the markets are going to remain unstable and fluctuate, we need to plan a little better for the unknown," Hance told the assembled voters.

Chester resident Jerene Slivinsky rose to express her concerns with the ever-increasing cost of the budget, noting that, "The cumulative increase for this town for the past four years will be over 33%." Slivinsky said she believes the town should be looking at service reductions in order to keep Chester affordable for residents. She also said she believes voting on the budget on the floor is "intimidating," and could keep voters from expressing their true wishes, preferring instead a

vote by ballot.

Hance explained that, "Many years ago, the voters voted to have all special articles voted from the floor at Town Meeting," but that this could be changed with a warned article at next year's Town Meeting, and would then take effect at Town Meeting in 2028.

Upon being put to a vote, the budget passed as proposed.

Next was Article 7, the proposed 1% local options tax on rooms, meals, and consumed alcohol, which proved no less controversial at Town Meeting than it had at previous selectboard meetings. The revenue generated by the tax would have been used to fund the Chester Housing Commission, which is tasked with finding ways to increase available housing in the town.

Many Chester residents expressed their disapproval of the tax, with objections ranging from opposition to further taxation of already rising prices, to the perception that the tax would make Chester a less desirable town to visit, or in which to open a business. Some, such as resident Randy Miles, a candidate for the GMUSD school board in the following day's election, also objected to 25% of the revenue from the tax being handed over to the State of Vermont. "We're also giving a generous portion back to the state," Miles said, "and I don't think they're really doing the job to help us out as much as we would like."

Others, however, expressed support for the tax, including Planning Commission Chair and zoning administrator Hugh Quinn, who said he has never made a decision on where to eat or stay based on whether the municipality charges

See CHESTER on Page 2

Plymouth Town Meeting, Woodstock school district passes \$112 million bond

BY SHAWN TAE WEBB
The Vermont Journal

PLYMOUTH, Vt. - The Town of Plymouth was among seven towns in the Mountain View School District (MVSD) to vote at their Town Meeting on the proposed \$112 million bond for the new construction of Woodstock Union High School and Middle School. All of the towns' ballots in the district, including Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock, were combined for an overall district tally, which passed. Plymouth also passed the MVSD budget.

State Rep. Charlie Kimbell held a discussion after the meeting, regarding the "unfinished business" of Act 73. According to the Vermont Agency of Education, the act "is a major Vermont education reform law designed to restructure school governance, funding, and quality. It aims to create more equitable and sustainable schools by implementing a weighted student funding formula, consolidating districts into larger regional entities, establishing minimum class sizes, and regulating public tuition payments."

Kimbell reported the legislature is looking at much larger school districts, reducing the number from 119 to five. However, the process has been slow, Kimbell explained, as public sentiment is largely against forced mergers. "Map wars" have ensued as residents and legislators attempt to protect their own schools' interests in the redistricting process. Kimbell confirmed at the meeting that, as the town was preparing for the bond vote the following day, they were in the redistricting map for Woodstock, and not Rutland.

Plymouth's town moderator Thomas Harris brought Town Meeting to order, and went over Articles 1-5, which were all voted on by Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3. Harris was reappointed

as town moderator, and Jay Kullman was reappointed to the selectboard for a three-year term.

Voters approved Article 2, to appropriate \$150,000 annually, for three years, to a fire truck equipment reserve fund. During the meeting, Fire Chief Jim Allen expressed that the fire department is trying to "get ahead and prepare for future use" of the equipment. They are trying to be proactive, in order to purchase an automatic truck that would be more accessible and easier for anyone to drive.

Article 3 established a future emergency highway and natural disaster reserve fund for roads, culverts, and bridges, and Article 4 approved the amount of \$100,000 to be appropriated to that fund.

Article 5 increased the tax exemption for eligible veterans from \$10,000 to \$40,000. The exemption only applies to a home that is owned by the veteran or survivor, and is their primary residence.

The remaining Articles 6-10 were voted on the floor at Town Meeting. The town approved \$16,089.50 to human services and organizations, and an increase to the annual appropriation to Okemo Valley TV from \$800 to \$1,400.

Board Chair Jay Kullman made a presentation on the town's budget, explaining that taxes are going down in 2027 as their new fire truck was paid off in 2024, 2025, and 2026. The general fund for 2026 is at \$979,844, due to "conservative budgeting." Kullman explained, "We probably collected a little bit more in taxes than we needed to, and spent a little less than we anticipated...We may be holding a little bit too much, and should think about how to put some of that into the reserve funds."

Reserve funds for 2026 stand at \$982,006, which will be used this year to replace the grader and to pay for the town's reappraisal.

The town budget of \$1,924,659.94, with \$1,508,259.94 to be raised by taxes, was passed.

Article 9, to fix the salary for each selectboard member at \$1,600, the same as last year, was passed. Finally, the installments of property taxes, to be due

on Sept. 1, 2026, and Feb. 1, 2027, was approved.

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Ludlow Rotary Club welcomes new owner of Belmont General Store —

LUDLOW, Vt. — The Ludlow Rotary Club recently welcomed Alissa Chronert, the new owner of the Belmont General Store, as a guest speaker at a recent meeting.

Located in the center of Belmont village, the Belmont General Store has been a cornerstone of local life since it was founded in 1843. For generations, the store has served as a gathering place for residents and visitors in this small rural community.

For Chronert, the store represents more than just a business opportunity — it is deeply tied to her own family history.

Her connection to Belmont began in childhood, when her family owned a rustic camp in the area. She fondly recalls spending summers and winters at the cabin, where life was simple; candles provided light, lake water served for bathing, and buckets of water were used to flush the toilet.

Even after graduating from college and moving to New York City, Chronert returned to Vermont nearly every weekend to enjoy the outdoors and reconnect with the place she loved. Those memories made a lasting impression, and ultimately led her back.

“When the store went on the market in 2020, it really caught my attention,” Chronert said. “It holds so many memories for me, my family, and the people in town. At the time, I was



Alissa Chronert and Kevin Barnes. PHOTO PROVIDED

also planning my wedding, so I wondered if I could really take on a general store as well. But it felt like a fun adventure and a great way to give something back to the community, especially since the store had been closed for so long.”

In 2023, Alissa and her husband Michael, a professional triathlete, purchased the property and began an extensive renovation project to restore the historic building.

During the renovation, the couple made several fascinating discoveries hidden within the walls of the old store. Among the finds were newspapers dating back to the late 1800s, and an old Coca-Cola machine tucked away between the walls. Just days after uncovering the machine, a customer walked into the store and shared a childhood memory of buying soda from a Coke machine that once stood there — a moment that reinforced the deep connection many lo-

cal have to the building.

Today, the Belmont General Store is once again open seven days per week. The store offers a variety of Vermont-sourced products, along with beer, cider, and wine. A cafe and deli serve breakfast sandwiches, pastries, coffee, and espresso in the morning, while lunch features a selection of hot and cold sandwiches.

Family connections remain central to the business: Chronert’s brother owns the nearby Mount Holly Beer Company, and her father contributes by baking pastries for the store, including what she proudly describes as his particularly delicious croissants.

The store has already become a popular stop for snowmobilers looking for lunch during the winter season. Looking ahead, Chronert said they are exploring the possibility of offering gasoline to better serve traveling snowmobilers.

With the store once again bustling with activity, Chronert hopes it will continue its long tradition as a gathering place for the Belmont community.

Contact any rotarian if you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the Ludlow Rotary Club or attending as a guest at our Tuesday luncheons.

Magic Mountain Chili Cook-off raises more than \$1,000

LONDONDERRY, Vt. — The Magic Mountain Ski Area community turned out in force on Saturday, March 7, for the second annual Magic Mountain Outing Club Chili Cook-off, a lively afternoon event that raised more than \$1,000 to support the mountain’s Outing Club and the ski patrol.

Held at the Black Line Tavern, the event featured 11 different chili entries from local restaurants and individual chefs. Skiers and visitors streamed in throughout the sunny afternoon to sample the offerings, cast their votes, and enjoy live music on the deck from Sammy B.

