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The cotillion continues under new direction

BY SHAWN TAE WEBB
The Vermont Journal

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The longstanding tradition of the cotillion continues! The competition of dance and etiquette, historically held by Springfield Hospital, is now under the direction of Joey Clafin, who runs her own in-home child care center, Happy Feet, and co-owns JC's Market and Deli with her husband, John. Clafin reported that she appreciates help from her

husband, behind the scenes assistance from Tammy Stagner, and continued support from photographer Marie Laplante. When Clafin learned that the hospital was discontinuing the Apple Blossom Cotillion, she didn't miss a beat in picking up where they left off. "I wanted to keep it going," she said happily. She volunteered for the event for four years, when her kids were young and participating as little contestants. Now, she has high



Participants rehearse for The Last Dance. PHOTO PROVIDED

and Springfield, and 11 little contestant couples. On Friday, they will name a Miss Congeniality and Mister Congeniality, and Most Improved. On Saturday, a queen and her court will be announced. The proceeds from ticket sales will go directly back to some of those competing. The queen and two members of her court will be awarded scholarships to use for higher education as they choose, such as college, trade school, or textbooks. Other funds will benefit the All-4-One after-school and summer program, in which many of the contestants are enrolled.

Tickets are discounted for seniors and students, and can be pre-purchased by using the QR codes included with this article. You can also purchase tickets at the door for the May 1 and 2 shows.

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Puzzle page winner

Congratulations to Gary Lescord, of Bellows Falls, for winning our puzzle page contest drawing! Gary has selected the \$75 gift certificate to Joy Wah. Look out for our next puzzle page contest in our May 6 paper for your next chance to win.

Weekly SUDOKU										King Crossword												
Answer										Answers												
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school seniors working in her store, and a daughter who is a senior, and didn't want to see the tradition go. Clafin admitted there is a lot of commitment to the event, but, though she and her husband are both working two full-time jobs, she is excited to continue. Playfully called "The Last Dance...Senior Style," Clafin says the event is the seniors' last hurrah before graduation, a new Springfield tradition. The theme is "The Mix Up," incorporating multiple genres of music. Though Clafin likes a good theme, she couldn't settle on just one, so there's a little R&B, hip-hop, contemporary, and country.

There will be some line dancing, and there's some comedy to it, Clafin added. There is sure to be a performance to please everyone in the audience. The Last Dance will be held customarily on Friday, May 1, and Saturday, May 2, at Riverside Middle School, at 7 p.m. both evenings. There are seven senior couples participating this year, from Claremont

Seniors/Students

Scan QR code for links to tickets

All Others

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Twin Falls Training Center moving to larger facility

BY JOE MILLIKEN
The Vermont Journal

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – The Twin Falls Training Center (TFTC), currently located on Spencer Drive in Bellows Falls, will soon be opening a new, significantly larger training facility located at 7994 U.S. Route 5 in Westminster, also known as the former BDR Trucking building, near the Bellows Falls Union High School. There will be a grand opening celebration on Saturday, May 3. Originally launched in 2022 and co-owned by Kari

Gypson and Cassandra Pedigo, TFTC's programs are designed to help children in developing better physical and social skills through the fundamentals of gymnastics. The TFTC staff and coaches are educated, trained, and certified through USA Gymnastics, in specialized courses that will ensure they are offering both a structured and creative experience for the kids. "We are a community-driven gymnastics facility dedicated to building strong, confident, and resilient athletes," Gypson said

in a recent interview. "This move to a much larger facility represents an exciting step forward in the organization's mission to provide a safe, supportive, and high-quality training environment where every child has the opportunity to grow." In the four years since opening, TFTC has been truly committed to not just gymnastics, but also to offering a space where young people of all ages will develop physical skills, discipline, confidence, and the love of exercise and movement. Additionally, they emphasize safety, positive encour-

agement, empowerment, and a sense of community. "The new Westminster location will allow us to expand Twins Falls' impact and better serve our athletes," Gypson added. "The larger space also creates expanded programming, increased training areas, and the addition of a full-sized competition floor. Also, upgraded equipment and an improved layout will enhance the overall experience within every age level. "The new location is also more visible and accessible, with improved proximity to school bus routes, making it

easier for families throughout the communities to participate. We've realized for a while that we needed more space to support what we're building here. This move allows us to grow our programs and continue giving our athletes the best possible experience." TFTC will be celebrating this exciting milestone with a grand opening at the new facility on Saturday, May 3, from 1-3 p.m. Guests will have the opportunity to tour the facility, meet the coaches, and experience the energy and spirit that defines Twin Falls.

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DEADLINES

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Springfield large infrastructure projects planned

BY PAULA BENSON
The Vermont Journal

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – At the Monday, April 13, Springfield Selectboard meeting, the board approved an event permit for Whistle Pig/Go America Beverages on April 24, at the Hartness House. Town Manager Scott Pickup reported on several properties that the town has taken action to clean up, stating that progress has been made at each of the residences. The board agreed to proceed with scheduled inspections and cleanups, with costs to be liened where appropriate. Additionally, the board authorized probate action to begin against the 482 Seavers Brook home, pending court scheduling. Working with town attorney Steve Ankuda, a legal notice will be published, and any claimant will have 30 days to come forward. In the meantime, Pickup said there have been some recent reports of ongoing activity at the site, and the police and relevant town staff have been made aware and are monitoring the situation.

Christine Boardman, library director, attended the meeting per Pickup's request, to inform the board on the status of proposed grant applications to offset the costs of projects to "address multiple capital needs at the library." The historic building is suffering visible interior cracking due to the poor condition of the flat roof. The town is currently putting \$60,000 per year into a library capital reserve fund for five years, and in fiscal year 2028-2029, the plan is to spend approximately \$369,000 on the roof. Pickup noted, however, that by that time the actual cost will likely be higher. Boardman related that she had recently submitted a large U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant application to cover the roof and related work. Schmitt suggested that the library trustees pursue federal congressional project funds via the offices of Sens. Peter Welch and Bernie Sanders, and Rep. Becca Balint. The board acted on appointments to the devel-

opment review board and decided to interview the five new applicants for the planning commission prior to their appointment. Chair Kristi Morris asked Pickup to facilitate scheduling the interviews. Pickup told the board he was pleased with the round of bids received to begin work on the Water Contract Project I-2 and requested that the board award the contract to S.U.R. Construction. As part of a larger I-2/I-3 water system upgrade, with an overall estimated cost of around \$8.3 million, this initial phase is anticipated to cost \$2,429,095, pending resolution of where to place urban, noncontaminated soils. The current strategy for relocating the excavated soil is to work with the Union Street School and place the material near the water tower behind the school, addressing drainage at the same time. Heidi Trimbach, a member of the Springfield Conservation Committee, told the board that the committee would like to be involved in determining where the

dumping location will be, stating, "That would be a great opportunity for us to create some habitat, and some good pollinator space, if we know when it's coming here." The effort would also mitigate stormwater runoff and drainage issues. Trimbach and Pickup agreed to connect and coordinate a plan. Funding for the upgrade will come from a bond authority of \$4.1 million, with the remaining costs expected to be covered by a 50% subsidy and other external funding sources. Pickup reviewed with the board several road construction projects, including the Eureka Road earthwork project, Crown Point Road paving and chip seal, and the Springfield Commons Park stormwater project. The board authorized Pickup to sign vendor contracts to begin the work. Additionally, Pickup reported on some large infrastructure projects that are coming up on the schedule between 2027 and 2031. These will overlap in timing, causing multiple years of

construction and traffic disruption. One plan calls for major water and sewer upgrades through River Street, Main Street, Summer Street, and Wall Street. Pickup said the town will be closely coordinating with the chamber of commerce and Springfield on the Move to reduce impacts. VTrans is taking on a sizable project that will affect all the bridges and approaches at Exit 7 on Interstate 91. This construction will involve alterations to the Toonerville Trail from Bridge Street toward the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center. Preconstruction work is scheduled for winter 2027, with the construction phase beginning in 2028 and extending through spring 2031. Pickup asked for the public's patience and understanding while these projects are underway, as they will ultimately improve critical infrastructure and public safety. The next regular meeting of the Springfield Selectboard will be Monday, April 27.

Springfield Rotary hosts Windsor County Mentors

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Rotary Club welcomed Matthew Garcia, executive director of Windsor County Mentors, as the featured speaker at its recent weekly meeting. Garcia delivered an engaging and wide-ranging presentation that blended history, personal narrative, and a compelling case for the power of mentorship in shaping young lives.

