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See Page 12

FREE

THE MESSAGE OF THE WEEK

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Mikros Technologies named Business of the Year after 35 years

BY LISA STICKNEY

CLAREMONT, N.H. – Mikros Technologies has been manufacturing innovative technology for 35 years, building on research that began with a cooling project for NASA. In June, the company was named 2026 Business of the Year in manufacturing and technology by Business NH Magazine. This annual award is selected by a committee of previous award recipients and the New Hampshire Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives.

Following the recognition, Mikros Technologies was invited to host a networking event in collaboration with its local chamber. On Sept. 17, the company held a chamber mixer at its research and development facility on Colonel Ashley Lane in Claremont. Elyse Crossman, of the Greater Claremont Chamber of Commerce, reached out to Ann Thomson, Mikros Technologies' marketing manager, to collaborate on an event welcoming chamber members and the public.

"Elyse wrote one of the four recommendations required to apply for the Business of the Year competition. We had been in ongoing communication, so it was natural that we would get on the chamber's meetup schedule," said Thomson.

Founded by Dr. Javier Valenzuela in 1991, Mikros Technologies grew out of his research at Creare in Hanover, N.H., where he worked as principal engineer and helped develop cooling technology for NASA's Space Station Freedom program. Valenzuela, who earned degrees from the University of Notre Dame and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, went on to develop technology for commercial applications.

Jesse McGowen, director of technology and enablement at Mikros Technologies, explained how the original research led to two lines of technology, both involving the ability to fabricate small passages in metal. The company's name comes from the Greek word "mikros," meaning "small."

"Part of that cooling project had some technology that was the beginnings of the technology we're selling today," McGowen said.

Another part of the project involved creating micronozzles for large-scale printing and scientific applications. In order to fabricate the tiny nozzles required, Valenzuela had to develop his own machinery, because nothing like it existed.

Mikros Technologies initially focused on nozzle plates for industrial inkjet companies. Over time, Valenzuela returned to his primary interest in cooling and heat transfer, developing products based on that technology.

Mikros Technologies moved its manufacturing operations from Lebanon to Claremont in 2002. The original facility eventually became its research and development center, while manufacturing expanded into the old Eagle Times building on River Road in 2016.

Jabil, a global engineering, supply chain, and manufacturing solutions company, acquired Mikros Technologies in 2024. The two companies had an established business relationship, with Mikros previously serving as a supplier to Jabil. As demand for its cooling technology grew, Mikros considered different ways to expand its manufacturing capacity. The acquisition provided financial backing and a path to scale its operations to meet the growing market.

Jabil is one of the world's largest contract manufacturers, producing products for companies that design and market their own technology. McGowen explained that many major technology companies focus on design, marketing, and customer support, while contract manufacturers handle production. Jabil also offers engineering services to help companies improve and prepare product designs for manufacturing.

Today, Mikros serves two related markets: cooling technology used in the testing of computer chips during manufacturing, and liquid cooling solutions for chips and networking switches operating in data centers. As demand for computing power grows, particularly for artificial intelligence, managing heat has become an increasingly important engineering challenge.

McGowen described a shift in the scale of the company's work. Historically, Mikros handled smaller research and development projects, including work with major technology companies on products that might not reach the market for years. The company is now moving toward higher-volume manufacturing to meet demand for cooling technology used in large-scale computing systems.

Over the years, Mikros developed cooling solutions for computer chips, power electronics, high-power LEDs, and electrical coils used to focus electron beams. Although not every market developed as anticipated, McGowen said, the projects helped build the company's technical knowledge, manufacturing methods, and design capabilities.

He also credited Valenzuela's engineering approach with helping the company develop technology ahead of market demand. Rather than settling for a solution that simply got the job done, Valenzuela sought to develop the best possible technical solution, McGowen explained. As new applications and larger markets emerged, that accumulated experience became increasingly valuable.

Since the acquisition, Mikros has nearly doubled its headcount, adding employees across production, machining, engineering, and business administration.



Mikros Technologies.

PHOTO PROVIDED

"We've been able to attract a lot of really talented people," McGowen said.

For McGowen, the people remain an important part of the work. "I've always liked the people. You'd be able to kind of learn from and teach and share experience with people," he said. "And now we have this even bigger group of great folks."

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Claremont City Council reviews new salary plan

BY ANNE DEMPSEY

CLAREMONT, N.H. – At the Oct. 14 Claremont City Council meeting, Director of Human Resources Shannon Thibodeau presented a new outline for a merit system modernization plan. This plan reflects the goals of mirroring the current market value of nonunion salaries within five years, attracting new employees, and retaining current employees. Thibodeau and her team updated the range of positions, their job descriptions, and pay ranges. During the first year, salaries would be raised by an average of 5%, which would move salary ranges toward a midpoint that was requested by the city manager. The second-year plan would bring more employees' salaries up to or above the midpoint. Year three would be dedicated to completing this transition. Year four would begin the process of introducing salaries that reflect work performance. By year five, this new merit system should be fully in place. Thibodeau stated that this is only a plan. The council has 30 days to review it, at which time it is free to reject or accept it.

Council member Wayne Hemingway announced that Stevens High School student Gene Gagnon was recognized by the National Merit Scholarship Inc. for his exceptional academic promise and scholastic excellence.

The council approved the appointments of Heather Irish to Seat 1 on the Claremont Development Board. Doreen Kusselow was appointed to Seat 2, and Sharon Wood to Seat 3 on the Fiske Free Library Board.

There was a first reading of an ordinance which allows the elderly to apply for a 3.7% reduction to their income and assets – not including their home – as an exemption when paying their taxes. An identical ordinance allows for a reduction of taxes for the disabled. There will be two more readings of these ordinances before they are formally approved.

Director of Finance Maureen Hulslander requested the council's approval to appropriate funds in the amount of $4,250 to the engineering firm Simpson, Gumpertz and Heger for subcontractor work on the exploratory structural work at the visitors center. This expense was not included in the fiscal year 2026 general fund budget. At that time, the firm could only state the cost would not exceed $5,000. The council approved this appropriation.