In the restaurant category, Bromley Market took the Gold Award for best chili, with a close runner-up tie between New American Grill and Which Way Tavern.

The Individual Chef Award went to Keith

Walsh, for his crowd-favorite Two-Flush Chili.

Both winners received commemorative plaques courtesy of Dennis Duggan, along with custom aprons designed by Land Lake & Us Gift Shop.

With a festive apres-ski atmosphere and enthusiastic participation from skiers, locals, and visitors, organizers called the second annual chili cook-off a major success.

“We were thrilled with the turnout and the incredible support from the community,” said Kristin Nelson, an organizer of the event. “The funds



Lynn Bianculli from Bromley Market and Keith Walsh don their winning aprons. PHOTO BY KRISTIN NELSON

raised will help support future Outing Club events, as well as the volunteer ski patrol that helps keep Magic running safely all winter.”

Organizers say they look forward to hosting the chili cook-off again next winter, and hope to see the event continue to grow as a community tradition.

Fletcher Memorial Library discussion on internet safety

LUDLOW, Vt. — Join Fletcher Memorial Library on Friday, March 27, at 1 p.m., for a discussion about using the internet safely.

Learn how to stay safe while you surf the web. This presentation will cover the ins and outs of how to protect your personal information online. We’ll cover tips for staying safe in cy-

berspace, like safe browsing, how to recognize online scams, and when it’s OK — or not — to share your personal information online.

This Senior Planet/OATS/AARP program is brought to you by Black River Good Neighbor Services and Fletcher Memorial Library with support

from Godnick Adult Center and the Vermont Community Foundation.

Fletcher Memorial Library is located at 88 Main Street, Ludlow, Vt. For more information, visit www.fmlnews.org, call the library at 802-228-8921, or call Black River Good Neighbor Services at 802-228-3663.



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CHESTER

From Page 1

a local options tax. Resident Caroline Morgan also observed that, while many spoke of defending Chester’s businesses, “There will not be anyone to work

in those businesses if there isn’t a place to live.” Morgan said she knew people who had accepted jobs in Chester’s school system, only to rescind their acceptance when they were unable to find housing accommodations.



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After many residents had their say in the open forum, more than the required seven voters petitioned for the vote to be taken by paper ballot. When the votes were tallied, 59 voted in favor of the tax, while 76 voted against, and the article did not pass.

The remaining Articles 8-20, appropriating funding for local organizations providing social and health care services to Chester residents, all passed with minimal discussion.



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arts & entertainment

Dot-mandala workshop at Gallery at the Vault

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Back by popular demand, Gallery at the Vault is happy to offer a fun dot-mandala Workshop with Antje Ruppert on Saturday, March 28, from 2-4 p.m.

You will use special dotting tools to create your mandala. Ruppert will introduce the tools and their application, and will provide practice sheets and a series of patterns to try out for the perfect dot placement, namely a sort of half-round, almost bead-like dot, to create a 3D feel.

Once ready, you will be provided with an 8-inch by 8-inch sheet of heavy card stock in a variety of colors, on which the center is already marked for the placement of the first dot. You will be given a strip of six small paint pots, and can choose from a variety of acrylic paints. This is a very



Aniji dot mandalas.

PHOTO PROVIDED

meditative and calming creative experience, and absolutely beginner-friendly.

Take your paint pots home for your own creations. Ruppert will explain how tools can be fabricated from things you have at home, e.g., toothpicks, cotton swabs, dowels, pencils with erasers, etc.

The cost of the workshop is discounted for gallery members. Register by

Wednesday, March 25.

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

Singer-songwriter showcase

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present a singer-songwriter showcase featuring Andrea von Kampen, Early Risers (Putnam Smith and Ashley Storrow), Jake Klar, and Lizzy Mandell at Next Stage, on Friday, March 20, at 7:30 p.m.

Von Kampen is a Nebraska-born singer-songwriter known for her introspective storytelling and captivating melodies. She has shared the stage with Watchhouse, Punch Brothers, The Wood Brothers, and Anaïs Mitchell's Bonny Light Horseman; released three studio albums; and performed at the Newport Folk Festival and Rocky Mountain Folks Festival. Headlining tours across North America and Europe, her music has reached a global audience with more than 55 million Spotify

streams. In 2022, von Kampen made her acting debut in the independent film "A Chance Encounter," distributed by Samuel Goldwyn, starring and contributing to its soundtrack. This fall, she will release a protest EP addressing the resurgence of hateful rhetoric in American politics.

Early Risers combine rootsy, lyric-driven songwriting with close vocal harmonies and multi-instrumental arrangements, including banjo, guitar, mandolin, piano, and shruti-box. After pursuing solo careers, Storrow and Smith joined forces in 2015, and have toured nationwide, from Maine, to California, and Vancouver, B.C. Their debut album, "Making Life Sweet," reached No. 1 on the Folk DJ Charts, with four songs in the top 10 most-played tracks.

Klar blends rhythm, groove, grit, and honesty into a fresh Americana sound that fuses folk sincerity with rock and pop sensibilities, crafting music that connects listeners to meaningful stories and emotions.

Mandell has released two albums: "Made for Flying" (2012), which won Times Argus/Rutland Herald Tammie Awards for Best Singer-Songwriter and Best Album, and "To the Moon" (2025), created in collaboration with Vermont multi-instrumentalist Colin McCaffrey.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in Putney, Vt. Tickets are discounted in advance at www.nextstagearts.org. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

Vermont Comedy All Stars

PUTNEY, Vt. – Get ready for an unforgettable night of laughter as Gordon Clark and the Vermont Comedy All Stars return to Next Stage Arts for a live stand-up comedy showcase on Friday, March 27. Doors open at 6:45 p.m., with the show starting at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are available discounted in advance at www.nextstagearts.org. The evening features a lineup of Vermont's finest comedic talent.

Zoe Bernstein, a local comic and proud owner of a 2014 Toyota Corolla, has shared the stage with nationally touring comedians including Ryan Hamilton and Danny Jolles.

Julia Colasanti, Midwest-born and nationally experienced, has performed at the Laugh Factory Chicago, and

opened for headliners such as Amy Miller, Jay Larson, and Yamaneika Saunders. She also produces a monthly themed comedy show at Lincoln's in Burlington.

Tracy Dolan, a Burlington-based comedian, draws humor from her romantic misadventures and parenting experiences. She has performed at the Boston Women in Comedy Festival, and NYC's She-Devil Comedy Festival, and has opened for Gary Gulman, Hari Kondabolu, and Cameron Esposito.

Mo Doukhi, originally from Lebanon and raised as a Palestinian refugee, brings a darkly humorous perspective paired with charm, having opened for national acts at the Vermont Comedy Club.

Eric Dreibratt, currently based in Brooklyn, combines his comedic and puzzling skills, having performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and hosted shows from Burlington to New Orleans.

The show is produced and hosted by Gordon Clark, director of the nonprofit Vermont Comedy All Stars, which has produced more than 100 shows across Vermont since 2020. Clark, Vermont's oldest regularly performing comedian, continues to bring laughter to audiences statewide.

Join the Vermont Comedy All-Stars for a night of wit, humor, and unforgettable stand-up at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, Putney, Vt.

Vermont poet laureate at Chester Town Hall

CHESTER, Vt. – On Saturday, March 21, at 1 p.m., Vermont Poet Laureate Bianca Stone returns to Chester Town Hall to present her "The State of Poetry" project, a traveling community-building initiative in which she will share poems written by past Vermont poet laureates that illuminate and speak to the world in which we live today. The event will underscore how poems and poets are vital to our state, connecting community members to the changing landscape, architecture, and wildlife, and to each other. At the

Chester event, Stone will focus on Vermont's first poet laureate, Robert Frost. Doors open at 12:30 p.m.

Says Stone, "I'm excited to really get deep into some of the poetry of my predecessors, and to bring really incredible poetry to people, in a room together, to really embody those poems, and speak to what happens when we do that. Every time I have a chance to read poems and talk about them with people in Vermont, something really exciting happens, and it's like an energy in the room."