Garcia began with an unexpected but memorable journey into ancient Greece, connecting the origins of mentorship to classical literature. Referencing the works of Homer – including “The Iliad” and “The Odyssey” – he highlighted the character Mentor, a trusted advisor asked by Odysseus to guide his son. In ancient Greek culture, Mentor represented wisdom, guidance, and community leadership – the foundation of what mentorship still means today. Garcia also noted his admiration for Cassandra from “The Iliad,” a figure gifted with foresight but unheard, underscoring the importance of listening and trust in human relationships.

Garcia’s own path to leadership in the nonprofit sector is as dynamic as his presentation. Born in North Carolina, he was drawn to New England early on, eventually graduating from Dartmouth College. He went on to build a career in the publishing industry in New York City before

relocating to Vermont in 2003. After becoming an attorney and practicing law for a period, Garcia made a deliberate shift toward mission-driven work. He served for many years as executive director of the Spark Community Center before taking the helm at Windsor County Mentors, where he continues to lead today.

Founded more than 50 years ago, Windsor County Mentors focuses on one-to-one mentoring relationships between adults and youth, particularly adolescents facing challenges. The organization serves Windsor County, Vt., as well as Sullivan County and the Kearsarge region in New Hampshire. Mentors meet with their mentees in school settings, on weekends, or both, providing consistent support and connection.

Garcia emphasized that the organization operates with a lean structure – just five staff members, with Garcia as the sole full-time employee – and an annual budget of approximately \$180,000, much of which must be raised through community support. Additional funding comes from local communities served and the State of Vermont.

Despite its modest size, the organization follows nationally recognized best practices in mentoring. Garcia shared that research shows mentoring leads to measurable outcomes, including reduced truancy and stronger family relationships, with

mentees reporting higher levels of trust in their parents compared to peers without mentors.

Volunteer mentors are central to the program’s success. Each mentor completes a training process and commits to at least one year of service, offering steady guidance and companionship to their mentee. Garcia, who also serves as the organization’s chief development officer, encouraged Rotary members and community residents to consider volunteering or supporting the program financially.

“Mentorship is one of the simplest and most powerful ways to strengthen a community,” Garcia said. “It’s about showing up, building trust, and being present in a young person’s life.”

For more information about becoming a mentor or supporting Windsor County Mentors, please visit the organization’s website at www.wcmentors.org.

Springfield Rotary Club continues to host speakers who inform, inspire, and connect members to meaningful service opportunities both locally and beyond. The Springfield Rotary Club meets every Tuesday, at 12 p.m., at the SAPCC Workforce Development & Training Center. For more information, visit www.springfieldvtrotary.org.

Board game cafe at Rockingham Library

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – On Saturday, April 25, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., please join the Rockingham Free Public Library for a board game cafe. Try a new game or play an old favorite. Puzzles are available as well.

The board game cafe is a fun community event for people of all ages and all game-playing experience. We welcome seasoned players, people interested

in learning something new, and everyone in between. In addition to providing games and lots of space for gameplay, the Rockingham Free Public Library will have refreshments.

The board game cafe will have adult games of all types, including party games, strategic and collaborative games, building games, classics, and more. Games geared towards children and families will be

available in the youth department.

This free program is open to the public and will take place at the Rockingham Free Public Library on Saturday, April 25, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

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

LTE: Springfield School Board new proposed budget

Springfield Residents,

You voted “no” on our proposed budget in March, and we have listened and responded.

We know that Vermont education funding is confusing and that seeing the increased overall budget number on the ballot is concerning. This increase is because of the additional grant funding received, but it reflects a purposeful decision:

to use available federal funds to strengthen and improve our schools, rather than making additional cuts that could limit student opportunity. We did this to reduce the local taxpayer burden while still making investments in student success. These changes result in a net budget increase of \$207,861, but a decrease in per-pupil spending of \$181 because of how the additional grant funding was applied.

You have asked what

has been done to improve student outcomes. This past year, the district focused on three key priorities: literacy, instructional framework, and professional support and growth. The fiscal year 2027 budget continues to build on this work, ensuring continued progress and accountability in improving our students’ outcomes.

The bottom line is that we have reduced expenses by \$367,139 through a variety of adjustments, and received an additional \$575,000 in federal funding. The budget that is now being voted on: (1) contains expenditures that are only a 0.99% increase over this current year – half the 1.96% increase that was in the March budget, and less than one-third of the current inflation rate of 3.3%; (2) reduces per-pupil spending to \$15,008, a \$181 decrease from the March budget – this is also below the state excess spending threshold and well below five out of six of our neigh-

boring towns; and (3) continues to build on the foundation that was started this year to strengthen Springfield schools to what we all want them to be.

We believe in our schools, our students, and our staff, for our children and for our community. Strong schools are essential to a strong Springfield, they are the future of our community, and we are committed to that work.

Please stop by to see us on April 30, in the Springfield High School cafeteria, starting at 4:30 p.m., for a community event followed by our budget information session at 6 p.m.

Our schools depend on a voter-approved budget. Please join us and vote on May 5.

Sincerely,
Springfield School Board
Troy Palmer
Steve Karaffa
Denise Hunter
Jessica Austin
Steve Geller

Riverside Middle School Americanism Honor Guard

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Riverside Middle School in Springfield, Vt., has launched the Americanism Honor Guard program, and the Springfield Elks Lodge is proud to be supporting their program by furnishing uniforms once their de-

sign is released, and ensuring their American flag is always in tip-top shape.

Pictured in the photo during the morning flag raising, from left to right, are Melia Willis, Aoife Joyce, Khloe Gauthier, and Cecilia Allen.



Honor Guard program. PHOTO PROVIDED

“An Uncommon Look at the Common Loon” presentation

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Join the Rockingham Free Public Library on Saturday, May 2, at 11 a.m., for “An Uncommon Look at the Common Loon,” a slideshow talk by Ian Clark. The presentation is accompanied by his photo exhibit, which will be on display at the library through June 30 and available to view after the talk.

With their haunting cries and beautiful plumage, common loons are an iconic symbol of the northern wilderness.

During the last 13 years, West Newbury-based photographer Clark has spent more than 2,600 hours kayaking with loons and has taken more than 400,000 photos of loons and their behaviors. “An Uncommon Look at the Common Loon” explores the natural history of loons in the North Country. We invite you to attend the slideshow talk on Saturday, May 2, and to visit the photo exhibit, on display from April 1 – June 30.

Both the slideshow program and photo exhibit are

free and open to the public.

Clark spent many years operating commercial photo labs and tackling technical photographic problems, including a stint as the manager of the photographic section at NASA’s Langley Research Center. He has a Bachelor of Science from the Rochester Institute of Technology and did his master’s work at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University. He has been a news stringer off and on since 1975. Clark is a juried member of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen, the New Hampshire Art Association, and the 802 Arts House. More information about Clark is available on his website at www.ianclark.com.

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



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arts & entertainment

Edgar May hosts Kentucky Derby & Casino Night

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – On Saturday, May 2, from 4-7:30 p.m., don your best hat and join us at the Hartness House for the 152nd Kentucky Derby – the fastest two minutes in sport. The Edgar May Health and Recreation Center is hosting this Kentucky Derby & Casino Night as a night of social fundraising and community with derby- and casino-inspired games for entertainment. All proceeds will support Edgar May's 2026 Annual Campaign.

Prior to the Kentucky Derby viewing, enjoy classic casino favorites including black jack, roulette, craps, and a human slot machine. Our casino games are for entertainment only, and there will be no cash gambling involved. However, 50 tokens equal one derby raffle ticket. Enter your derby raffle tickets toward the horse you think will win the race. Afterward, we'll select our raffle winner from that horse's bag.

We will also host a Cal-

cutta auction, where guests can bid on each of the 20 horses in the race. The person who "owns" the winning horse after the derby will win half the Calcutta pot. Or try your hand in the Trifecta Box, where you name the horses that will take win, place, and show for a chance to win half the Trifecta pot.

The evening will also include a silent auction, catering by Brownsville Butcher & Pantry, and a cash bar provided by the Hartness House. We invite guests to come dressed in the spirit of the evening with their best Kentucky Derby hats or attire. Prizes will be awarded for Best Dressed and Best Derby Hat.

Event tickets may be purchased at www.edgarmay.org/kentucky-derby, or at the Edgar May Health and Recreation Center, 140 Clinton Street, Springfield, Vt. With each ticket purchase, guests will receive one derby raffle ticket, 50 casino chips, and optional

free child care for ages 6-12 through Edgar May's Kids Night Out program, taking place at our facility for the duration of the event. A waiver for Kids Night Out will be sent out following your Kentucky Derby ticket purchase. During Kids Night Out, your youth will enjoy games and activities on our fenced-in turf, as well as a movie night in the pool. Pizza and beverages will be provided.