Police Chief Brett Wilmot requested the council's approval of a five-year contract with Axon Enterprises Inc. for new conductive energy weapons, known as tasers, along with cartridges, training, and related equipment, at a cost of $155,895.40 paid in five equal payments over five years. The council approved.

Fiske Free Library Director James Allen asked the council's approval for a $5,000 grant from the Burn Foundation, to be used for a local author series held at the library planned for early 2027. The council approved.

The Claremont City Council meets on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, at 6:30 p.m., in the Claremont City Hall Council Chambers.

Keene Pumpkin Festival celebrates fall despite wintry temps

BY PAULA BENSON

KEENE, N.H. – Many New Hampshire residents have fond memories of going to the Keene Pumpkin Festival when they were kids – looking forward every year to trick-or-treating at the different downtown stores and businesses, carving a pumpkin to add to the pumpkin tower, and joining the spirited Halloween costume parade down Main Street.

One lifelong New Hampshirite who started going to the festival with her family when she was young recalled huge crowds packing the streets, "walking shoulder to shoulder."

This year's event, held Saturday, Oct. 17, was well attended in spite of the chilly temperatures and bitter gusts of wind that had most everyone bundled up in winter gear and lining up for hot mulled cider. With the sun shining and music and laughter filling the air, the mood was light and festive all day.

The traditional kids' costume parade started at 2 p.m., at the gazebo in the square, and was led by A Company of Witches out of Marlow, N.H. Families in costumes followed the dancing witches down Main Street to Gilbo Avenue, where students from MoCo Arts performed a portion of the upcoming middle-school and high-school musical "The Little Mermaid." Pick up tickets for the Dec. 12 performance at www.moco.org/tickets.

There were also a variety of great performers throughout the day on three different stages. The New Hampshire Dance Institute (NHDI) drew a sizable crowd, and line dance group The Monandock Mavericks put on a lively show. Modern Fools played for fans in their unique style described as "seriously retro, cosmic Americana." A Company of Witches put on two shows in the afternoon, and on the South Stage, in front of the Colonial Theater, Sonntag Jazz Collective performed a



Walls of carved pumpkins along Main Street.

PHOTO BY PAULA BENSON

*See **PUMPKIN** on Page 2*

INDEX

Health & Community.....4
Obituaries & Services.....5
Calendar.....6
Legal Notices.....6
Classifieds.....7
Politics & Opinion.....7-9
Arts & Entertainment.....10
Real Estate.....11

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DEADLINES

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

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CCCD celebrates successful nesting season for eastern meadowlarks

WALPOLE, N.H. – Connecticut River Valley Grassland Bird Project is celebrating a successful nesting season for eastern meadowlarks in the Connecticut River Valley. New England has lost more than 95% of its meadowlark population in the past 50 years, making every successful nest vitally important.



An eastern meadowlark in flight.

PHOTO BY MICK BAISLEY

Conventional haying schedules overlap with the meadowlark nesting season, and successful nesting requires targeted management and collaboration with landowners. We are grateful to Sullivan County farmers Alan Putnam, Leo Roy, and Norm St. Aubin for adjusting their hayfield management to protect meadowlark nests and give young birds the time they need to develop flight skills.

We'd also like to thank Jen Armstrong, Coleen Lawlor, and Cat Abbott for volunteering their time to locate and monitor meadowlark nests throughout the season. A fourth successful nest was documented in Rockingham, Vt., on land owned by Great River Hydro, with financial support for delayed mowing provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Together, these efforts demonstrate what is possible when farmers, landowners, volunteers, and conservation partners work together to give meadowlarks the time and habitat they need to raise young.

The Connecticut River Grassland Bird Outreach Initiative is supported by a partnership among Windham County NRCD, Cheshire County Conservation District, Ottauquechee NRCD, and a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Northeast Forests and Rivers Fund.

Learn more about the Connecticut River Grassland Bird Initiative at www.windhamcountynrcd.org/connecticut-river-valley-grassland-bird-project.

The ritual logic behind the Dartmouth Green and the bonfire

HANOVER, N.H. – Every college has official history. The livelier history is often carried by what students touch, sing, avoid, wear, and repeat. Dartmouth Homecoming gathers people around the Green and the bonfire, turning a central landscape into a temporary ceremonial center.

James George Frazer collected prohibitions that marked people, places, and objects as set apart. His explanations were often speculative, yet the basic problem is familiar on a campus. Once a community agrees that a step, touch, or route carries luck or danger, observance becomes a small test of local knowledge. That distinction helps explain why this particular tradition has lasted.

The green and the bonfire also show how rules become meaningful through observance. Some traditions prescribe a touch, others prohibit a step, and still others tell people exactly when to sing or gather. The practical stakes may be tiny, but the social stakes are not. Knowing the rule proves that one has learned the local grammar of belonging. Repeated long enough, a gesture can become a map of who is inside the community and who is still learning its language.

The example is therefore best read at two scales. Locally, it belongs to a specific school and has a traceable institutional history. Comparatively, it resembles a much wider human tendency to attach meaning to repeated acts at moments of transition or return. Frazer sometimes collapsed those two scales and treated similarity as evidence of common origin. The safer approach keeps them separate. The local history tells us where the custom came from. Comparison tells us why the custom may feel satisfying, memorable, or binding once a community adopts it.

Another clue comes from instruction. People usually learn the Green and the bonfire from other people, which makes transmission part of the tradition itself. This is why the essay treats chronology as a guardrail. A known modern origin should not be overwritten merely because an older ritual elsewhere looks surprisingly similar. For a recurring season, the custom provides punctuation. It helps mark beginnings, climaxes, and returns that would otherwise blur into the ordinary calendar. The old theory is most useful here after its evolutionary certainty has been stripped away.

New Hampshire college ritual is inseparable from autumn, when homecoming, fire, animal emblems, and the return of alumni all arrive with the changing season.

There is no need to invent an ancient pedigree. In fact, the modern date of a tradition can make the point sharper. Communities can manufacture continuity surprisingly quickly when repetition gives an act a place in collective memory.