Reading the poetry of the past poet laureates whom Stone's project will empha-

size, she says, "To engage with these poems does something really subtle and important to our consciousness and conscience. This is a time when we need to find voice to our complex and difficult feelings and realities. Poems are so important to our 'state,' right now, because we need to see one another, and we each need to feel seen. And we need most of all to see ourselves."

This program is offered free to the community. We ask for donations to allow Upstairs at Town Hall to continue to bring unique arts and cultural events to the beautifully restored Chester Town Hall theater.

Rising Tide performance space in Chester studio

CHESTER, Vt. – 2027 marks Barre Pinske's 20th year living and working in Chester, Vt. – and he's still finding new ways to surprise people.

Best known for his wooden bears, Pinske has built one of the more unlikely creative resumes in New England. His work has landed him on CNN Headline News three times, and in the pages of USA Today Weekend and The Boston Globe. A sculpture of his is placed in the entryway of Prince's Paisley Park Museum. During the Reagan administration, the Pentagon commissioned one of his "Bear in Eagle" pieces as a diplomatic gift to Russia during nuclear disarmament talks. All of the Aerosmith band members collect his work. In 2016, he finished in the top three out of a thousand entries in an A&E-sponsored reality competition, working with director Alex Strandling, of Fact8 in Bellows Falls. For 15 years, he produced the Big Buzz Chainsaw Carving Festival throughout the region.

His latest project is Pinske's Rising Tide, a dedicated performance space inside his 50 First Avenue studio, built around a passion for stand-up comedy, and a belief that rural Vermont deserves a real stage.

Open mics have been running since December, on alternating Saturday nights, at 8 p.m., and the response has been stronger than expected. Comics are traveling more than an hour to perform. Locals are showing up both to take the mic, and to enjoy the

show. Every performance is livestreamed and recorded to YouTube, and comics get a full 10 minutes – double what most open mics offer in larger markets, which Pinske says makes a real difference.

"Giving comics more time helps because they don't have to rush their jokes – there's actually room for people to laugh," he says. "The theater-style space and professional sound system put the focus where it belongs: on the performers."

Pinske points out that open mics have always been where comedy begins. Gilbert Gottfried's sister brought him to his

first one at 15. Dave Chapelle started as a teenager. Adam Sandler, who grew up in New Hampshire, was encouraged by his brother to try one, and the rest is history.

"The fact that we have a pro-level space in a rural area and can broadcast to the whole world is really cool," says Pinske. "Who knows – the next big talent might come right out of Chester, Vt."

All are welcome. Admission is free. Nonalcoholic drinks and snacks are served.

Upcoming dates are Saturday, March 20, and every Saturday starting in April, all at 8 p.m.

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real estate

DIRECTORY/COMMUNITY

2026 moving preparation checklist

REGION – If you're planning to buy a home this year, 2026 is already shaping up to be an exciting one. There's a lot to look forward to. At the same time, preparing for move-in can raise plenty of practical questions. To help make the transition smoother, here's a simple guide you can use as you get closer to closing day.

Update your address

Once you have a confirmed move-in date, it's a good time to start planning your address updates. Begin with a USPS change-of-address form timed for your move-in day, to ensure your mail follows you. From there, create a checklist of organizations to notify, including your employer, banks, credit cards, insurance providers, health care offices, loyalty programs, and any subscription services you rely on.

It's also smart to review your state's requirements for updating your driver's license and vehicle registration so you're ready to tackle

those shortly after settling in. Keeping a list in your phone makes it easier to track what's been updated, and what's still pending.

Make utility setup simple

Getting your utilities lined up before move-in will make your first few days much more comfortable. Most homes require electricity, water, gas, trash service, internet, and sometimes home security. Since providers vary depending on where you're buying, comparing options ahead of time helps avoid last-minute scrambling.

Secure the right insurance

Insurance is a key part of preparing for homeownership. Before closing, you'll choose a homeowners insurance policy that protects your property, belongings, and personal liability. Coverage varies by policy, so take time to understand what's included, and whether additional protections like flood or windstorm insurance might be appropriate for your area.

As you get closer to closing, you'll see an insurance option through Covered, a digital insurance marketplace that helps you explore and manage your coverage, built right into your loan tasks. It's there simply to save you some time if you want to compare a few choices without hunting around. You can use it, or you can go with your own agent, whatever feels easiest for you.

First-day and first-week checklist

When you walk into your new home for the first time, a few early tasks can help you feel grounded and confident: (1) change or reprogram exterior locks; (2) test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors; (3) locate the main water shut-off valve and breaker box; (4) replace HVAC filters and review the system's maintenance schedule; (5) do a quick, thorough clean before unpacking; (6) Set up essential rooms first like the kitchen, bedrooms, and bathrooms; (7) confirm local trash and recycling pickup details; (8) make a

note of any items you want to repair, update, or keep an eye on.

Once you've handled the essentials, a few simple habits can help you get off to a strong start. Setting reminders for routine home maintenance, creating or bookmarking your online mortgage account, and taking "before" photos of each room are all small but im-

portant steps. They'll help you stay organized as you make your new place feel like home.

If you're moving into a new neighborhood, introducing yourself to neighbors can also make your transition smoother and help you feel connected right away.

Looking ahead to a great year

Focus on the steps that

matter most, and let the rest unfold naturally as you settle into your new space.

If you have questions as you prepare for homeownership or need help navigating any of these steps, I'm always here to support you along the way.

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

Governor's Institutes of Vermont summer programs

REGION – Vermont high school students currently in grades 9-11 are invited to apply for immersive, career-focused summer learning experiences held on Vermont college campuses. Applications are due by March 31 for the Governor's Institutes of Vermont (GIV) summer 2026 residential programs.

GIV institutes run for one to two weeks, and allow students to explore

a topic of interest through hands-on projects, expert instruction, and peer collaboration. Institute areas include arts, engineering, entrepreneurship, global issues and youth action, health and medicine, mathematical sciences, technology and design, and weather and climate science.

New in 2026, GIV is partnering with UVM to bring the health and medicine institute to Burlington, to work with their expert professors and health care professionals. Alongside learning about careers from nursing to respiratory therapy, biomedical research to dentistry, and surgery to psychology, students will have the opportunity to earn a Vermont Emergency First Responder (VEFR) certifi-

cation, which allows them to work on local ambulance crews.

Programs are designed to be accessible to all Vermont families, with sliding scale tuition allowing students to attend for low costs.

Learn more and apply at www.giv.org. The application deadline is March 31.

The Governor's Institutes of Vermont is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. For 42 years, GIV has served more than 14,000 Vermont students, and each year more than 75% of them require financial assistance. Community support helps ensure that all interested Vermont students can participate, regardless of family income. To learn more about supporting GIV, visit www.giv.org/support.

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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
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OPINION/LEGALS

obituaries

Stanton L. Bessey, 1943-2026

JUPITER, Fla. – Stanton Lee Bessey, affectionately known to friends and family as “Skip,” passed away peacefully on Feb. 16, 2026, in Jupiter, Fla. Born on Sept. 4, 1943, in Springfield, Vt., Skip was a selfless and generous father, who will be missed dearly.

Skip enjoyed a rewarding career at Northrop Grumman, from which he retired after many years of dedicated service. In his leisure time, he found joy in restoring motorcycles, a hobby that allowed him to combine his love for mechanics with his appreciation for craftsmanship. He had a deep affection for the Southwest, its landscapes and culture holding a special place in his heart. Additionally, he was an avid fan of old Westerns, often sharing his enthusiasm for these classic films with those around him by watching them at full volume.

Skip was preceded in death by his beloved wife Janice Lee Bessey. He is survived by his loving daughter Jill Ellen Prince, her husband Jack Prince, and his devoted son Jason Matthew Bessey.



Stanton Bessey, 1943-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

He leaves behind two cherished grandsons Jake Stanton Bessey and Luke Clai-bourn Bessey, a dear niece Noelle Renee Gariety, along with numerous friends and acquaintances who had the privilege of knowing him.

In keeping with Skip's wishes, his family will gather privately to celebrate his life. While he may no longer be with us, the memories of Skip's warmth, humor, and passion for life will remain in the hearts of those who loved him.