The Kentucky Derby & Casino Night is made possible with the support of our premiere Win Sponsors, Lamb & McNaughton PC and Rick Bibens; our Place Sponsors, Bibens Ace Hardware and Lincoln Street Inc.; and our Show Sponsors, Springfield Cadillac GMC. Interested in sponsoring this event? Go to www.edgarmay.org/kentucky-derby or email Christian at ccraig@edgarmay.org to learn more and get involved.

Pentangle Arts announces second annual Mudstock Gala

WOODSTOCK, Vt. – After an incredibly snowy winter, the spring and "mud season" remind us how hardy you need to be to hold the title of Vermonter. We at Pentangle Arts are celebrating the end of the least celebrated season with our annual Mudstock event. Join us in saying "goodbye" to the mud and "hello" to the spring buds on May 8.

Come and enjoy mudpies, mudslides, and mingling, with music by the amazing BettySoo. Coming

all the way from Texas, BettySoo's vocal prowess is a thing of wonder – a world-class instrument of deft phrasing and purity, a voice that knows when to hold back and when to dive in.

The fun does not just end there; we encourage goers to wear their best "mud chic" look to pair with a seasonal hat or crown and your most fabulous wellies or mud boots. The most unique boots and crowns will be entered into a drawing for a one-year free family movie pass.

This fundraiser is to support our amazing summer season lineup for Music by the River, a series of free live music shows in Woodstock, Vt., every Friday in July and August. See full summer season lineup at www.pentanglearts.org/event-details/music-by-the-river-at-east-end-park-fridays-july-3-august-21.

Reserve your tickets today. This is for the entire community, therefore, the event tickets are pay what you will.

CCCD to host turtle workshops

WALPOLE, N.H. – The Cheshire County Conservation District (CCCD) is pleased to announce the next workshops in the development of a regional turtle conservation initiative. Partners collaborating on the effort are the New Hampshire Association of Conservation Commissions (NHACC), the Harris Center for Conservation Education, the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services, and Moosewood Ecological.

Of the 356 species of turtles worldwide, approximately 61% are threatened or already extinct. The southwestern region of New Hampshire, specifically Cheshire County, is habitat to a wide range of turtle species, from stable populations to turtle populations at risk. At-risk species include the spotted turtle, the wood turtle, and Blanding's turtle.

Local turtle populations are at risk in our region due to loss of habitat from development; mortalities from road crossings; and climate-related impacts on wetland habitats, nesting sites, and migratory corridors.

This exciting initiative seeks to support research-identified strategies for supporting turtle populations and by increasing turtle literacy throughout our region and beyond.

The first workshop, "Making Your Turtle Sightings Count," will be held on Tuesday, May 12, from 5:30-6:30 p.m., via Zoom. It's always exciting to encounter a turtle in the wild, but did you know that it's also an opportunity to contribute to turtle conservation? Join New Hampshire Fish & Game turtle biologist Josh Megysey and Harris Center ecologist Nate Marchessault to learn how you can turn your turtle photos into data that can be used for research and conservation. Learn more and register at www.harriscenter.org/events/making-your-turtle-sightings-count.

The second workshop, "Land Management Practices for New Hampshire

Turtles," will be held Monday, June 8, from 3-5 p.m., at Reservoir Woods, 44 Reservoir Road in Walpole, N.H. Join us for a walking tour at Reservoir Woods, while learning about various turtle habitat management practices on the property, how they support turtle populations, and ways to implement practices on your property. Visit www.cheshireconservation.org/event-details/land-management-practices-for-new-hampshire-turtles-a-turtle-wildlife-workshop to learn more or register.

For more information, contact info@cheshireconservation.org or 603-904-3011.

Gallery at the Vault Open Wall reception

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – You are invited to a reception at Gallery at the Vault for our Open Wall show, "A World of Color, A World of Wonder," on Friday, April 24, from 4:30-6 p.m. Meet the artists and hear their stories about their art.

The Open Wall is for artists who would like to get their work out there for the first time, as well as for seasoned artists. We display the unique and varied works of those who live in this area. There is no jury and there are no fees.

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, call 802-885-7111, email galleryvault@vermontel.net, or visit www.galleryvault.org, Instagram, or Facebook. Gallery at the Vault is accessible.

Springfield Community Chorus spring concerts

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – This spring, the Springfield Community Chorus is singing two concerts: the first on Saturday, April 25, at 7 p.m., at Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church Street in Bellows Falls, Vt.; the second on Sunday, April 26, at 3 p.m., at the First Congregational Church, 77 Main Street in Springfield, Vt. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated.

This spring is full of new music and new voic-

es for the chorus. Some new songs include "More Waters Rising," a song that speaks to the ecological and social changes sweeping our world today. It was written by Saro Lynch-Thomason in 1986.

A tune newly adapted to choral music by Jeffery L. James is a traditional South African song, "Tshosholozza." A choral adaptation of the song "Make Them Hear You," from the musical "Ragtime," was written by Stephen Flaherty in 1996. The concert ends with a lively "Dies Irae" from a re-

quiem written by Michael John Trotta published in 2020.

Not only is the concert full of new music and new voices, the chorus has a new director, Emma Erwin. Erwin is a choral and instrument conductor, clarinetist, and vocalist based in Springfield, Vt. She holds a degree in music education from Keene State College, and has experience teaching and codirecting various choral festivals. She is a wonderful fit for our chorus as it moves forward.

Singer-songwriter showcase at Next Stage

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage Arts and Twilight Music present a special evening of contemporary folk music on Saturday, May 2, at 7:30 p.m., at Next Stage Arts in Putney. This singer-songwriter showcase brings together four acclaimed artists – Alice Howe, Freebo, Sam Robbins, and Halley Neal – for an intimate, in-the-round performance that highlights both individual artistry and collaborative spirit.

In this unique, shared-concert format, each performer will take turns presenting original songs while also joining one another on stage, offering audiences a dynamic and spontaneous musical experience.

Freebo, a folk, rock, and blues icon, is widely known for his decade-long tenure as bassist with Bonnie Raitt. His distinctive fretless bass has been featured on recordings by John Mayall; Ringo Starr; Crosby, Stills & Nash; Maria Muldaur; Joe Walsh; and Dr. John. A multi-award-winning songwriter, Freebo has appeared on "Saturday Night Live," "The Muppet Show," "The Midnight Special," and in concert with The Legendary Spinal Tap.

Howe, winner of Best Female Artist at the International Acoustic Music Awards, captivates listeners with the natural beauty of her voice and

finely crafted songs. Her latest album, "Circumstance," produced by Freebo and recorded at the legendary FAME Studios in Muscle Shoals, Ala., showcases her poetic lyricism and melodic depth.

Robbins is an emerging voice in contemporary folk – an "old soul" troubadour whose thoughtful songwriting has earned national attention. Touring widely behind his 2025 album, "So Much I Still Don't See," Robbins has been named one of Atwood Magazine's Artists to Watch, appeared on "The Voice," and shared stages with artists including Jason Mraz and Liz Longley. He has also performed at major festivals, such as Kerrville,

Falcon Ridge, and Wheatland.

Neal, a Boston-based singer-songwriter originally from Nashville, brings award-winning vocals and uplifting, peace-centered themes to her music. She has received national recognition for her performances at leading folk festivals, including Kerrville Folk Festival, Rocky Mountain Folks Festival, and the Telluride Bluegrass Festival.

The concert begins at 7:30 p.m., with doors opening at 6:45 p.m., at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill in Putney, Vt. Tickets are discounted if purchased in advance. Tickets and more information are available at www.nextstagearts.org.



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health

Springfield Hospital director of marketing speaks to Ludlow Rotary

LUDLOW, Vt. – Tonia Fleming, director of marketing and planning at Springfield Hospital, spoke to the Ludlow Rotary Club about the challenges facing Vermont's hospitals in general and Springfield Hospital in particular.

Challenges facing Vermont health care providers include a shortage of workers, reimbursements that don't cover costs, increased patient complexity, and an aging population, among others. Recently, 30% of the patients in the emergency room were there for mental health or substance abuse issues, including a high number of young people.

There are many other challenges as well that are not controllable by the hospital, such as transportation, day-care challenges, and af-

fordability.

There are, however, state initiatives, including regional efforts, to plan for the future and address rising costs. Springfield Hospital is collaborating with Grace Cottage, Brattleboro, and Ascutney hospitals to address broader issues facing all the hospitals and health care facilities in Vermont. The group is looking into whether they can share staff or recruit from local nursing schools to avoid paying for traveling nurses, which are expensive, among other initiatives.

Springfield Hospital serves a six-county service area, as they have been doing for the past 106 years. It is hoping to share some of the \$195 million of federal health-care dollars recently allotted to Vermont. Its mis-

sion is to provide personalized, high-quality care in its niche market of 25 beds for short-term care.