What survives is not necessarily an ancient rite. What survives is a human appetite for giving the calendar, the crowd, and a shared symbol more meaning than any one of them could carry alone.

Written by Charles E. A. Lincoln IV. *Lincoln holds degrees from Harvard University, Texas A&M University, the University of Amsterdam, and Boston University, and is a doctoral candidate in comparative constitutional law at the University of Groningen.*

Our Place fundraiser

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The 28th Empty Bowl soup supper to benefit Our Place Community Food Center will be held Saturday, Oct. 24, at 5 p.m., at Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children.

Tickets are now on sale for the dinner and auction event that includes a social hour featuring local beer and wine, a supper of signature soups prepared by local restaurants and chefs, silent and live auctions of items and services donated by local businesses and individuals, and the launch of the Our Place Holiday Basket program. Attendees will take home a handmade ceramic bowl as a memento of the evening.

Tickets are on sale online at the center's website, www.ourplacevermont.org/events.

Proceeds from the Empty Bowl fundraiser support the food programs of Our Place, including the food pantry, healthy breakfasts and lunches five days a week, and grocery deliveries to homebound seniors.

Our Place is located at 4 Island Street in Bellows Falls. The nonprofit organization serves families in the greater Rockingham and surrounding areas, as well as Walpole and North Walpole, N.H. Further information is available by calling 802-463-2217, emailing info@ourplacevermont.org, or by finding Our Place on Facebook.

Tri Town Collectors Club meeting

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Tri Town Collectors Club will hold its next seasonal show featuring coins, paper money, vintage sports cards, stamps, postcards, and other collectibles on Saturday, Oct. 31, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the Charlestown Senior Center, 223 Old Springfield Road in Charlestown, N.H.

This daylong series of hobby activities is packed with fun for the whole family. Besides the usual offerings, there will be many special guest dealers with displays of postcards, political buttons, and vintage and modern sports cards. There will be a free hobby giveaway table geared especially toward kids.

There is no admission charge, and anyone wishing to set up a free table to sell their material may arrange to do so by contacting Joe Fuller at 802-379-2353 or pepsijoseph@yahoo.com.

PUMPKIN

From Page 1

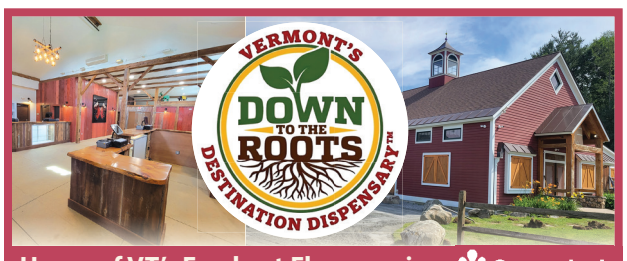
skillful set which had folks of all ages bopping along with the music.

The jazz ensemble, made up of musicians Julia Baer, Logan Phillips, Kevin Sonntag, Emma Toscano, and Kyle Trombley, shared a post on its Facebook page after the festival: "It might have been cold today, but we certainly played hot."

There were a variety of local food vendors and more than 30 craft vendors who displayed their wares and tried to keep their pop-up tents from going airborne in the wind. There truly was something for everyone, and people were happy to see the festival coming back to life and gaining in popularity with the residents of Keene and surrounding communities once again.

The party continued into the evening despite the frigid nip in the air. With so many people still wearing costumes, the mood felt a lot like Halloween: a little bit spooky and somewhat mischievous. Downtown bars and restaurants were packed with groups of friends gathered for some preholiday reveling.

The festival is organized by Let It Shine Inc., a local nonprofit, which set out to create a family-friendly celebration of fall and community spirit. Headquartered in Keene, the charitable organization raises funds to help people in need and assist other nonprofits. It accepts donations and sells merchandise year-round. Visit Let It Shine's website at www.pumpkinfestival.org.



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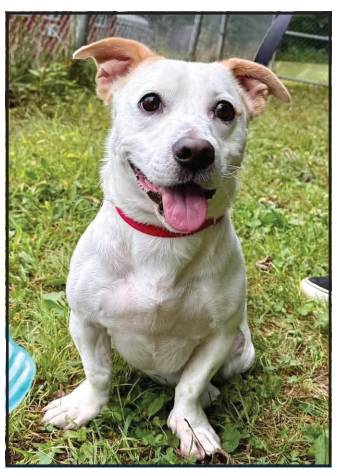
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CHARLIE

I am a 26-pound tripod due to an old bullet wound. I am shy at first, but I am a goofy boy who loves belly rubs. Heartworm positive, I must stay in Vermont.

Springfield Humane Society, 802-885-3997, 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, Vt.



EZE

I am a 3-month-old super playful kitten that enjoys chasing strings and purring loudly when you scratch under my chin.

Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society, 802-484-5829, 4832 VT Route 44, West Windsor, Vt.



COALTON

Hey, are you looking for me? I am 6-year-old Coalton and I am a sweet, curious outgoing guy! I'd be the perfect addition to your family!

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BOBBY

I am a 1-2-year-old lovable guy. I love to eat, get pets, and play. I am cat friendly, and I adore people.

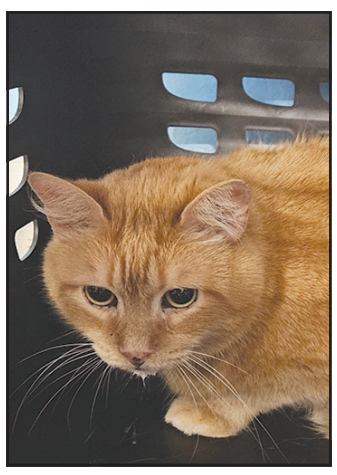
Springfield Humane Society, 802-885-3997, 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, Vt.



SUE

I am 10 years old, and like to spend lots of time snuggled up in my bed. I like to approach people on my own terms, but when I do I enjoy lots of head scratches.

Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society, 802-484-5829, 4832 VT Route 44, West Windsor, Vt.



TRENT

I am 11-year-old Trent. I am a sweetheart that came to the shelter with rotten teeth and urinary blockage issues. Now I'm all "fixed up" and ready for my new family.