Skip's journey has come to an end, but his legacy lives on through the stories, laughter, and love he shared with his family and friends.

Raymond G. Thibeault Jr., 1962-2026

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Raymond George Thibeault Jr., 63, died Feb. 24, 2026, at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. He was born Sept. 21, 1962, at Alice Peck Day Hospital in Lebanon, N.H., the son of Louise Hattie (Healy) Thibeault.

Ray had a passion for painting houses, and started his own painting business in his early 20s, Ray's Painting. Ray had his business for 43 years, and traveled all over New England painting houses and churches. On Aug. 20, 1983, he married Denise White, of Springfield, Vt., and they were together for 44 years.

Ray is survived by his wife Denise White, of Springfield, Vt.; their three sons Raymond C. Thibeault, of Springfield, Vt.; Joshua D. Thibeault, of Springfield, Vt.; and Matthew J. Thibeault and his wife Melissa, of Virginia; stepson Nathan and his wife Elizabeth White, of Springfield, Vt.; two grandchildren Cayden and Andon White, of Springfield, Vt.; sisters Laura (Thibeault) Bebee



Raymond Thibeault, 1962-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

and her husband Bob, Julie (Fadden) Day and her husband Steve, and Lottie Fadden, of Unity, N.H.; and many nieces and nephews.

Ray was the president of the Westview Tennant association in Springfield in the 90s. Ray also loved putting on the Halloween haunted house and haunted hayride for the kids in Springfield. Ray loved hunting, but really enjoyed fishing and camping at Lake Champlain. Ray was predeceased by his mother Louise (Healy) Thibeault, and a daughter who passed at birth in 1983. There will be no calling or services, as these were Ray's wishes.

Letter to the Editor: Ludlow town and village merger

Dear Editor,

I wish to thank those in Ludlow who attended our annual Town Meeting on March 2, and those who voted on March 3. Your support of fiscal year 2027 budget items is very much appreciated! Tuesday, March 24, is another big day in Ludlow, when residents can vote for the town and village “merger.”

We currently have two sets of government – village and town – which creates redundancy and inefficiencies (two budgets, two systems of payroll, two systems of payment to vendors). Merging the town and village will create a single government structure. When it

comes to utilities (i.e., water, wastewater, and electricity), only those who pay for such utilities now will continue to pay for them, even with a merger. “Yes” for the merger is government consolidation. “Yes” for the merger will create operational efficiencies with a focus on improving program delivery and enhancing services across all of Ludlow's municipal departments. I urge everyone to vote “yes” to the Ludlow Plan of Merger on March 24.

Sincerely,
Penny Wu
Ludlow Municipal Manager

Shirley Freeman, 1934-2026

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Shirley Freeman, 91, died Saturday, March 7, 2026, at the Gill Odd Fellows Home in Ludlow, Vt. She was born on Aug. 31, 1934, in Rutland, Vt., the daughter of Solan and Lottie (Whitney) Todriff.

She married Lawrence Freeman; he predeceased her in 2018.

Shirley worked as a housekeeper in private homes in the area for many years.

She enjoyed arts and crafts with her daughters, scrapbooking, quilting, sewing, knitting, and drawing. She also enjoyed playing cards

with her family.

She is survived by two sons Ricky Freeman, of Claremont, N.H., and James Freeman, of Brookfield, Vt.; son-in-law Theodore Foster, of Springfield, Vt.; six grandchildren; and several great-grandchildren.

She was predeceased by her husband, two daughters Betsy Foster and Marlene Freeman, and two grandchildren Danny Foster and Mandy Foster.

A graveside service will be held at a later date.

Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield, Vt., is assisting with arrangements.

Robert Merriam, 1935-2026

LUDLOW, Vt. – Robert “Bob” Merriam, 90, passed away peacefully at home on March 8, 2026, after a brief fight against cancer. He was born on July 12, 1935, the son of Harold and Earline Merriam, of Bridgewater, Vt.

Following high school in Woodstock, Vt., Bob attended Wentworth Institute of Technology, and graduated in 1955 with an engineering degree. He resided in Ludlow, Vt., for more than four decades, enjoying hunting, fly fishing, hiking (completing the Long Trail end to end), gardening, and playing Double King Pead with family and friends at the family deer camp in Plymouth. He spent his working life primarily at Jones & Lamson in Springfield, Vt., as a machine tools engineer during the industry's heyday. He also had military service, being drafted into the Army Reserve in 1957, where he qualified as expert rifleman with a perfect score.

Bob married his high school sweetheart Shirley Perkins in 1956, and together had four children: Michael, Stephen, Deborah, and James. She preceded him in death in 1989.

Bob remarried in 1990 to JoAnn Thomas, and shortly thereafter they retired to

Florida for the next 15 years, where they basked in the warm weather and enjoyed the excellent fishing, and a vast expanse of friends and neighbors. Only Hurricane Ian in 2022 could change their retirement plans; they rode out being in the eye of the storm track with visiting daughter Deborah, and it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Shortly thereafter, they moved to Cavendish, Vt.

Bob is survived by sons Michael, Stephen, and James, of Maine, Montana, and Vermont respectively; daughter Deborah, of Alaska; stepdaughter Jill Thomas, of Henderson, Nev.; adopted daughter Kathleen Ehlers, of Ludlow, Vt.; nine grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. In remembering Bob, we know we “hit the lottery” to have him as a father and husband, and learned the right way to live our lives through the standards of character, decency, and humility he personified.

Bob wished for no service, and, in lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Bridgewater Congregational Church, P.O. Box 4, Bridgewater, VT 05034. A Celebration of Life will take place at a future date.

Letter to the Editor: VFW Post 771 2026 annual appeal

Dear Friends of VFW Post 771,

On behalf of VFW Post 771, we are reaching out during a critical time for our post. As a proud chapter of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, our mission has always been clear: to serve those who have served and to strengthen our local veteran community.

Today, Post 771 is facing significant challenges. Rising operating costs, decreased event revenue, decreased membership, and building expenses have placed a serious strain on our ability to remain open and operational. Without immediate support, our ability to continue serving local veterans is at risk. Your financial support will directly support (1) emergency assistance for veterans and families, (2) outreach and support programs for disabled and elderly veterans, (3) com-

munity events honoring military service, and (4) ongoing maintenance and operating expenses for Post 771.

Post 771 is more than a building. It is a place of fellowship, camaraderie, advocacy, and assistance for those who answered our nation's call. For many veterans, it is a lifeline.

We respectfully ask you to consider making an annual donation to help sustain our mission. Every dollar makes a measurable difference, and ensures we continue supporting veterans. Thank you for your continued support of those who sacrificed so much. Feel free to contact me at 802-885-6008 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Ronald Farrar
Post 771 Commander and Vietnam veteran

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 & The Shopper.

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.

Richard A. Jacobs, 1952-2026

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Richard Allan “Jake” Jacobs, 74, of Springfield, Vt., passed away March 8, 2026. Born Jan. 2, 1952, in Midland, Mich., he graduated from South Burlington High School in 1970 and later served in the United States Army, receiving an honorable discharge in 1978.

Jake owned and operated Jake's South Street Market in Springfield for more than 45 years. Under his leadership, the small convenience store grew into a popular local market known for its deli items, meats, and takeout meals. Known for his strong work ethic and personable nature, Jake built lasting relationships with customers and community members.

An avid outdoorsman, he enjoyed hunting, traveling, gardening, and spending time at his land and hunting camp in Williamstown, Vt. He was also active in the Springfield Moose Lodge 679, where he served in leadership roles, including president, and received Moose International's prestigious Pilgrim Degree.



Richard Jacobs, 1952-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

He was predeceased by his mother Wilma Benson Jacobs Martin, and his brother Michael Jacobs.

He is survived by his stepfather Roy Martin, of South Burlington; his brother David Jacobs, of Venice, Fla.; his sisters Suzanne Martin Couillard (David), of North Hero, Vt., and Kathy Martin, of Georgia, Vt., and her fiancé Francis Whitney Jr., of Richford, Vt.; his partner Janet Makela, of Springfield, Vt.; and several nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life will be held May 16, at 1 p.m., at the Springfield Moose Lodge 679.