Fleming encouraged rotarians to look at costs in advance on the Springfield Hospital website and compare those with other facilities. She indicated their facilities provide a wide and comprehensive range of specialized clinical services, from routine and complex surgery, to day-case procedures, diagnostic services, and physiotherapy. She encouraged attendees to stay local for care.

Cost and convenience are Springfield Hospital's core strengths, giving them the ability to compete with other health care providers in the future.

Stop the Bleed certification workshop for 4-H'ers

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Sign-up is now open for a

4-H Stop the Bleed certification workshop on Saturday, May 2, from 1-3 p.m., at River Valley Technical Center, 307 South Street in Springfield, Vt. This free workshop is offered by the University of Vermont Extension in partnership with Southern Area Health Education Center. It's for 4-H'ers ages 11-18.

Participants will learn how to recognize life-threatening bleeding; take quick, effective action using direct pressure, wound packing, and tourniquets; practice real-world skills

with trained instructors from Rescue Inc.; and be confident leaders, responsible community members, and prepared helpers at events, farms, worksites, and everyday settings. Upon completion of the workshop, 4-H'ers will earn a nationally-recognized Stop the Bleed certification.

Registration is required. Register online at go.uvm.edu/4h-stb. For more information, email Camille Kauffman at camille.kauffman@uvm.edu.



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HCRS welcomes Jed Kingman as director of IT

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Health Care and Rehabilitation

Charlestown Health accessibility upgrades

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – North Star Health hosted community members at Charlestown Health Center to celebrate new accessibility upgrades to the facility. They were joined by supporters of the project New Hampshire Healthy Families, The Dee Foundation, Claremont Savings Bank, and accessibility advocates Diane and Justin Milliken.

In 2024, Dianne Milliken, mother to Justin Milliken and a dedicated advocate for accessibility in all places, approached North Star Health with a vision. She shared her ideas on how to make Charlestown Health Center, her son's new medical home after aging out of pediatrics, a more welcoming and accessible space for patients like Justin to receive care.

Fast forward to April 8: North Star invited the community to see the room that was outfitted with an adjustable bed and electric Hoyer lift to make exams more comfortable and functional for wheelchair users and clinical staff. This project was sup-



Diane (right) and Justin (front) Milliken at the ribbon cutting ceremony for Charlestown Health Center's accessible exam room. PHOTO PROVIDED

ported by New Hampshire Health Families, The Dee Foundation, and Claremont Savings Bank Foundation.

Before cutting the ribbon on the new setup, Dianne shared what these new features meant: "This isn't just about a space – it's about dignity, inclusion, and making sure that Justin and others with unique needs are seen, valued, and able to fully participate in the care they deserve."

CEO Joshua Dufresne also gave thanks to Dianne and Justin, the generous supporters of the project, and the community for their support, while sharing some context:

"Charlestown Health Center is our only facility that was originally designed to be a health center. All others are retrofitted. You'll notice there are no stairs here, that's by design. I'm thrilled to be taking that accessibility a step further with the unveiling of this room for patients who need a higher level of accessibility."

This project is only the start. North Star is committed to making our facilities accessible to all. North Star is creating a wish list of projects. To donate to more projects like this and follow along with this journey, visit www.northstarfqc.org/accessible.

Windsor County Drug Take Back Day

REGION – Chief Deputy Claude Weyant, of the Windsor County Sheriff's Department, would like to inform the citizens of Windsor County that our semi-annual Drug Take Back Day is taking place on Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. This is a

team effort with the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency, the county sheriff's department, and local participating law enforcement agencies.

You may drop off any unused prescription drugs at any of the following locations: Ludlow Police Department, Springfield Police

Department, Weathersfield Transfer Station, Windsor Police Department, Norwich Police Department, Royalton Police Department, and Woodstock Police Department.

The goal is to keep these drugs away from people who should not have them to keep people safe.

Springfield Hospital General Surgery

"Right at the start of basketball season, I had to have emergency appendix surgery, and I was honestly worried about how it would affect my ability to get back on the court.

The care I received was incredible—from the surgery itself to the support during recovery. Dr. Bennett was personable, took time to make sure that I understood every step, and helped me safely return to playing. I was back with my teammates sooner than expected, and I feel strong and confident.

I'm really grateful for how well they took care of me."

Call Now 802-885-5600
29 Ridgewood Rd, Springfield, VT 05156
www.springfieldhospital.org

Services (HCRS), southeastern Vermont's non-profit community mental health agency, is pleased to announce the appointment of Jed Kingman as director of information technology. Kingman joined HCRS in December as interim chief information officer and has since brought a proactive approach to strengthening the orga-

nization's technology systems. During his time in the interim role, he has worked closely with teams across the agency to better understand operational needs and identify practical solutions that support both staff and the people HCRS serves.

"Jed has demonstrated a strong ability to listen, collaborate, and lead with

intention," said Anne Bilotreau, CEO of HCRS. "His expertise and commitment to building reliable, user-friendly systems have already made a meaningful impact across our organization."

With more than 18 years of experience in information technology leadership, Kingman previously served as chief technology officer at a health care company in Concord, N.H. His background includes systems design, infrastructure improvement, and operational efficiency, with a focus on making complex systems more accessible and effective.

In his role as director of information technology, Kingman is focused on improving system reliability, simplifying processes, and ensuring that technology enhances day-to-day operations. He emphasizes a collaborative, hands-on approach, and believes technology should ease burdens and allow staff to spend more time supporting people.

"I'm focused on making technology easier, more reliable, and genuinely helpful for the people who use it every day," said Kingman. "When systems work well, they support everything else, allowing staff to focus on what matters most: the people we serve."

Kingman's appointment reflects HCRS' continued commitment to strengthening infrastructure and equipping staff with tools that are efficient, dependable, and aligned with the organization's mission.

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obituaries

Helen G. Bostock, 1951-2026

LUDLOW, Vt. – Helen Grace Bostock, 75, died Tuesday, April 14, 2026, at the Springfield Health & Rehabilitation Center. She was born Jan. 22, 1951, in Fort Dix, N.J., the daughter of Robert and Rose Marie (Slanetz) Short. She graduated valedictorian from Leland & Gray High School in Townshend, Vt., Class of 1969.

She married Paul B. Bostock on May 19, 1999, in Ludlow, Vt.

Helen worked as an administrative assistant in the insurance industry. She also worked as a school bus driver in Cavendish, Vt., and worked in elder care in the area.

She enjoyed quilting and crocheting, and she loved her cats.

Helen is survived by her husband, Paul B. Bostock; brothers-in-law, Charles Bostock, John Bostock and Richard Bostock; sister-in-law, Eleanor Norton; and



Helen Bostock, 1951-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

cousins.

She was predeceased by her parents, and by her sister, Constance Redford.

A graveside service will be held on Thursday, April 30, at 11 a.m., at the Pleasant View Cemetery in Ludlow, Vt. The Rev. Charles Bostock will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to your local humane society.

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

James A. Come Jr., 1939-2026

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – James A. “Jim” Come Jr., 86, died peacefully on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at Cedar Hill in Windsor, Vt.

Jim was born May 9, 1939, in Woodsville, N.H., to James and Rita Come, and lived most of his childhood in Wells River, Vt.

Jim married Audrey DeRusha, and they moved to Claremont, N.H. They later divorced. In 1988, he married Marilyn Prouty. They lived together in Charlestown, N.H., for many years before moving to Cedar Hill Assisted Living in Windsor, Vt., a few years ago. They co-owned and operated M&J Shoe Store in Charlestown for a number of years before retiring. They also enjoyed traveling to Florida for many years before settling permanently back in Charlestown, N.H.

Before co-owning and operating M&J Shoe, Jim worked for many years at Jones & Lamson and Bryant Grinder, both in Springfield, Vt.

Jim is survived by his daughter, Daryl Cady; son, James (Dee) Come; stepson, Mark Prouty, and his partner, Wendy Allen; grandchildren and step grandchildren, Jessica Cady-Burlew, Eric (Kristiyana) Cady, Jacob (Erin) Vienne, Ben (Bonnie) Hastings, Brandon Hastings, Kelley Prouty, and Ryan (Erin) Prouty; great-grandchildren and step-great-



James Come Jr., 1939-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

grandchildren, Nicholas, Isabel, Luca, Kaden, Evan, Riley, and Willow; several nieces and nephews; and many friends.

He was predeceased by his parents; his brother, Charles; and his wife, Marilyn.

There will be no calling hours. A graveside service will be held Friday, April 24, at 11 a.m., at Pine Crest Cemetery in Charlestown, N.H. To join us at the cemetery (which cannot be found on Google), turn onto Jeff Drive off of Old Claremont Road (look for the Pine Crest sign). Do not turn to the right when Jeff Drive bears off. Follow the road straight to the end.