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I am beautiful hound looking for my own home to Aroooo in! I am dog and people friendly. A kind donor has sponsored my adoption fee to help me find a home soon.

Springfield Humane Society, 802-885-3997, 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, Vt.



VERONA

I am a 5-year-old gal looking for an adult-only home and to be the only animal. Ideally, my family would have experience with the Akita breed. I enjoy long walks and playing fetch.

Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society, 802-484-5829, 4832 VT Route 44, West Windsor, Vt.



BUSHING

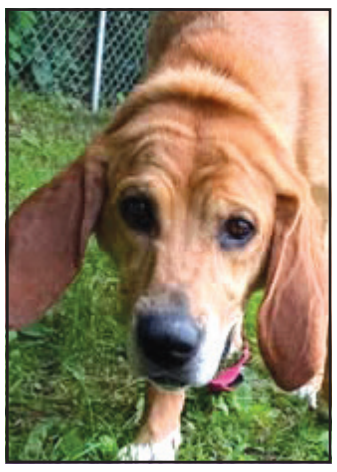
I am 1.5-year-old Bushing. I have been at SCHS for 6 months and no one knows why. I am a sweet girl that gets along great with other cats and just wants a family of my own!

Sullivan County Humane Society, 603-542-3277, 14 Tremont Street, Claremont, N.H.

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BIBB + JOYCE

We are two kittens available for adoption. If you are looking for a kitten, please reach out to SHS, as we get them in often, but they are adopted very quickly!

Springfield Humane Society, 802-885-3997, 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, Vt.



LOVE

I am 10 years old. I really enjoy the company of other cats and made friends at the shelter. I take a while to warm up to new people, but love getting pets when I trust you.

Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society, 802-484-5829, 4832 VT Route 44, West Windsor, Vt.



PUZZLE

I am 10-year-old Puzzle, and although I look rough, I am looking better and better each day with the proper care and food! I have a lot of love to give and I crave attention.

Sullivan County Humane Society, 603-542-3277, 14 Tremont Street, Claremont, N.H.

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Springfield Humane Society, 802-885-3997, 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, Vt.

health & community

Chester Run Club brings community together

CHESTER, Vt. – What started as a simple observation of more people out enjoying Chester's roads and trails this spring has grown into a new community tradition. The Chester Run Club, founded by local resident Emily Martonik, was created with a straightforward goal: bring runners of all abilities together to build friendships, stay active, and enjoy the miles together.

"Every time I drove through town, I kept seeing different people out running," Martonik said. "I realized there were probably a lot of us running the same roads, just at different times. I thought it would be fun to create a space where people could meet and run together."

The club meets every couple of weeks for a relaxed, 3-to-4-mile run through Chester. The emphasis isn't on pace or performance, it's on community. Runners naturally split into groups based on their speed, making the experience welcoming for everyone, from first-time runners to experienced marathoners.

"There are no expectations," Martonik said. "Whether you're training for a race or just looking to get outside and meet new people, everyone is welcome. We've even been running with our kids in jogging strollers some weeks."

The club reflects a growing trend of informal community running groups popping up in towns across the country, offering an accessible way for people to improve their health while building meaningful local connections. With a few more runs planned as the season comes to a close, Martonik hopes the Chester Run Club becomes something residents can count on for years to come.

"It's been really rewarding to see people who didn't know each other a few months ago now making plans to run together outside of the club," she said. "That's exactly what I was hoping for."

The Chester Run Club is open to runners of all experience levels. Information about upcoming group runs is shared through the club's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/chesterrunclubvt.

Windham County Dental joins North Star Health

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – North Star Health is excited to welcome Windham County Dental Center into its organization, a change that will support the sustainability and expansion of the center's services. The dental center will remain a safety-net provider, serving patients who are uninsured, have Medicaid, or have private insurance. Patients will continue to see the same smiling faces they know when they come in for a visit.

The partnership builds on Windham County Dental Center's history of responding to the health needs of Brattleboro and surrounding towns. "Joining North Star Health represents an exciting new chapter for our community. By broadening our resources and strengthening our partnerships, we can expand the services and opportunities available to our patients. This partnership provides greater sustainability for our dental center while allowing us to continue focusing on what matters most – improving the health and wellbeing of our community," said Karen Wilber, executive director of Windham County Dental Center.

North Star Health Board Chair Bob Flint said, "We're pleased to be bringing Windham County Dental into the North Star family. We look forward to working together to continue to increase access to dental services in the Brattleboro area."

Windham County Dental Center was established through a partnership between United Way of Windham County and Brattleboro Memorial Hospital in response to the 2017 community needs assessment. The assessment identified a significant gap in dental care for people covered by Medicaid. The center opened in 2019, moved to its current location at 53 Fairview Street in 2023, and became part of North Star Health on Oct. 1, 2026.

David Sanville, interim CEO of Brattleboro Memorial Hospital (BMH), shared, "The success of the Windham County Dental Center demonstrates what can be achieved when community organizations unite around a shared goal. The partnership between BMH and United Way created a lasting solution that continues to expand access to dental care for those who need it most."

The United Way plans to continue its involvement by supporting expanded services for school-aged children in the region. "We see the dental center's move to North Star Health as a real opportunity to deepen our partnership and support North Star's growing presence in Windham County. We hope to explore ways to connect North Star's health services with local schools so school-aged children and their families can access primary care more easily," said Rebecca Baruzzi, executive director of United Way of Windham County.

The move will also partly support Brattleboro Memorial Hospital's sustainability through rental income that was not previously collected.

Joshua R. Dufresne, CEO of North Star Health, said, "This is part of our ongoing effort to expand and serve the underserved population in Brattleboro. Bringing Windham County Dental Center into the fold will provide greater administrative support in areas such as human resources, information technology, and communications, allowing employees to focus more fully on caring for patients."