Trevor F. Watkins, 1969-2026

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Trevor Forrest Watkins, 56, passed away unexpectedly at home on March 8, 2026. He was born in Springfield, Vt., on Aug. 12, 1969, to Glenn and Ellen (Lambert) Watkins.

Trevor graduated from Springfield High School and began his career trucking. He drove cross-country for BDR, and for Stowmills more locally. He also worked for the City of Keene as a heavy equipment operator, and helped establish Two Neanderthals Smokin' BBQ. Trevor was a hardworking man, always providing for his family.

Trevor loved music; ATX, Alice in Chains, and Tool were his favorites. He loved sitting by the fire, the smell of the ocean, and pointing out awesome Peterbils. But, most importantly, he loved his children and grandchildren. He loved telling stories of his years trucking, and all the things he'd seen over the road. He always said Montana was the most beautiful place he'd ever been. It was so great that we all took an epic family vacation to Wyoming and Montana, where many beautiful memories were made.



Trevor Watkins, 1969-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

Trevor was predeceased by his son Nathaniel Watkins. Trevor is survived by his wife Melinda; his daughter Jessika Nadeau and son-in-law Matthew; his daughter Annalise Watkins and her significant other Daniel Weiser; his son Layne Watkins and his girlfriend Marlo Goodrich; his son Collin Watkins; his grandchildren Nora and Calvin Nadeau; his parents Glenn and Ellen; his sister Carrie and her husband Frank Fuller; many nieces and nephews; and his honorary son-in-law Ryan Bean.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation to the National MS society or Donate Life, as Trevor was the recipient of a lifesaving liver transplant in 2019.

BELLOWS FALLS VILLAGE CORPORATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

WATER MAIN FLUSHING

THE BELLOWS FALLS VILLAGE CORPORATION WATER SYSTEM WILL BE FLUSHED WEEKDAYS FROM 9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M. BEGINNING WEDNESDAY, April 1, 2026, AND CONTINUING THROUGH Thursday 30, 2026.

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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.

calendar

LEGAL NOTICES

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 20 – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join us online or in person at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street, every third Friday, at 10 a.m., 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 balancing postures will take inspiration from the vernal equinox. Walk into the library and join in person for free; there's no need to preregister. For online access, which includes all recordings, visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/88980.

MARCH 21 – CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, will serve the last turkey dinner of the season on Saturday, March 21. The menu will be turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, gravy, squash, cranberry sauce, a dinner roll, and assorted pie. There is a cost per meal. Please call 603-678-0433 before 3:30 p.m., and specify takeout or dine-in. Dine-in will begin at 4:30 p.m., and takeout meals can be picked up beginning at 5 p.m.

MARCH 24 – MOUNT HOLLY, Vt. – The Mount Holly Conservation Trust will hold a public

information and comment session about the proposed Vermont Conservation Plan (Act 59) on Tuesday, March 24, from 5-8 p.m., at the Mount Holly Community Center, 26 Maple Hill Road. The meeting is open to the public, and will begin with free pizza at 5 p.m., followed by an information and public comment session. Everyone is invited to participate.

MARCH 27 – LUDLOW, Vt. – The annual ham and kielbasa raffle hosted by the American Legion Auxiliary and the Sons of the American Legion will be held on Friday, March 27, starting at 5:30 p.m., at the Ludlow American Legion Post 36, 133 Main Street. All proceeds benefit veterans and youth programs. There will be 10 rounds, with numerous additional prizes per round. This event is open to the public, and all are welcome.

MARCH 28 – CHESTER, Vt. – On Saturday, March 28, a third No Kings Day, a nationwide day of protest, will be held in Chester. Residents of Chester and neighboring towns will gather in solidarity on the Chester Village Green, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., to reject authoritarianism and show the world what democracy really looks like. For more information and to register for this event visit www.mobilize.us/s/taGwYu,

or contact Steve Dock at styeve35@gmail.com.

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Academy Museum proudly presents "Love Letters" by A.R. Gurney, performed by George and Linda Thomson, on Saturday, March 28, at 7 p.m., at the Heald Auditorium in the Ludlow Town Hall, 37 Depot Street. This is a fundraiser for the museum. Tickets can be purchased the night of the event, or prior to the event at local businesses.

ROCKINGHAM, Vt. – Jamelot will be held on March 28, from 5:30-8:30 p.m., at Vermont Vines Vineyard, featuring wine tastings and live music. Our tasting room opens at 12 p.m., so feel free to come early, sip some of our finest wines, and get ready for an unforgettable evening. Come for the wine, stay for the tunes. We can't wait to see you there. There is a small cover charge; thank you for supporting local farms/music.

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – There will be a No Kings rally on Saturday, March 28, from 1-3 p.m., on Main Street in Charlestown. Please join the Charlestown Democrats and friends to peacefully protest against the actions of the Trump administration. Bring your own posters. For more information, email democratscharlestownnh@gmail.com.

APRIL 7 – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Tai Chi Vermont-certified teacher Jo Bregnard will teach a new tai chi form, bafa wubu, online and in person, on Tuesday, April 7, at the Springfield Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 21 Fairground Road. Recordings are available. Sponsored by Senior Solutions. All are welcome. Head to the meetinghouse, or, for access to the

livestream or recording, visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/92447 to sign up. For more information, email jo@jobregnard.com.

RECURRING EVENTS

SUNDAYS – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Catamount Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol meets Sundays, from 3:30-5:30 p.m., at Hartsess 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 – 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 603-5998.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – Women's pool games are played every Monday, from 9 a.m. – 12 p.m., at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights. Come be a part of this fun activity with likeminded women. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

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

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 – LUDLOW, Vt. – A gentle yoga flow class with strength building with bands and body to reconnect to your center, build strength, and invite ease into your body and mind will be held Wednesdays, from 10-11 a.m., at the Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street. All levels welcome. Mats and blocks available. Contact Lori Wright at loriwright163@gmail.com or 603-401-8123 to register, or with any questions.

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

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

WALPOLE, N.H. – Alcoholics Anonymous women's meeting, a

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

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.

W. TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Pizza night is held every Friday, 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.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – On Fridays, between Feb. 6 and April 10, AARP volunteers will be preparing taxes for seniors, for free, at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights. You must call Audrey at 802-345-5415 to schedule an appointment (please do not call the senior center directly).

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 Chester Housing Commission Opening

Looking for an opportunity to serve your community? The Town of Chester has an open position for appointment to the Housing Commission. Interested parties should submit a letter of interest to julie.hance@chestervt.gov or Town of Chester, P.O. Box 370, Chester, VT 05143 by March 27, 2026.

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!

Please call 802-875-7758 for more information and to register.

Cavendish Town Elementary School
573 Main Street, Proctorsville, VT

TOWN OF SPRINGFIELD ANIMAL LICENSE NOTICE

Animal Licenses are available at the Town Clerk's Office. A spayed/neutered dog license is \$16.00 before April 1st and an un-spayed/un-neutered dog license fee is \$20.00 before April 1st. All dogs and wolf-hybrids six months or over must be licensed by April 1 each year and wear a collar and tag at all times. A dog or wolf-hybrid without a tag is presumed to be unlicensed and is not protected by law. A tag must not be used on any dog or wolf-hybrid other than the dog or wolf-hybrid in the license bearing the corresponding number. If you are unsure if your dog/wolf-hybrid needs a new rabies vaccination before being licensed, please contact this office. Barbara A. Courchesne, Town Clerk CVC, 96 Main Street, Springfield, VT 05156 (802) 885-2104 FAX (802) 885-1617) townclerk@springfieldvt.gov.

Londonderry Planning Commission Hearing Monday 4/13/26 at 6:00 PM

The Londonderry Planning Commission will meet on Monday April 13, 2026, at the Londonderry Town Offices to solicit comments from the public on a proposed zoning bylaw amendment and a new zoning map. This amendment will change the zoning regulations for the entire town of Londonderry. It is designed to:

- align the town's zoning regulations with the planning goals in the Town Plan,
- addresses inconsistencies resulting from the many changes that have been made to state statutes since the zoning bylaws were last updated,
- fix shortcomings of the current regulations that had resulted in confusion or difficulties for applicants, the Administrative Officer, and the Development Review Board over the years,

The full text of the proposed amendment and the new zoning map are posted on the Planning Commission page of the Londonderry Web site, and paper copies are available for twenty dollars from the town clerk.