A reception will be held immediately following the service at the Sumner House, 122 Main Street, Charlestown, N.H.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of Jim to a charity of your choice.

Randall P. Hicks, 1945-2026



WALPOLE, N.H. – Randall Perry Hicks passed away on March 25, 2026, after a long, courageous battle with cancer, with his loving daughter, Kelley, and granddaughter, Grace, by his side, in The Villages, Fla.

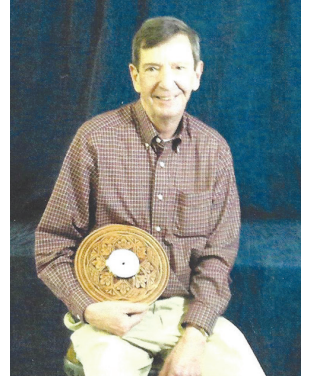
Randy was born on April 5, 1945, in Keene, N.H., to Samuel Trafford Hicks Jr. and Frances Cutter.

He went on to serve his country in the United States Army as a security specialist and enrolled at Wentworth University, where he studied mechanical engineering.

He started his career at White Metal Rolling and Stamping as a production manager, and he concurrently had his real estate license and worked for Preston, Betty Cox Realtors in Bellows Falls, Vt. Shortly after, he went to work with his father at Hicks Machine, eventually purchasing and successfully running it until his retirement in 2019.

Randy was an avid golfer and member of the Hooper Golf Course his entire life. He served on the board of directors for many years and was very active with the golf course activities. He was also one of the current owners of Hooper Golf Course.

Randy was a skilled carpenter, furniture maker, and chip carver. He was a member of the Walpole Artisans, where he displayed and showed his work. Randy was a member of the VFW, American Legion, and the



Randall Hicks, 1945-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

Upper Valley Machining Museum.

Randy was predeceased by his parents; son, Christopher Hicks and his wife, Shelley Hicks; his brother Samuel T. (Dianne) Hicks III; his sister Sarah (Jack) Hogan; and Deborah (Peter) Schofield. He is survived by his daughter, Kelley Hicks, and granddaughter, Grace Conety; brother, Phil Hicks; and sister-in-law, Lori (Dan) Shaughnessey. He is also survived by his nieces and nephews, Amy (Ryan) Royce, Kevin (Lynda) Hicks, Darren Hicks, Greg Gendreau, Patrick (Stephanie) Shaughnessey, Dori Kaluza, and Andrew Schofield; and grandnieces and grandnephews, Murphy Smith, Nick Royce, and Lucy Royce.

A graveside service will be held on April 21, at 11 a.m., at the Walpole Village Cemetery in Walpole, N.H.

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

Norman Susee, 1938-2026



WALPOLE, N.H. – Norman Susee, of Walpole, N.H., passed away peacefully on April 9, 2026. He was 87 years old.

Norm was born in 1938, in Keene, N.H., to Joseph and Winifred (Tuttle) Susee. He grew up in Keene, carrying with him the values of a small-town upbringing that would shape the rest of his life: hard work, kindness, and a deep sense of community. He later proudly served his country in the United States Air Force and was stationed in Dover, Del.

Before his time in the service, he could often be found playing guitar alongside his brother, Harold Buskey. After returning home to New Hampshire, that love of country music only grew stronger. He went on to form The Cousin Bros, a band that became a familiar and welcome presence throughout the region, first performing as Norm & Jerry (Brown). What started as a shared passion turned into something much bigger – bringing country music, laughter, and connection to countless people over the years. If you knew Norm, you knew country music was never far behind.

The band's journey brought them to memorable stages, including the Cheshire Fairgrounds, where they opened for country legends like Barbara Mandrell, Sylvia, Billy “Crash” Craddock, and Webb Pierce. For Norm, those moments were special – but just as meaningful were the nights spent playing country music in local clubs, community halls, and anywhere people gathered to enjoy good music.

At one point, his passion for music took him to Nashville, Tenn., where Norm and Jerry recorded two original songs, “Tennessee Street Runner” and “Eat Your Heart Out,” written with their good friend Art Cottrell. When “Eat Your Heart Out” reached number one on radio stations in several southern

states, it became a proud milestone in a life already rich with music.

Over the years, Norm shared the stage with many talented local musicians, including Davey Schroeder, Dave Lake, Dave Colburn, Roy Carroll, and Jerry Scadova. The Cousin Bros became well known for playing at places like The Valley Green, Stella's Celar, The Hungry Lion, and The Top Hat, as well as at The Moose, the American Legion, and the VFW. They played at weddings, anniversaries, and gatherings of all kinds – anywhere people wanted to celebrate. Long-time drummers Mel Skinner and Tom Brown kept the rhythm going. Sometimes, they would be joined by Roy Carroll on the fiddle or the guest voices of Anita Pelkey, Marie Norway, or Joy Goodnow, which added to the band's unmistakable sound. He later played in the band Playing Possum with Phil Bond, Mike Mialkowski, and Toby and Terry Taylor.

But for Norm, it was just as much about the people as it was the music. He loved seeing a room come alive, and watching others smile, dance, and forget their worries for a while. And if you were lucky enough to hear him play, you probably remember how he liked to end the night: with the song “The Party's Over.” It was a signature moment, one that now feels especially fitting. Though the party is over, the joy he brought to so many will not be forgotten.

Outside of music, Norm was the kind of person everyone could count on. He had a gift for fixing things; if something was broken, chances are Norm could make it work again. In his later years, he worked at L&B Trucking in Westminster, Vt., where that dependability and skill never went unnoticed. He gave his time and talents freely, always ready to lend a hand. He also found peace in simpler moments, especially when fishing. Even

though he rarely kept any for himself, he took real pleasure in sharing his catch with others – a small but perfect example of his generous spirit.

At the center of everything was his family. Norm deeply loved his wife, his children, and his grandchildren. He showed that love not just in words, but in the quiet, steady ways he showed up – through his actions, his reliability, and his presence. He will be remembered for his country music, his work ethic, and, most of all, his kindness and willingness to help anyone in need.

He was predeceased by his parents, Joseph and Winifred Susee; his brothers, Myron, Donald, Harold, Allen, and Bert Buskey; his son Alan Susee; and his grandsons, Jeremiah Lawrence and Keith Norman Snide.

He is survived by his loving wife, Calla Susee; his sons William and Kenneth, of Dover, Del., and Robert Susee (Larry), of Albany, N.Y.; and four stepchildren, whom he loved as his own: Brenda Vandusen, of Xenia, Ohio, Wanda Lawrence (Kevin), of Rockingham, Vt., Pamela Howe (Jim), of Westminster, Vt., and Kevin Rumrill, of Lebanon, N.H. He is also survived by his sisters, Shirley Page,



Norman Susee, 1938-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

of Swanzey, N.H., Barbara Shay, of Winchester, N.H., and Audrey Crosby, of Plymouth, N.H.; along with many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, nieces, and nephews.

And though the final song has been played, the country music he loved – and the love he gave – will continue to echo in the hearts of all who knew him.

There will be a family graveside service on Saturday, April 25, at 12 p.m. Please join us for a celebration of Norm's life at The Moose Club, 59 Westminster Street, Bellows Falls, Vt., on April 25, at 1 p.m. Light refreshments will be provided.

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

William T. Slade, 1943-2026

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – William T. “Bill” Slade, 82, passed away at home on April 4, 2026. He was born on Aug. 22, 1943, in Springfield, to H. Harold and Shirley (Blodgett) Slade. He attended Springfield schools, and graduated from Springfield High School, Class of 1961. He later graduated from broadcasting school in Boston, Mass.

Bill was a volunteer Springfield firefighter. He was co-owner of Bills' Sight and Sound in the Springfield Plaza. Bill was employed as a much-loved custodian for the Springfield School District for many years. In 2003, he moved to Nokomis, Fla., and continued as a custodian for two schools there before retiring. He resided there for 18 years and returned to Springfield in 2021.

Bill was predeceased by his parents, and sisters Joyce Strom (Jim Malone) and Kathy Jacobs (Ralph).

He is survived by his sis-



William Slade, 1943-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

ters Barb Bromley (Don), Sherry Forrest (Jack), Paula Torres, and Judy Hebert (Rick); brother Jeff Slade (Lisa); nieces and nephews; and two cousins.

Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield is assisting with arrangements.

A graveside service will be held on June 13, at 1 p.m., at the Oakland Cemetery in Springfield, Vt.

Memorial contributions in his name may be made to Springfield Fire Department, 77 Hartness Avenue, Springfield, VT 05156.