"I have long supported bringing a federally qualified health center into Windham County, the only county in Vermont without a community health center. I am very pleased that North Star Health is taking over operations of Windham County Dental Center. Federally qualified health centers are one bright spot in our otherwise broken healthcare system. They serve anyone who walks through the door, regardless of whether they have insurance or not. They provide comprehensive, community-based care and help reduce health disparities, particularly in rural areas where access to providers can be limited," commented U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Wallingford Elementary service challenge

WALLINGFORD, Vt. – Students at Wallingford Elementary School (WES) are setting an ambitious goal for the 2026-2027 school year: complete 150 acts of service for their school and the greater Wallingford community. But this year, they are hoping the idea spreads well beyond Wallingford.

Wallingford Elementary is challenging other schools throughout the region and across Vermont to set their own service goals and find meaningful ways for students to make a difference in the communities they call home. The challenge builds on an initiative that began during the 2025-2026 school year. Wallingford students and staff set out to complete 100 acts of service and ultimately surpassed their goal, finishing the year with 104. This year, WES has raised the goal to 150.

"The number gives us something to rally around, but 150 is not really the point," said Wallingford Elementary Principal Phil Hall. "We want our students to understand that they don't have to wait until they are adults to make a difference. They are members of this community right now, and they are capable of making it better."

At Wallingford Elementary, an act of service must involve at least 30 minutes of meaningful work and benefit either the entire school community or the greater Wallingford community. The goal is not to count every individual good deed, but to give students opportunities to invest their time, effort, and energy into something larger than themselves. Projects might include maintaining or improving community spaces, helping local organizations, supporting community events, completing environmental projects, creating something that benefits others, or responding to needs identified by members of the community.

The school is also inviting the Town of Wallingford, local organizations and businesses, and community members to help identify genuine needs that students can help address. If there is a park that needs attention, an organization that could use extra hands, a seasonal project that needs volunteers, or another age-appropriate opportunity for elementary students to contribute, WES wants to hear about it.

Now, Wallingford Elementary hopes other schools will join the effort. A school might challenge its students to complete 25, 50, or 100 acts of service. Another might set a goal based on its enrollment, organize one schoolwide service project each month, or develop a challenge that fits the needs of its own community. What matters is giving young people authentic opportunities to see themselves as contributors. The hope is to create a growing network of students across Vermont demonstrating what young people can accomplish when service becomes an intentional part of school culture.

At Wallingford Elementary, the initiative connects directly to the school's 2026-2027 theme, "All for One and One for All," as well as "Together We Grow," the school motto introduced during the 2025-2026 school year.

Last year's 104 acts of service demonstrated what one small school community could accomplish when students, educators, and community members worked toward a common goal. This year, Wallingford Elementary hopes to accomplish even more, and inspire other schools to start their own challenges along the way.











HEALTH & CHURCH obituaries

Dartmouth Health study finds rural older adults have less access to intensive hospice care

LEBANON, N.H. – Older adults living in rural communities are less likely to receive hospice care, and when they do, are less likely to receive the most intensive hospice services for severe symptoms, according to a new study led by a Dartmouth Health researcher and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). The study found that 52.4% of older adults who died in urban ZIP codes received hospice care, compared with 44.8% of those in the most rural ZIP codes.

Among people who received hospice care, rural and urban patients were similarly likely to receive routine visits from hospice nurses, social workers, and aides, despite the longer distances rural hospice teams often travel to reach patients.

"Rural hospice teams are doing a remarkable job of providing routine care to patients despite the challenges of distance and geography," said Dr. Claire Ankuda, lead author of the study, palliative medicine physician at Dartmouth Health, and associate professor of medicine and of health policy and clinical practice at Dartmouth's Geisel School of Medicine. "What we found is that the biggest differences emerge when patients need more intensive, round-the-clock support – and that's the gap we need to understand better."

The study found significant differences in access to two types of intensive hospice care. General inpatient hospice care, which provides around-the-clock care for patients with severe symptoms that cannot be managed at home, was provided to 21.7% of hospice patients in urban ZIP codes compared with 12.7% of patients in the most rural ZIP codes.

Continuous home care, which provides at least eight hours of nursing care in a patient's home, was provided to 2.5% of hospice patients in urban ZIP codes compared with just 0.5% of patients in the most rural ZIP codes.

The findings highlight challenges facing rural hospice providers, where greater travel distances, workforce shortages, and lower population density can make it more difficult to provide intensive services. The researchers point to one possible fix: a rural payment adjuster that would let Medicare pay rural hospice agencies more for delivering general inpatient and continuous home care, helping offset the added cost of providing intensive services in low-density areas.

"Rural patients should have the same opportunity to receive the level of hospice care they need, regardless of where they live," said Ankuda. "Understanding what is driving these differences is an important next step so we can identify ways to improve access to high-intensity hospice care in rural communities."

The study was conducted by researchers from Dartmouth Health/Geisel School of Medicine; the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; the University of California, San Francisco; and Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

The full study, "Rural-Urban Disparities in the Delivery and Intensity of the Medicare Hospice Benefit," is published in JAMA.

LUDLOW, VT.

United Church of Ludlow (UCC and Methodist), 48 Pleasant St.

The United Church of Ludlow is an Open and Affirming Church of the United Church of Christ, and a Reconciling Congregation of the United Methodist Church. Everyone is truly welcome here, without exception. Sunday service is held at 10 a.m., in person and on Zoom, followed by a fellowship hour. Call 802-356-8046 for more information or for the Zoom link.

SPRINGFIELD, VT.

Church of Christ, Rt. 11, 972 Chester Rd.

Sunday coffee and fellowship time at 9:30 a.m., adult Bible study at 10 a.m., worship service at 11 a.m. includes a group meeting for children. Live or past services can be viewed on Facebook at SpringfieldVTChurchofChrist. Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., adult class on different topics meets in the Fellowship Hall, accessed by parking in the back of the church. For more information, call Jamie Kurpiel, Evangelist, at 870-615-0452 or email jckurpiel@yahoo.com. If no answer, call 802-886-2670.

Precision Valley Baptist Church, 69 Rt. 106

Join our worship service every Sunday at 10 a.m. Women's Study group meets on Tuesdays at 6 p.m., and Mens Study Group meets on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. All are welcome! For more information, check out Facebook @PrecisionValleyBaptistChurch.