The table of contents of this proposed zoning bylaw includes: General Standards, Exemptions and Limitations, Prior Applications, Approvals and Uses, Nonconformities, Zoning Districts, General Zoning Rules, Site Design and Performance Standards For Commercial and Multi-Unit Housing Developments, Specific Use Standards, Subdivision Standards, Planned Unit Development (PUD) Standards, Administration and Enforcement, Fees and Filing Requirements, Zoning Permits, Commercial and Multifamily Home Development, Appeals, Notice Requirements, Hearings and Decisions, Violations and Penalties, and Definitions.

ROAD FOREMAN – TOWN OF WESTON, VT

The Town of Weston is seeking a full-time Road Foreman to oversee maintenance of town roads and supervise the road crew. Position includes equipment operation, project coordination, and emergency response including winter storm operations. CDL required or ability to obtain. Competitive salary and benefits.

Send resume and cover letter to: Town of Weston, PO Box 98, Weston VT 05161 or email selectboard@westonvt.org Full job description available at: www.westonvt.org Position open until filled. EOE.

NOTICE OF TAX SALE

The resident and non-resident owners, lien holders, and mortgagees of property in the Town of Andover, in the County of Windsor and State of Vermont, are hereby notified that the taxes assessed by such Town for the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 tax years remain, either in whole or in part, unpaid on the following described property in such Town, to wit:

It being all and the same lands and premises conveyed to Christopher T. Meyer and Kathleen R. Meyer by Quit Claim Deed of Bruce P. Meyer and Sylvia A. Meyer dated January 30, 2006 and recorded on February 3, 2006 in Book 48 at Page 451 of the Andover Land Records. Reference is made to the stipulation between Bruce Meyer and Sylvia Meyer and The Town of Andover, et al, dated January 24, 2006 and recorded on May 10, 2006 in Book 49 at Page 257 of the Andover Land Records. [E-911: 108 Gates Rd., Parcel #011000058.400]

And pursuant to 32 V.S.A. §5254, so much of such property will be sold at public auction at the Town of Andover Office, a public place located at 953 Weston-Andover Road, in Andover, Vermont, on the 10th day of April, 2026, at 11:00 a.m., as shall be requisite to discharge such taxes with costs, unless previously paid. Dated at Andover, Vermont this 4th day of March, 2026.

Jeanette Hazeltine, Collector of Delinquent Taxes

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

LEGAL NOTICES

classifieds

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repairing gravel driveways. Serving Springfield, Vt. area. Call/text 802-376-1168 or email ezdump.bl@gmail.com.

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LEVI ELECTRIC - 917-417-7880 levelectricvt.com - Trusted residential electrician with 10+ years experience. Upgrades, lighting, EV chargers, panels, service calls. Proctorsville-based. Quality work, fair pricing, free estimates.

FOR SALE

GRAFTON, Vt. - 2005 GMC Ser-

ria, SLE 2500HD DSL, 4dr/4wd, \$8500. 2020 GMC Sierra SLT 2500HD DSL, 4dr/4wd, Fisher V-plov, 5th wheel set up, side tool boxes, \$36,000. 2020 GMC Sierra SLT 2500HD DSL, 4dr /4wd, w/2025 Fisher V-plov and 2025 Fisher Sander, 5th wheel set up, \$46,000. Call 802-732-8494.

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TOWN & VILLAGE OF LUDLOW DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing before the Ludlow Development Review Board will be held on Monday April 13, 2026 at 6:00 P.M., in the Francis J. Heald Auditorium at the Ludlow Town Hall, 37 Depot Street, and via Zoom, to hear the following applications:

- Revival Ventures, LLC application SUB-26-002 subdivide a 23.64 Acre lot into two (2) lots of +/- 19.33 Acres and +/- 3.19 Acres.
- Mark and Nicole DeFeo application #128-98-PUD, Amendment #73, to construct a "Boot Room" on an existing deck at Okemo Trailside Condominiums.

The meeting Agenda will be available on Ludlow's Web page, www.ludlow.vt.us with the Zoom ID and the URL link.

Additional information about this application is available in the Planning and Zoning office at the Town Hall.

Erin Ladd, Director of Planning & Zoning

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WARNING

TOWN OF LUDLOW, VERMONT Town and Village Plan of Merger Vote March 24th, 2026

The legal voters of the Town of Ludlow, County of Windsor, State of Vermont, are hereby notified and warned of a special meeting to vote by Australian ballot on the following article, to be held at the Heald Auditorium in the Ludlow Town Hall at 37 Depot Street, Ludlow, Vermont on Tuesday, the 24th Day of March, 2026, between the hours of Ten o'clock AM, (10:00 AM) in the forenoon and seven o'clock, PM, (7:00 PM) in the afternoon.

Shall the Town of Ludlow approve the proposed "PLAN OF MERGER" of the Village of Ludlow into the Town of Ludlow, as approved by both the Town of Ludlow Selectboard and Village of Ludlow Trustees?

An official copy of the proposed Plan of Merger is on file and available for public inspection at the Town Clerk's Office at 37 Depot Street, Ludlow, VT 05149. Copies will be made available upon request. The Clerk's Office is open Monday - Friday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

A copy of the proposed Plan of Merger can be found online here: <https://www.ludlow.vt.us>

The legal voters of the Town of Ludlow are further notified that voter qualifications, registration and absentee voting relative to said Town Meeting shall be as provided in Chapters 43, 51 and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated. You must be registered to vote in the Town of Ludlow in order to vote at the aforementioned special meeting. Voters are encouraged to request an Early/Absentee Ballot from the Town Clerk's Office by calling (802) 228-2828 or (802) 228-3232 or email to ucook@ludlow.vt.us or ptodi@ludlow.vt.us

Dated at Ludlow, Vermont this 9th day of February, 2026.

TOWN OF LUDLOW SELECTBOARD:

But Sandy
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
Ulla Cook, Town Clerk

WARNING

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Dated at Ludlow, Vermont this 10th day of February, 2026.

VILLAGE OF LUDLOW TRUSTEES:

Rob Brack
[Signature]
[Signature]

ATTEST: *[Signature]*
Ulla Cook, Town/Village Clerk

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT

Windsor Unit

PROBATE DIVISION

Docket No.: 25-PR-05180

In re ESTATE of:

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Suzanne Rostan Decedent

late of Springfield, Vermont Decedent's Town of Residence

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

Dated: 3/9/2026 Signature of Fiduciary *[Signature]*

Executor/Administrator		Mailing Address	
Barry J. Polidor, Esq.		P.O. Box 279	
Phone Number	Email	City, State, Zip	
(802) 885-4530	polidorlaw@gmail.com	Springfield, VT 05156	

Name of Publication: Vermont Journal

Publication Date: March 18, 2026

Name of Probate Court: Windsor Probate Court
Address of Probate Court: 12 The Green
Woodstock, VT 05091

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Green Mountain Power Corporation

Project No. 2489-049

NOTICE OF APPLICATION READY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND SOLICITING COMMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, TERMS AND CONDITIONS, AND PRESCRIPTIONS

(March 10, 2026)

Take notice that the following hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection.

- Type of Application: Subsequent Minor License
- Project No.: 2489-049
- Date filed: October 31, 2022
- Applicant: Green Mountain Power Corporation
- Name of Project: Cavendish Hydroelectric Project
- Location: On the Black River, in the town of Cavendish, in Windsor County, Vermont.
- Filed Pursuant to: Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 791(a) - 825(r).
- Applicant Contact: John Tedesco, Green Mountain Power Corporation, 2152 Post Road, Rutland, VT 05701; Phone at (802) 655-8753, or email at John.Tedesco@greenmountainpower.com.
- FERC Contact: Samantha Pollak at (202) 502-6419, or samantha.pollak@ferc.gov.
- Deadline for filing comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and prescriptions: on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on May 11, 2026; reply comments are due on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on June 23, 2026.