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calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 24-26 – BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Living Hope Fellowship Church, 582 Rockingham Road, will host healing/spiritual refreshment services with guest speaker Richard Gatewood on Friday, April 24, at 6 p.m.; Saturday, April 25, at 10:30 a.m. (including a free lunch) and 6:30 p.m.; and Sunday, April 26, at 10 a.m.

APRIL 24 – BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The United Church of Bellows Falls, 8 School Street, will host a pasta supper sponsored by the Bellows Falls Woman's Club to benefit two high school scholarships on Friday, April 24, from 5:30-7 p.m. The menu will be a variety of pasta dishes, including vegetarian and gluten-free options; bread; salad; dessert; and beverages. Children ages 6-12 eat at a discounted price, and children under 6 eat free. The building is accessible to all; please use the back entrance.

APRIL 25 – S. LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Join the South Londonderry Free Library in welcoming spring with a honeybee workshop on Saturday, April 25, at 10:30 a.m. Kids of all ages are invited to work with art teacher Casey Junker Bailey to

make drawings/collages inspired by the charming book "The Honeybee." The workshop is free of charge, appropriate for all ages, and participants will receive their own copy of the beautifully illustrated book to keep. Buzz on over to the library and join us for the fun. For more information, call the library at 802-824-3371.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield United Methodist Church, 10 Valley Street, is having a soup and bake sale during the farmers market on Saturday, April 25, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. Everyone is welcome.

APRIL 28 – CLAREMONT, N.H. – There will be a scam-awareness class at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, on Tuesday, April 28, at 1 p.m., open to all seniors. Come hear ways to protect yourself from scams.

APRIL 29 – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Mickey Dopp will be playing live music at the Springfield Senior Center, 139 Main Street, on Wednesday, April 29, at 1 p.m. For more information, contact executive director Lori Johnson at 802-885-3933 or lorijohnsonssc@gmail.com.

MAY 2 – CLAREMONT, N.H. – Join us on Saturday, May 2,

from 8-11 a.m., for the annual May breakfast at First Congregational Church, 72 Pleasant Street in Claremont, N.H. The event is hosted by The Well Collaborative NH. Admission is free for kids 4 and younger. There will be locally sourced eggs, meat from North Country Smokehouse, locally produced maple syrup, baked goods made by volunteers, and more. This year, the breakfast will include a spring mini art show featuring art created by people from around the area, with the theme of spring. All pieces will be sold by donation. This year, the art can be any medium (such as painting, decoupage, clay, crochet, cross-stitch, embroidery, etc.) as long as it is no bigger than 5 by 7 inches. If you would like to participate, reach out to Neil at neilpierceallen@gmail.com.

MAY 3 – PERKINSVILLE, Vt. – Matt Meserve will be playing a live concert on Sunday, May 3, from 4-5 p.m., at the Perkinsville Community Church, 35 Church Street. If you would like to be on the email list for these events, please contact us at churchperkinsville@gmail.com.

MAY 9 – SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join Springfield on the Move for a delightful Mother's Day market on Saturday, May 9, from 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., at 100 River Street. This is the perfect way to honor the incredible moms in our lives. Discover a beautifully curated market featuring local artists showcasing their unique creations, amazing vendors offering handmade goods and

gifts, and workshops where you can learn to create stunning floral arrangements. Whether you're looking for the perfect gift or a fun day out with mom, this event has something for everyone. Don't miss out on the joy and creativity waiting for you at the Great Hall.

JULY 13 – LUDLOW, Vt. – As part of the Fletcher Memorial Library's 125th anniversary, the Friends of Fletcher Memorial Library are developing a 2027 calendar which will feature photos of Ludlow and be sold in the fall of 2026. All proceeds will be used to support the library. We are looking for photos that showcase some aspects of Ludlow: our beautiful mountains, lakes, flowers, wildlife, and quaint village. Stop by the library at 88 Main Street in Ludlow for more information and an entry form. The deadline to submit photos is July 13.

RECURRING EVENTS

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

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

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.

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 9-10 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 – SAXTONS RIVER, Vt. – Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street, will hold the "Originals & Traditionals" Open Mic Night on the fourth Friday of every month, from 7-9 p.m., hosted by musician Putnam Smith. Sign-ups begin at 6:30 p.m. All material should be original or "traditional" (i.e., in the public domain). Each performer can perform two songs or up to 10 minutes, whichever comes first. If you have any questions, please contact Smith at putnamsmith@gmail.com.

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.

DAILY – REGION – If you want to drink that's your business, but if you want to stop, that's ours. Contact Alcoholics Anonymous at www.aavt.org or call your local hotline at 802-802-2288 and join a meeting. You are not alone.

Chester-Andover Elementary School KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Chester-Andover Elementary School has begun the process of registration for children who will be eligible for Kindergarten for the 2026/2027 school year. Children must be 5 years old on or before August 31, 2026. Please contact the school office at 802-875-6832 or email kim.leonard@trsu.org to let us know your child will be attending.

Green Mountain Union High School is seeking a part-time school year cook to join its Food and Nutritional Services team (15 hours per week). This fast-paced, high-energy role involves preparing and serving breakfast, lunch, and snacks using fresh, local ingredients, along with maintaining food safety standards and basic kitchen records. No nights, weekends, or holidays required. Pay ranges from \$16.70 to \$20.70 per hour. Interested applicants should contact Andrew.Levesque@trsu.org or 802-875-2146.

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, May 11, 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:

- Tom Koch, Application # FHR-26-001 & CU-26-001 for 100% substantial improvement to an existing structure requiring Flood Hazard and Conditional Use review. This property is in the Town Residential district.
- Walter Siegardner, Application # VAR-26-001 for a front yard setback variance from 55 feet to 48 feet. Total variance requested is seven (7) feet. This property is in the Town Residential district.
- Mark Cassano, Application # SUB-26-006 for Subdivision review to adjust the property line to Ludlow/Plymouth town line. This property is in the Town Residential district.
- Ming Zheng, Application # SITE-26-001 & CU-26-002 for Conditional Use and Site Plan Review for a proposed nine (9) unit multi-family property on a vacant lot. This property is in the Village Residential Commercial district.
- The Trustees of the Gill Odd Fellows Home of Vermont, LLC, Application #SUB-26-007 to subdivide an existing 24.57-acre lot into two (2) lots containing 10.63-acres (Lot 1) and 13.94-acres (Lot 2). This property is in the Village Residential district.
- Matthew McClallen, Application # PRE-SUB-26-008 for a preliminary sketch plan review of a proposed nine (9) lot subdivision on an existing 11.81-acre lot prior to a complete subdivision application. This property is in the Mountain Recreation district.
- Todd & Kim Guthrie, Application #128-98-PUD, Amd. #74 to modify permit to enclose front entry deck to incorporate space into the mudroom at the Trailside Condos. This property is in the Mountain Recreation district.

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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NOTICE TO SPRINGFIELD VOTERS

Absentee Ballots for the Springfield Town School District Meeting being held Tuesday, May 5, 2026, are available at the Springfield Town Clerk's Office. If you wish to vote by absentee ballot, and you didn't already make a request for "all local elections" with your pre-Town Meeting absentee ballot request, please contact the Town Clerk's Office as soon as possible in person, in writing, by phone or by email. If you make your absentee request in person, you can choose to vote your ballot and return it before leaving the Town Clerk's Office. If you return your ballots by mail, allow extra time for postal delivery. An Absentee Request Form can be found on the town's website <https://springfieldvt.gov> or you may request your ballots online at <https://mvp.vermont.gov>. The deadline for requesting absentee ballots is Monday, May 4, 2026 at 4:30 p.m. You may register to vote on Election Day at the polls and then proceed to vote on that day. You may also register to vote any time at the Town Clerk's office or online at <https://mvp.vermont.gov>. Prior to May 5, 2026, absentee ballots may be returned in-person, through regular mail and after hours through mail slots located in town hall entrances. All voted absentee ballots must be received at the polls by the Town Clerk before the close of polls at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5, 2026. The polls are located at Riverside Middle School in the gymnasium and will open on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at 8:00 a.m. and close at 7:00 p.m. Town Clerk's Office will not be open on May 5, 2026. Barbara A. Courchesne, Town Clerk, CVC - 96 Main Street, Springfield, Vermont 05156 (802) 885-2104 tosclerk@vermontel.net

LEGAL NOTICES

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TOWN OF ANDOVER ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing before the Zoning Board of Adjustment of Andover, Vermont will be held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. at the Andover Town Office to consider the following:

Application #8.2/3/26/3/26, Applicant/Owner: Rich, Deb and Brandon Simmons, Finn Hill Farm, LLC, **Reason for hearing:** Application to request a Conditional Use permit to use a portion of an existing barn located at 439 East Hill Rd. as a private event space.