Springfield Assembly of God, 269 River St.

Sunday morning service is 10 a.m. Evening service is 6 p.m. Go to www.facebook.com/Springfield-Assembly-of-God-156583214402910 for links and more information.

CHURCH SERVICES: We run Church Services on an alternating schedule. Subject to space. All services are posted online at www.VermontJournal.com.

Diane M. Neronsky, 1934-2026



Diane Neronsky, 1934-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Diane M. Neronsky, 91, of Springfield, Vt., peacefully passed away on Oct. 8, 2026, leaving behind a legacy of love and kindness. Born on June 2, 1934, in Rutland, Vt., she is the daughter of Joseph and Eileen (Loveday) Pockette. When her family moved to Springfield during her fourth-grade year, she met her lifelong best friend, Lydia (Peterson) Dzewaltowski. She graduated from Springfield High School in 1952. Diane's joyful spirit shone brightly, as she was Springfield's majorette and also instructed majorette and baton students across New England.

On July 2, 1955, she married her true love, Springfield native Ray Neronsky. They spent 11 years starting their family in Charlotte, N.C., before returning to Springfield. Diane and her beloved brother, Tommy ("TJ"), were prominent figures in their community, known for directing and leading Springfield's Junior Miss and Apple Blossom Cotillions for many years. Diane also played a significant role in the family business, the Precision Valley Motel, and was an active member of her church. For half a century, she valued the friendships she cultivated through the Catholic Daughters at Saint Mary's Parish.

Diane was known for her kindhearted, lively spirit. She loved creating a beautiful home, taking annual trips to Maine with her girlfriends, and spending time with those she cared about. Always caring and generous, Diane committed her time to helping others – whether giving a ride to an appointment, volunteering at the hospital coffee shop, offering needed words of encouragement, or simply stopping by for a friendly visit.

Her life was devoted to her three beloved sons, John Joseph (Sandy), Jeff (Mary), and Jerry (Mark); and her treasured grandsons, John Raymond and Matthew. They truly were the meaning of her life. Diane was a remarkable and selfless mother and grandmother, whose happiness stemmed from cherished moments with her family, including her dear cousins, nieces, and nephews. She will be profoundly missed, but will stay forever in the hearts and memories of those who loved her.

She was preceded in death by her loving husband, Ray, and her dear, sweet son Jeff.

A memorial service will be held on Friday, Oct. 23, at 2 p.m., at the Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield, Vt. Father Larry, of St. Mary's Holy Family Church, will officiate.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to Springfield Center for Living and Rehabilitation, 105 Chester Road, Springfield, VT 05156.

Erica Low Moody, 1967-2026



Erica Low Moody, 1967-2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

KEENE, N.H. – Erica Low Moody, of Keene, N.H., passed away peacefully on Oct. 9, 2026, after a long battle with kidney failure. She was born on Oct. 6, 1967, in Baltimore City, Md., to Nanci Low MacMillan and Sidney Low Jr.

Erica graduated from Keene High School in 1985 and went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in behavioral science and a Master of Education degree from Keene State College. In 2020, she earned a second Master of Education degree in educational leadership and administration from Plymouth State University, followed by her Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies (CAGS) in 2021. At the time of her passing, Erica was looking forward to completing her Ph.D.

Erica was a constant and caring presence at Bellows Falls Union High School in Vermont for many years, where she worked as a special education teacher. She poured her heart into helping her students succeed and made a lasting impact on their lives and futures.

"To the world, you may be just a teacher, but to your students, you are a hero."

Erica leaves behind her parents, Nanci Low MacMillan and Sidney Low Jr., of Orono, Maine; her sister, Ariana Marchesini, and brother-in-law, Alex Marchesini, of Camden, Maine; and her stepdaughter, Paige Flammia, Paige's husband, Joseph Flammia, and their son, Joey.

Erica was predeceased by her brother, Skip Low, of Winterport, Maine.

There are no events scheduled at this time.

Those who wish to honor Erica's memory may make a donation to the Springfield Humane Society in Springfield, Vt., at 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, VT 05156.

Condolences to the family may be expressed at www.brookingssmith.com.

Justin Vieu, 2026



Justin Vieu, 2026.
PHOTO PROVIDED

CHESTER, Vt. – We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of our cherished son, Justin Vieu, on Oct. 5, 2026. His charismatic personality and infectious smiles will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

In addition to immensely loving his girls, Justin had a passion for the outdoors and enjoyed fishing, hunting, and snowmobiling.

He is survived by his adoptive parents, Janice and George Berube; his girlfriend, Tasha Long; and their two children, Crystella and Rózaleigh.

Justin also leaves behind his birth parents, Mary Golec and Daniel Vieu; his wife, Melissa Vieu; his grandmothers, Pauline Golec and Shelly Poisson; his brother, Jonathan McKeever, and his adoptive parents, Jill and Mack McKeever; his sisters, Haileigh Vieu, Sadeigh Vieu, Raelynn Vieu, Alexis Vieu, Aaliyah Clark, and Autumn Moore; stepsiblings Taylor Raymond and Lucas Defalco; and his lifelong friends Alias Hazen-Foster and Carl Long Jr.

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.













calendar

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT. 22 –

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – The Second Congregational Church of Londonderry, 2051 North Main Street (Vermont Route 11), will serve a community lunch on Thursday, Oct. 22, at 12 p.m. The menu will be a traditional turkey dinner and dessert. Fun, fellowship, and great food. All are welcome. A free-will offering will be gathered. No takeout available. For more information, call the church office at 802-824-6453.

OCT. 23 –

BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – A screenplay reading of Alfred Hitchcock's 1955 film "The Trouble With Harry" will be held on Friday, Oct. 23, at 7 p.m., at the Latchis Theatre, 50 Main Street. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit www.app.arts-people.com/?show=363446.

OCT. 24 –

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS, Vt. – The Bridgewater Grange, 129 Route 100A, will host a potluck with live music by Bbang on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 6-8 p.m. There will be pumpkins, Halloween candy, and apples to take home. All are welcome. Bring a dish to share.