The Commission strongly encourages electronic filing. Please file comments, recommendations, terms and conditions, and prescriptions using the Commission's eFiling system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/FERCONline.aspx>. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 10,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <https://ferconline.ferc.gov/QuickComment.aspx>. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov, (866) 208-3676 (toll free), or (202) 502-8659 (TTY). In lieu of electronic filing, please send a paper copy via U. S. Postal Service to: Debbie Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Debbie Anne A. Reese, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852. All filings must clearly identify the project name and docket number on the first page: Cavendish Hydroelectric Project (P-2489-049). The Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure require all interveners filing documents with the Commission to serve a copy of that document on each person on the official service list for the project. Further, if an intervener files comments or documents with the Commission relating to the merits of an issue that may affect the responsibilities of a particular resource agency, they must also serve a copy of the document on that resource agency.

k. This application has been accepted and is ready for environmental analysis at this time.

l. The Cavendish Project consists of: (1) a 111-foot-long concrete gravity dam with: (a) a 90-foot-long by 25-foot-high north spillway section topped with a 6-foot-high inflatable flashboard system and (b) a 21-foot-long by 6-foot-high south spillway section topped with 2.5-foot-high steel flashboards; (2) a 17.06-acre impoundment with a gross storage capacity of 18.4 acre feet at a normal water surface elevation of 884.13 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29) that extends approximately 3,000 feet upstream; (3) a 90-foot-long dike structure with an earthen crest of approximately 12 feet wide and composed of sheet pile and rock along the impoundment; (4) a 3-foot-wide downstream fish passage chute located on the north side of the spillway; (5) a concrete intake structure equipped with a mechanically operated headgate, and a trash rack with 2-inch clear bar spacing; (6) a 178-foot-long power tunnel that carries flow from the intake to a penstock; (7) a 6-foot-diameter, 1,090-foot-long penstock; (8) a 64-foot-long by 34-foot-wide powerhouse containing three turbine-generator units with a combined capacity of 1.44 megawatts; (9) a 100-foot-long, 12.5-kilovolt generator lead that runs from the powerhouse to a substation, which is the point of interconnection with the electrical grid; and (10) appurtenant facilities.

Green Mountain Power proposes to continue operating the project in a run-of-river mode with a continuous minimum flow release of 10 cubic feet per second into the bypassed reach. The project generates about 4,864 megawatt-hours annually.

m. A copy of the application can be viewed on the Commission's website at (<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 (P-9028). For assistance, contact FERC Online Support (see item j above).

All filings must (1) bear in all capital letters the title "COMMENTS," "REPLY COMMENTS," "RECOMMENDATIONS," "TERMS AND CONDITIONS," or "PRESCRIPTIONS;" (2) set forth in the heading the name of the applicant and the project number of the application to which the filing responds; and (3) otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 C.F.R. §§ 385.2001 through 385.2005. All comments, recommendations, terms and conditions or prescriptions must set forth their evidentiary basis and otherwise comply with the requirements of 18 C.F.R. § 4.34(b). Agencies may obtain copies of the application directly from the applicant. Each filing must be accompanied by proof of service on all persons listed on the service list prepared by the Commission in this proceeding in accordance with 18 C.F.R. §§ 4.34(b) and 385.2010.

You may also register online at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

n. 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.

o. The license applicant must file the following on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on May 11, 2026: (1) a copy of the water quality certification; (2) a copy of the request for certification, including proof of the date on which the certifying agency received the request; or (3) evidence of waiver of water quality certification.

p. Final amendments to the application must be filed with the Commission on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on April 9, 2026.

(Authority: 18 CFR 2.1)

Debbie-Anne A. Reese, Secretary.

health & wellness

Black River Good Neighbor Services strength training and community meals

LUDLOW, Vt. – Strength and balance training class combines exercise and information to help you build bone strength and aid in fall prevention. The class is a blend of current strategies for seniors seeking improved balance and strength. A low-impact routine, the class is intended

to strengthen the body and improve functional fitness. Functional fitness means training your body for everyday activities, and to make daily motion easier and safer.

Participants are introduced to an exercise routine intended to strengthen bones and improve bal-

ance through repetition and weight lifting with arms and legs. Offered free of charge by Black River Good Neighbor Services, classes are held at the Ludlow Community Center twice weekly. The class is free, open to all, and requires no special equipment or attire. Handheld weights and

ankle cuffs are available for participant use.

Community meals are offered on the first and third Thursdays of each month, at the Ludlow Community Center cafeteria. A full-course meal is provided, free of charge. Everyone is welcome to attend.

While the event is all

about food, socialization plays a vital role for many who attend. Friends, neighbors, and folks from the local area and beyond come to meet, share stories, and eat good, nourishing food. A wonderful benefit, the meal also offers an abundance of laughter and friendly faces. Follow-

ing meals, once a month, free bingo takes place with prizes, together with entertaining and educational programs. The event is offered by Black River Good Neighbor Services.

Article submitted by Black River Good Neighbor Services.

See what CSBCC has to offer

CLAREMONT, N.H. – At Claremont Savings Bank Community Center (CSBCC), we believe fitness should feel welcoming, supportive, and achievable for everyone. Whether you're just getting started, or have been active for years, our goal is simple: help you move better, feel stronger, and live healthier.

Located in Claremont,

N.H., CSBCC offers a friendly, community-focused environment where members of all ages and abilities can thrive. From our fully equipped fitness center to our indoor walking track, group exercise classes, and aquatic pools, there is truly something for everyone. We pride ourselves on creating a space where you feel comfortable walking through the doors

and confident working toward your goals.

Looking for motivation? Our certified personal trainers are here to help with customized workout plans, accountability, and encouragement every step of the way. Prefer the energy of a group? Join one of our many fitness classes designed to build strength, improve endurance, and keep you moving in a fun,

supportive setting. We also offer youth programs, senior fitness options, and seasonal specialty classes to keep things fresh and engaging.

Health and wellness go beyond exercise. At CSBCC, we are building a stronger community by providing opportunities for connection, recreation, and overall wellbeing. Whether you're walking the track

with a friend, participating in a challenge event, or simply carving out time for yourself, you're investing in a healthier future.

Our facility is more than a gym – it's a place where neighbors become friends, and goals become accomplishments. No intimidation. No pressure. Just progress at your pace.

If you've been thinking about taking the next step

in your wellness journey, now is the perfect time. Stop in, tour the facility, and see why so many in our community choose CSBCC as their home for fitness.

Stronger bodies. Healthier lives. A better community, together.

Article submitted by Claremont Savings Bank Community Center.

Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp, building stronger bodies and a stronger community

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – In the heart of Westminster, Vt., Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp is more than a gym. It is a community built on resilience, purpose, and family.

Originally founded in 2009, the business carries forward a legacy rooted in service and heart. After the passing of her mother in

2021, owner Sarah Dumont stepped fully into leadership with a renewed commitment to the mission that started it all: helping people live stronger, longer, more capable lives.

Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp specializes in 30-minute, coach-led, small-group strength and metabolic training sessions

designed for busy adults who want meaningful results without spending hours in the gym. Programs range from high-energy Boot Camp sessions to Fit Body Forever, a 60-and-older functional strength program focused on preserving muscle mass, protecting bone density, and supporting healthy aging.

What truly sets Fit Body apart is its culture. Members are greeted by name.

Milestones are celebrated. Birthdays are acknowledged. Every workout ends with "Family on three," because here that word is not just a phrase, it is a lived experience.

Beyond the gym floor, Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp is deeply committed to community outreach. From annual food drives supporting the Chester Andover Family Center, to diaper drives, holiday giving

programs, and local workshops centered on wellness and personal growth, the mission extends far beyond physical fitness. The team believes in strengthening not just bodies, but the broader community as well.

Under Dumont's leadership, the business has also expanded its investment in professional development and mentorship. Through internships, continuing education, and leadership training, Fit Body is creating meaningful career pathways in health and fitness right here in Vermont.