Dated at Andover, Vermont, this 14th day of April, 2026
Jonathan W. Stevens, Clerk/Secretary, Andover Zoning Board of Adjustment

LEGALS **opinion & classified**

Dear Editor,

Fifty-five years ago John Lennon asked us to "Imagine," to be dreamers. Today, corrupt, authoritarian leaders draw us into wars and coerce corporations to support them to get favorable government contracts and protections.

He asked us to "Imagine all the people living life in peace." We can't just dream or imagine, we need to act. Somewhere between 8 and 9 million people took to the streets for No Kings Day 3, not just in the United States, but around the world. The citizens of Hungary acted, went to the polls, and voted

out a dictator who had oppressed and suppressed them for 16 years.

The next step is for the people of the United States to stage a walkout to take power away from the corporations and billionaires who support corrupt leadership in this country. May Day! This is a national movement.

On May 1, (1) don't order or buy anything from Amazon, Target, Home Depot, or other large corporate stores or gas stations; (2) shop locally and use cash instead of using a credit or debit card that benefits banks; (3) sup-

port workers, not billionaires; and (4) find a May Day Strong event in your community and participate. On May 1, let's honor the legacy of workers.

Find an Indivisible organization in your area to join and build a community that works together to protect our future.

As John Lennon said, "I hope someday you'll join us / And the world will live as one...A brotherhood of man."

Sincerely,
Bill Keating
Indivisible Greater Falls

Dear Editor,

With the warmer weather arriving, we are seeing more bicycles on the roadways. I would like to remind the children throughout the county of some bicycle tips, so they will be safe riding on the roadways. These tips are also important for all cyclists, young and old.

Wear a proper bicycle helmet. When possible, wear bright colored clothing. Have a front white light and a red reflector on the back. Know and obey all traffic laws. Ride to the right. Basically, obey all the rules as if you were driving a car. Yield to pedestrians. Slow down and be cautious at intersections. Best to walk your bike when using a crosswalk. Don't wear headphones while riding.

Beware of riding in motorists' blind spots. Use hand signals. If riding with others, ride in single file. Keep at least a car door's width from cars, even when going past parked vehicles. Regularly check your bicycle, making sure everything is

working. When possible, ride with another person. Be safe and careful!

Sincerely,
Claude E. Weyant, Captain/Chief Deputy
Windsor County Sheriff's Department

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SPRINGFIELD, Vt. - Hotpoint gas stove for sale, white, asking \$400. Large office chair, all leather, green, \$75. Please call 802-885-1370.

OTHER

CENTRAL VERMONT - A & J's Tree Service - No job too big or too small. Free Estimates & Fully Insured. "Dangerous Trees are our

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TAG SALE

S. LONDONDERRY, Vt. - Saturday, May 2, from 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., at 3650 VT Route 100, South Londonderry. Tag sale, plant sale, and bake sale to benefit the West River Montessori School.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. - Yard sale on Saturday and Sunday, May 2 and 3, from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Rain date of May 9 and 10. 59 Highland Circle, Springfield. Come one, come all. Packrat has a very large selection of indoor and outdoor items. Best sale of the weekend!

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SPRINGFIELD, Vt. - Lawn care needed for small yard. Call 802-885-1370.

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.

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WARNING FOR THE LONDONDERRY TOWN MEETING

The legal voters of the Town of Londonderry, Vermont, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Town Hall, 139 Middletown Road, South Londonderry in Londonderry, on Monday, May 11, 2026, to act on the following Articles, namely:

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED FROM THE FLOOR:
Beginning at 6:00 p.m., the following business will be transacted from the floor:

ARTICLE 1 Shall the Town raise and appropriate a sum not to exceed \$81,000 for the purpose of funding, in part, the salary and benefits of the General Office Manager, a portion of which salary and benefits will be shared by all Departments within the town?

ARTICLE 2 To transact any other business that may legally come before the Meeting.

- (NON-BINDING) Shall the Town of Londonderry authorize the Selectboard to investigate purchasing one or more parcels of land for future use to be determined by a future Town Meeting?

Dated at Londonderry this 6th day of April 2026.

Selectboard of the Town of Londonderry

Thomas Cavanagh, Chair

James Ameden, Jr., Vice Chair

Taylor Prouty

James Fleming

Leanne Alexander

Received for the record this 6th day of April 2026

Allison Marino, Town Clerk

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Raku Pottery with Andrew Berends 5/2 & 5/9 12-4
Hand-painted Silk Scarves Boho Bunnies by Terri Flowers
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(07/15/26 - 1FN - 13)

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(10/07/26 - 26)

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CHESTER, Vt. – Green Bee Lawn & Garden is different from most lawn care companies. Tim Roper launched the business in 2020 as a one-person “retirement gig,” envisioned as something that would keep him busy three days per week, let him get some exercise, bring in a few extra dollars, and show the world that combining organic lawn care practices with commercial electric lawn care equipment culminates in top quality results.

Now, six years later, Green Bee is a growing father-and-son operation, continuing to show that lawn care doesn't require running dirty, loud, gas- or diesel-powered equipment in order to keep lawns looking great. Their equipment is so quiet that customers are never bothered when the crew shows

up and gets to work. Using only organic lawn treatments also removes any concerns around people, pets, and wildlife using the property.

The company's growth is a result of their reputation for producing first-quality results. Customers have come to rely on Green Bee in ever increasing numbers to provide them with great-looking lawns and additional services, including new lawn installations, hardscapes, light excavating, driveway repairs, drainage work, and expert fencing installations thanks to Jim Roper's dozen years of experience in the fencing industry. Jim has managed fence installations ranging from back yards, to horse properties, to a VA hospital, large solar arrays, and even a couple of airports! His expertise

shows clearly in the end product – attractive, perfectly installed fences that customers rave about.

If you're looking for a company you can rely on to help manage and improve your grounds in the most thoughtful ways, Green Bee Lawn & Garden will treat you right.

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SEON receives grant from Vermont Community Foundation

REGION – The Vermont Community Foundation has awarded the Sustainable Energy Outreach Network (SEON) a \$7,500 grant to advance SEON's

sustainable training standards and opportunities. This grant will be used to support SEON's efforts to implement a registered apprenticeship program for high-performance builders

and further SEON's training effort throughout the state. The advisory donor is “Modesty Is My Best Quality Fund.”

SEON's activities can be summarized into three broad categories: (1) recruit young adults and career changers into the carpentry field of high-performance building. There is an acute shortage of carpenters, and SEON's apprenticeship program is designed to close this gap; (2) train the incumbent workforce with the advanced knowledge and skills of building science to meet the challenges of our climate crisis; and (3) re-

tain the workforce through leadership training and organizational consulting that builds a culture of personal mastery, team learning, and shared meaning.

SEON thanks our advisory donor, who shares our commitment to high standards and innovative practices in residential building.

SEON is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit training organization that delivers in-person courses on building science and leadership development throughout Vermont. To learn more and view the 2026 training schedule, visit www.buildingscience.org.



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REGION – If you’ve ever caught yourself wishing you had a little more room to spread out, you’re not alone. Whether it’s space for adult children or aging parents, a quiet home office, or adding long-term value to your property, more homeowners are starting to look at accessory dwelling units, or ADUs, as practical ways to make their homes work harder for them.

You might know an ADU by a different name: in-law suite, carriage house, garage apartment, or basement apartment. No matter what you call it, the idea is the same. It’s a smaller, fully functional living space built on the same property as your primary home. Some are detached. Others are built above a garage or finished into an existing basement, as long

as there’s a private entrance and essentials like a kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area.

From a lifestyle standpoint, flexibility is what draws people in. Some homeowners have built one so aging parents could live nearby but still have their own space. Others wanted a dedicated office that didn’t take over the main house. Some decided to rent them out for extra income. It really comes down to what you need and what stage of life you’re in.

Of course, before any construction begins, zoning and local guidelines matter. Cities and counties each have their own rules around size, placement, and usage. A quick check with your local planning department early on can save you time and frustra-



Accessory dwelling units are becoming more popular among homeowners.

PHOTO PROVIDED

tion later.

One of the first questions people ask is how to pay for an ADU. Since building an ADU is considered a major home project, many homeowners look at renovation financing. A renovation loan can let you roll the

cost of construction into your mortgage instead of paying for everything out of pocket. There are a few programs designed for projects like this, each with different guidelines depending on the scope and budget.

Another option some homeowners explore is using existing equity through a refinance. The right route depends on timing, how much equity you have, and your overall financial goals. It’s less about steering you one way or the other and more about laying out the options so you can decide what fits best.

Adding a second living space changes how a property functions day to day. It can give family members a place of their own, create room to work, or open the door to rental income, depending on how it’s used. Over time, it may also contribute to overall property

value.