CHESTER, Vt. – The Chester-Andover Family Center will host its Empty Bowls fundraiser on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 4:30-7 p.m., at the Chester American Legion, 635 Vermont Route 103. There will be raffles, a live auction, delicious soups, and tasty treats available.

OCT. 24-25 –

NEWFANE, Vt. – The Historical Society of Windham County presents "A Potluck of Stories: Windham County Remembers," on Saturday, Oct. 24, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Oct. 25, at 2 p.m., at Newfane's Union Hall, 5 Church Street. A different program of stories from Windham County's past and present is slated for each date – tales told by people from area towns that shed a light on where we've come from to become who we are. Organizers say "personal accounts are more important now than ever before. As we morph into an even more technology-driven culture, we'd do well to hold on to what makes us human, the things AI can't tell: our stories." The programs are free, though donations to the Historical Society of Windham County will be welcomed. The hall is accessible. For more information, visit www.potluckofstories.carrd.co or email verbatimvt@gmail.com.

OCT. 26 –

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street, will host a Halloween party on Monday, Oct. 26, at 12 p.m. There will be a costume contest with cash prizes, and finger sandwiches and cupcakes will be served. Please make reservations by calling 802-228-7421. Free cash bingo will follow. All ages are welcome.

NOV. 7 –

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – Gerry Grimo & The East Bay Dance Combo will perform at the Charlestown Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 7-9 p.m. This will be a Roaring '20s-themed social dance. Dress in period costume for good fun. Small suggested donation. There is a large dance floor and comfortable seating. Snacks will be available, BYOB.

RECURRING EVENTS

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 –

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Come check out TOPS – Take Off Pounds Sensibly. We are a nonjudgmental, affordable, and supportive weight loss group. The first visit is free. All are welcome; youth must be at least 9 to attend and have parental permission. Meetings are every Tuesday at 25 Cherry Hill in Bellows Falls. Weigh-ins start at 5 p.m.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Senior Solutions, in collaboration with Tai Chi Vermont, is offering its "Tai Chi for Fall Prevention" beginner class in the Great Hall, 100 River Street (parking at Pearl Street entrance) on Tuesdays, from 10:40-11:40 a.m. Tai chi not only helps to lower the risk of falling, but also improves concentration, leg strength, balance, and coordination, and reduces joint pain and stress. Come join us; it's fun and it's free. For more information, email suerubl@aol.com.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Tai Chi Vermont-certified teacher Jo Bregnard will lead a weekly beginner bafa wubu tai chi practice, online and in person, from the Springfield Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 21 Fairground Road), on Tuesdays, from 10-11 a.m., Sept. 8-Nov. 3. All are welcome, and all classes will be recorded. For pricing details and to sign up, visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/95776.

LUDLOW, Vt. – The infant and toddler playgroup at the Fletcher Memorial Library, 88 Main Street, is held on Tuesday mornings, from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m. This playgroup is best suited for children ages 5 and younger, and is a great opportunity for kids and families to meet and enjoy interactive time together. Whether it's playing with cars, cooking up a meal in the play kitchen, or sharing a story, there are plenty of activities available to choose from.

WEDNESDAYS –

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Fletcher Memorial Library, 88 Main Street in Ludlow, will host kids' story time on Wednesdays, from 10:30-11 a.m., from Sept. 16 – Dec. 16. Story time is a wonderful weekly routine to establish with your young child. Each week focuses on early literacy activities, stories, and songs, and ends with a craft or science exploration. It is a great opportunity for your child to socialize and meet new friends, and for adult caregivers to connect. Best suited for ages 5 and under.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Every Wednesday morning, from 8-11 a.m., at the Springfield VFW Post 771, 191 River Street, we get together with fellow veterans for coffee and donuts, and socialize for a few hours. All veterans of all ages are welcome. You do not have to be a VFW or American Legion member to come. Call 802-885-6008 for more information.

THURSDAYS –

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, holds computer clinics on the second and fourth Thursdays of every month, from 12:20-3 p.m. Bring your computer or laptop in if you need help with it. This is for seniors older than 50 only. Emily and Luke will help you troubleshoot any problems you are having. This is a free service, except for the cost of replacement parts. They can also help you with your cell phone, especially Android phones. To make an appointment, call the senior center at 603-543-5998.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – A fly-tying class will be held at the Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, on Thursday evenings, from 6-8 p.m. Tools and instruction are available for free, with a small charge to cover materials. The class is limited to five students. If interested, contact Lloyd Mann at lrmann126@gmail.com.

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.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join us on Main Street, from 5-8 p.m., every fourth Friday in May, June, July, August, September, and October. Events feature a vibrant downtown experience filled with local vendors, live music in the park, and plenty of activities for everyone to enjoy. Presented by Springfield on the Move, Copper Fox, and Gallery at the Vault.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – "Release & Realign" yoga classes with teacher Jo Bregnard meet on Fridays, Oct. 23 – Dec. 18 (no class Nov. 27), from 10-11 a.m., at the Unitarian Universalist Meetinghouse, 21 Fairground Road. All are welcome, no experience necessary. Visit studio.jobregnard.com/product/96156 for complete details and to sign up for online access (livestream and recordings). Sign up for the full series and attend in person to receive a set of props to keep while supplies last. For more information, email jo@jobregnard.com.

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF PETITIONS FOR ELECTION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICT SUPERVISOR FOR THE OTTAUQUECHEE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION DISTRICT

To all those residing within the boundaries of the Ottauquechee Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD), notice is hereby given that on October 19, 2026 petitions for the position of supervisor for the conservation district will be available. An election will be held on December 7, 2026 for two supervisors for the district. Petitions must be completed and returned to the local conservation district office by close of business on November 3, 2026.

Only persons, firms, and corporations who hold title in fee land and residing within such an organized district are eligible to sign a petition or vote.

Conservation districts are local subdivisions of state government established under the Soil Conservation Act of Vermont.

An eligible voter may contact Ottauquechee Natural Resources Conservation District at (802) 369-0697 or onrcd1@gmail.com for a petition or more information or visit 28 Farmvu Drive in White River Junction, Vermont; petitions are located just inside the front foyer.