At its core, Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp stands for something simple but

powerful. Strength is about more than muscle. It is about resilience. It is about connection. It is about building a place where people feel seen, supported, and capable of more than they once believed.

For those looking for more than just a workout, Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp continues to demonstrate that small-town businesses can create lasting impact, one session, one relationship, and one stronger community at a time.

Article submitted by Sarah Dumont, owner, Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp.



Julie's Icare

Julie Richardson, Optician

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Claremont Savings Bank

Community Center

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Meeting Monthly:
The second Monday of each month

Where:
Fletcher Memorial Library
88 Main Street, Ludlow

When:
1 PM - 2 PM

For Information call: 802-228-3663

Offered by:
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UKULELE CLASSES

Learn to play the Ukulele!

Have you always been interested but don't know where to begin? This is a beginner class for learning to play the ukulele. No experience necessary! Come, join in, and have fun!


When:
March 11, March 25,
April 8, April 22,
May 13, May 27
11 AM - Noon

Where:
Ludlow Community Center
Free of charge

Provided by:
Black River Good Neighbor Services
Info: 802-228-3663




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health & wellness

Why conversations in restaurants can become harder to follow

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Many adults first notice hearing changes in places like restaurants, family gatherings, or other busy social settings. You may hear that people are talking, but following the conversation becomes more difficult. Voices blend together, background noise seems louder than it used to, and conversations require more effort than they once did.

This experience is very common, and often appears before someone would consider themselves

to have hearing loss. Speech understanding relies heavily on certain high-frequency sounds. Consonants such as S, F, TH, SH, and CH help make words clear and understandable. These sounds are softer than vowels, and are often the first to become harder to hear when hearing changes begin. When this happens, speech may sound less crisp, especially in environments with background noise.

Age-related hearing changes can start earlier than many people expect.

Everyday noise exposure from work, travel, social settings, and daily life can gradually affect the tiny hair cells in the inner ear that help detect sound. These changes typically impact clarity rather than volume at first. That is why many people say, “I can hear people talking, but I can’t understand what they’re saying.”

Restaurants and crowded places make listening even more challenging. Music, dishes, ventilation systems, and multiple conversations happening at the same time

create competing sounds. The brain must work harder to separate the voice you want to hear from all the surrounding noise.

Over time, this increased effort can lead to what many people describe as listening fatigue. Social situations that were once enjoyable may begin to feel exhausting, and some individuals may find themselves withdrawing from conversations or avoiding noisy environments altogether.

A hearing screening can help determine whether

these changes are affecting your hearing. Early screenings measure how well you hear softer sounds and how clearly you understand speech. Identifying hearing changes early allows you to better understand your hearing health, and explore solutions that can help improve communication and confidence in everyday situations.

At AudioNova Springfield, our experienced hearing experts are here to help you better understand your hearing and answer any questions you may have.

If conversations in restaurants or social settings have become more difficult, it may be time for a hearing check. Schedule a free hearing screening today. Visit us at 100 Springfield Plaza Road in Springfield, or call 802-213-5398 to speak with our team and learn more about your hearing health.

Taking the first step toward better hearing can make everyday conversations easier and more enjoyable again.

Article submitted by AudioNova.

Vernal equinox chair yoga at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – March’s monthly chair yoga class at the Springfield Town Library, on Friday, March 20, at 10 a.m., will celebrate the vernal equinox with energizing balancing postures. Join in person at 43 Main Street or online to learn accessible movements you can do right from your seat.

Chair yoga meets the third Friday of every month for 60 minutes. With attention to brain boosting and nervous system nourishment, each month’s practice will leave you feeling mobile yet grounded – relaxed, with energy to skip into your weekend.

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



Jo Bregnard leading a chair yoga class at Springfield Town Library. PHOTO PROVIDED

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 six chair-yoga videos recorded at the Springfield Town Library as soon as you register.

For more information, email jo@jobregnard.com.

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Chair massage coming to Neighborhood Connections

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Neighborhood Connections is now offering a chair massage program on a quarterly basis. It starts on March 24, then continues on June 2, Sept. 22, and Dec. 1, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Space is limited, so you must call us at 802-824-4343 to sign up for each session.

Sara Martin is a myofascial and neuromuscular

release (MFR). Unlike traditional deep tissue, which often relies on grinding pressure, her approach focuses on the body’s connective tissue (fascia). MFR is a sophisticated, sustained-pressure technique designed to unwind chronic restrictions at the root. While you will feel the profound depth of this work, it is a therapeutic “melt” rather than a forceful push. This is a restorative, neuromuscular

experience perfect for those seeking long-term mobility and a quieted nervous system.

If you are looking for a technical, results-driven treatment that respects the body’s natural rhythm, Martin offers a truly unique alternative to the standard resort massage.

Contact Neighborhood Connections at 802-824-4343 for more information, and to secure your place.

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PROS TO KNOW

MAPLE OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND, MARCH 21-22

Governor celebrates Maple Month with first tapping

CANAAN, Vt. – Vermont Gov. Phil Scott tapped a maple tree at April's Maple in Canaan today, to recognize the beginning of this year's maple season. With the winter weather still chilly but the sun growing

stronger by the day, today the governor joined April Lemay, her family, and Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Anson Tebbetts to tap a maple tree and join in the tradition of Vermont's maple season while cel-

brating the importance of this industry to the state's economy and culture.

"The annual tree-tapping event recognizes Vermont's maple industry and the hard working Vermonters who produce the best maple in the world," said Scott. "Their hard work and dedication year-round are why we continue to lead the nation in maple production and excellence."

Scott also signed a proclamation declaring the month of March as Maple Month in Vermont, saying, "Maple syrup is one of the most recognizable symbols in Vermont, and will continue to symbolize the hard work, craftsmanship, innovation, and creativity that

make Vermont the great state it is." Find the full proclamation at www.governor.vermont.gov/sites/scott/files/documents/Maple%20Month%20%28Proclamation%2026-11%29.pdf

April's Maple is located deep in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont, on 800 acres that has been in Lemay's family since 1937. Three generations of the Jackson family have tended to this land, and when the idea for April's Maple first surfaced, it was important to Lemay that the land continue to honor her grandparents Audrey and Elmont Jackson and their way of life by honoring what was important to them: family, appreciation for nature, and respect for our environment.

"Sugaring isn't easy work; Mother Nature likes to keep us on our toes, but the last 13 years have been so rewarding. Working with my family and an amazing team, we offer our visitors a memorable experience centered on Vermont maple syrup – from the production process to a maple-inspired cafe menu," said Lemay. "To us at April's Maple, maple syrup isn't just something great on your pancakes; it is our way of life that brings us together to laugh and share stories with longtime and



Gov. Scott tapping a maple tree at April's Maple in Canaan. PHOTO PROVIDED

new friends."

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets (VAAF) continues to work to support our producers with marketing programs, labeling and product quality inspections, and collaborations with the Vermont Maple Sugar Makers Association.

"Vermont is the nation's leading producer of maple syrup because of the hundreds of maple producers across our state," said Tebbetts. "Last season, Vermont producers once again outpaced the rest of the country, while creating some of the best-tasting maple syrup you can find. Their work has made maple syrup Vermont's second-largest agricultural product, behind milk, highlighting the industry's importance to our state."

The Green Mountain State has led the U.S. in

the number of maple taps every year since 1916, and was only out-produced in 1926 and 1918. In 2003, Vermont had 2.12 million taps, and has steadily increased that number to 8.4 million in 2024. Annual production prior to 1935 was typically between 1 million and 1.4 million gallons. This dropped to around 200,000 to 300,000 gallons in the 1970s. Since 2003, Vermont's maple syrup production has increased from around 500,000 gallons to 3.108 million gallons in 2024.

The 2025 maple season continued this tradition of maple dominance, with a total production of 3.06 million gallons, 8.35 million taps, 0.367 gallons yielded per tap, a total revenue of \$95 million, and an average retail price of \$58.30 per gallon, up \$1.10 since 2023.

COME JOIN US AT THE GREEN MOUNTAIN SUGAR HOUSE

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 Saturday - March 21st
 Sunday - March 22nd
10-5PM

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