With more households planning for multigenerational living and flexible space needs, it’s a conversation that’s coming up more often.

If adding space has been on your mind, even casually, it can help to talk through the numbers and what it might look like before making any big decisions. Sometimes a simple planning conversation is all it takes to see what’s possible and what the next step could look like.

Submitted by Victoria Blodgett, PrimeLending, Ludlow, Vt.

Turning waste into fertilizer

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – As spring comes around the bend and farmers prepare to apply fertilizers to their emerging crops, we are faced with a global crisis in fertilizers once again, threatening farmers’ livelihoods and food supplies. Global conflicts and energy disruptions continue to expose the fragility of the systems on which modern agriculture depends – systems tied to fossil fuels, international trade routes, and energy-intensive industrial production.

Yet an abundant source of fertilizer is produced every day in our own communities.

Every year, Americans urinate \$50 billion worth of nutrients that could replace one-quarter of all synthetic fertilizers used in U.S. agriculture. Yet most of these nutrients are flushed away with drinking water and sent through wastewater systems, where they often contribute to pollution in watersheds rather than nourishing crops.

Two organizations working to change that are Rich

Earth Institute and Brightwater Tools, which are hosting a public open house to share the latest updates from their work advancing nutrient recovery and circular sanitation.

Since 2012, Rich Earth Institute has operated the nation’s first and largest community-scale urine recycling program, safely transforming human urine into fertilizer used by local farms. The nonprofit’s research, education, and demonstration work shows how communities can reclaim nutrients, reduce water pollution, conserve clean water, and support farmers with locally sourced fertilizers.

Brightwater Tools, a company that grew out of Rich Earth’s work, develops practical technologies that enable nutrient recovery systems to be implemented at larger scales. The company designs equipment that transforms diverted urine, full-toilet waste (“blackwater”), and food waste digestate into high-quality fertilizer products, including innovations such as pasteurizers, freeze concentrators, and charcoal

filtration systems. They will share highlights from their pilot sites both in the U.S. and across Europe.

Together, these organizations are part of a growing global movement to complete the nutrient cycle by recovering valuable nutrients from waste streams, such as urine, food scraps, and wastewater, helping build more resilient and sustainable food systems.

At the open house, hosted at the two organizations’ joint research center, 355 Old Ferry Road in Brattleboro, on Thursday, April 30, from 4:30-6:30 p.m., visitors will have the opportunity to tour the nation’s first and largest community-scale urine recycling facility; meet engineers, researchers, and educators working at the forefront of nutrient recovery; hear from farmer partners through short videos about on-farm urine fertilizer research; explore innovative nutrient-cycling technologies, including urine-diverting toilets, treatment systems, and fertilizer application equipment; and learn how circular systems

can support healthier farms, cleaner waterways, and more resilient communities.

As global disruptions continue to reveal vulnerabilities in our food and infrastructure systems, local solutions like nutrient recycling offer a powerful opportunity to rethink how communities manage resources – and turn waste into abundance.

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The difference between prequalified and preapproved

REGION – Prequalification and preapproval are two terms you may hear used interchangeably when shopping for a mortgage, but they are actually two optional steps you can take to start the loan approval process. A mortgage prequalification is usually a much shorter process that requires you to honestly report your own financial information, while a mortgage preapproval typically requires you to submit more documentation, like W-2s, to verify your income and assets, making it a lengthier process.

Neither prequalification nor preapproval will guarantee you a loan, but getting prequalified or preapproved before you start searching for a home can help you more easily find a home you love within your budget. A preapproval may also make the process of completing a full loan application much easier and faster, because you'll already have submitted a lot of necessary information to the lender.

While both prequalification and preapproval from a lender help identify your price range, a preapproval letter can signal to your real estate agent and sellers that you're serious about buying a home. Agents often require a preapproval letter, because it is a strong indication that you are a qualified buyer and can make a competitive offer.

Prequalification

Prequalification means you may satisfy a lender's general criteria for a mortgage, based on your self-reported financial information, like income, assets, credit, and debt. Prequali-

fication can be as simple as a short phone conversation with a lender. Afterward, the lender may or may not provide you with a letter detailing the types of loans you may qualify for and the loan amount you may be able to borrow.

Prequalification is just a starting point. According to a Zillow survey, about a quarter of prospective buyers who have not yet started working with an agent reported getting prequalified (27%).

If you're unsure where to begin in your homebuying journey, or aren't even sure what homes you can afford, start the prequalification process to learn more about your loan eligibility.

Keep in mind, a mortgage prequalification is only as accurate as the information you provide the lender. That's why those who are ready to buy in the near future often go straight to preapproval, which is a more comprehensive verification process.

Preapproval

A mortgage preapproval means you have a conditional commitment from a lender to approve you for a loan as long as you continue to meet their conditions by the time you close on the home. You'll need to provide the lender with documents like bank statements, W-2s, and pay stubs. The lender will also run a credit check, which may show as a soft or hard inquiry on your credit report, depending on the lender's preapproval process.

Once preapproved, you'll receive a preapproval letter detailing the loan amount, types of loan programs you

may qualify for (e.g., conventional, FHA, VA), and an estimated interest rate and annual percentage rate. Assuming you continue to meet the lender's financial loan qualifications during the underwriting process, your lender will be able to issue a final loan approval. You will still have to complete a loan application before being fully approved for a specific loan program.

A preapproval letter accompanying your purchase offer suggests to the seller that if they were to accept your offer, financing is more likely to go through than without one. Your offer becomes more compelling. According to Zillow's Consumer Housing Trends Report 2022, 85% of sellers say that they prefer to accept an offer from a buyer who is preapproved.

Difference between preapproved and prequalified

A prequalification can help you prepare to take the next steps towards buying a home and give you a sense of a reasonable budget to stay within when shopping for home. A preapproval gives you a more concrete under-



Discover the difference between preapproval and prequalification.

PHOTO PROVIDED

standing of your budget, so you can start making offers and can signal to the seller that you are a serious buyer. Here are a few more key comparisons between preapproval and prequalification.

Should I get prequalified or preapproved?

Getting prequalified for a mortgage can be a good starting point if you're a first-time homebuyer, or if you're in the very early stages of considering a home purchase. Most prequalifications don't require a hard credit inquiry, so your credit score won't take a hit if you decide to press pause on buying. And when you decide to move forward with a preapproval, you'll already have a good idea of the lender with whom you'll want to work with.

Either way, if you choose to get prequalified or preapproved, you'll still need to have an offer accepted, a loan application completed, and a purchase contract in place before your lender can fully underwrite and approve your loan.

Why wait to get preapproved or prequalified?

Buyers may want to get prequalified to get a ballpark for their budget and get pre-approved when they're ready to seriously shop and make offers. This is because preapproval letters only last for an average of 45 days. After this period, a new preapproval is typically required, since your financial circumstances could change. For example, you may make new purchases that increase your debt and tighten your house affordability, or you may get a new credit card that causes a hard inquiry on your credit report and lowers your credit score.

With each new preapproval, either a soft or hard inquiry is made on your credit report, depending on the lender's preapproval

process. Hard inquiries can affect your credit score over time. Keep in mind that during that 45-day period from the date of your first mortgage credit check, all hard inquiries are consolidated and won't individually impact your credit. If your preapproval expires and you're still actively shopping, reach out to your lender to discuss timing for your next preapproval.

Which is better?

A preapproval letter typically carries more weight than a prequalification, since the preapproval is a conditional commitment from a lender to approve your loan. If you're uncertain which is the best option for you, your moving timeline can be a good indicator of whether you should choose a preapproval or prequalification. If you're fully committed to buying a home, starting the preapproval process first might be the right option for you. If you're curious about whether or not you qualify for a loan and how much you may be eligible to borrow, mortgage prequalification will provide you with helpful information to find a home within your budget.

Written by Jessica Rapp. Provided by Zillow Group.

Sammy Pierce Scholarships

REGION – The \$1,000 Crown Point Realtors Sammy Pierce Scholarships are awarded each year to two students who demonstrate a strong commitment to their community and to helping others. Their efforts may be volunteer or charitable

service, leadership skills, humanitarian efforts, or active involvement in impacting the lives of others. The scholarship is open to home-schooled students, public or private school students, and college or technical school students. Adult learners are

also eligible. Students must be full-time residents of Andover, Baltimore, Cavendish, Chester, Clarendon, Grafton, Ludlow, Mount Holly, Plymouth, Reading, Rockingham, Shrewsbury, Springfield, Townshend, Wallingford, Weathersfield,

Weston, West Windsor, or Windham. Applications may be picked up at the local high school, or by reaching out to betty@diamondrealtyvt.com with "Scholarship" in the subject line. Completed applications are due by May 5.

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