Dated: October 5, 2026

TOWN OF CHESTER NOTICE OF HEARING FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT

Merridith Sylvester/Bright Beginnings LLC has applied for a conditional use permit to operate a Childcare business at the property located at 26 Main Street.

The Town of Chester Development Review Board will conduct a site visit at 5:00 PM on Monday, November 9, 2026, at 26 Main Street and will hold a hearing on this application at 6:00 PM on Monday, November 9, 2026, at the Chester Town Hall at 556 Elm Street in Chester. A copy of the application and additional information may be obtained from the Zoning Administrator. Participation in this hearing in person, via videoconference, or in writing is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

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

Dated at Chester, Vermont this 16th day of October 2026.

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

TOWN OF CHESTER NOTICE OF HEARING FOR SUBDIVISION PERMIT

Jacques Dodier has applied for a Subdivision Permit for a property located at 512 VT RT 103 South in the Town of Chester. The proposed minor subdivision will divide an existing parcel of 1.14 acres into a Lot 1 of .47 acres and a Lot 2 of .67 acres.

The Town of Chester Development Review Board will conduct a site visit at 5:30 PM on Monday, November 9, 2026, at 512 VT RT 103 South and will hold a hearing on this application at 6:00 PM on Monday, November 9, 2026, at the Chester Town Hall at 556 Elm Street in Chester. A copy of the application and additional information may be obtained from the Zoning Administrator. Participation in this hearing in person, via videoconference, or in writing is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

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

Dated at Chester, Vermont this 16th day of October 2026.

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

YOUR CAREER IN LAW ENFORCEMENT BEGINS HERE

The Town of Ludlow Police Department is seeking a highly motivated individual ready to begin a career in law enforcement.

We'll sponsor and pay you to attend the Vermont Police Academy, upon successful program completion, a position with the Ludlow Police Department awaits you.

Starting pay: During entry-level training: $26.47/hour with benefits including insurances/pension
Submit cover letter/resume/ and employment application (www.ludlow.vt.us) to Chief Jeffrey Warfle via email Jeffrey.warfle@vermont.gov

Your career. Your community. Your opportunity. APPLY TODAY!

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, November 9, 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:

- Scott & Rita Tucker | Application #SUB-26-012 | Application is to subdivide an existing 3.74-acre site into two (2) lots: Lot 1=1.18 acres; Lot 2=2.53 acres. This property is located in the Town Residential Commercial II district.
- The Mill Homeowners Association | Application #80-50-CU, Amd. 5; 464-18-FHR, Amd. 5 | Flood Hazard and Conditional Use Review for a non-substantial improvement to an existing structure located within the floodway. This property is located in the Village Residential-Commercial zoning district.
- Jonathan Dubinski | Application #SUB-26-001 | Applicant is continuing the Development Review Board's June 8, 2026 hearing for a subdivision that was denied under Board Order dated July 6, 2026. This property is located within the Village Residential 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, MSRED
Director of Planning & Zoning

Town of Ludlow, Vermont FT Patrol Officer Job Opening

Ludlow Police Department is accepting applications for a Full-Time Patrol Officer.

Seeking motivated certified candidates. Lateral transfers and out-of-state certified officers are encouraged to apply. Competitive starting pay is $30.96–$49.49/hour, commensurate with level of certification/experience, plus shift differentials of 5% and 7%.

Excellent benefits, including but not limited to, Insurance/ Pension/ PTO.

Must possess a valid driver's license, pass background, physical, psychological exams, and meet Vermont Criminal Justice Council requirements.

To apply: Submit resume, cover letter, and completed application to Chief Jeffrey Warfle at Jeffrey.warfle@vermont.gov. Application is available on Town's website www.ludlow.vt.us

NOW HIRING DIRECTOR OF PLANNING & ZONING TOWN OF LUDLOW, VT

The Town of Ludlow seeks a qualified professional to lead municipal planning, zoning administration, permitting, and community development.
Qualifications: Bachelor's degree in a related field or 3–5 years of planning/zoning experience. Vermont land-use knowledge preferred.
Benefits: Comprehensive health, dental, life and disability insurance; retirement plan; paid leave and holidays.
Salary: Commensurate with experience.
Apply: Submit cover letter, resume and three professional references to Penny Wu, Municipal Manager, at PWu@ludlow.vt.us or Town of Ludlow, PO Box 359, Ludlow, VT 05149.
Position Open until filled. Equal Opportunity Employer.
For more Application and Job Description details: go to our website: www.ludlow.vt.us

classifieds & community

BUYING/ SELLING

COINS, PAPER $$, POKÉMON, SPORTS CARDS, POSTCARDS, and other collectibles. SAT. OCT. 31, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the Charlestown, NH Senior Center. Tables and house calls available. For information, contact 802-379-2353 or pepsijoseph@yahoo.com.

CLEAN OUTS + MORE

EZ-Dump Enterprises has a 15-yard dump trailer available for rent. We're also here for heating equipment, appliance removal, home/storage unit clean outs, stump grinding, and refinishing/repairing gravel driveways. Serving Springfield, Vt. area. Call/text 802-376-1168 or email ezdump.bl@gmail.com.

ELECTRICIAN

LEVI ELECTRIC – 917-417-7880 levielectricvt.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

WEATHERSFIELD, Vt. – Three 2-year-old, very well built garage/barn doors. 2 ea. 8x7, 1 ea. 10x7. You pick up. Asking $500 OBO. Call 802-263-9876 after 10 a.m. No texting, no voicemail.

HELP WANTED

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RUTLAND & WINDSOR COUNTIES – Full-time/Part-time carpenter/handyman needed for local construction company. Pay starts at $35-$75/hour, more skills - more pay. Call Kent at Vermont Services, 802-779-3186.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Part time sales representative wanted to assist area businesses in marketing their services in our papers, while promoting special sections and featured events. Must be available every Thursday and Friday. Salary based on experience, plus set weekly mileage compensation. Room for growth of days and territory. Please email publisher@vermontjournal.com or call 802-228-3600.

LUDLOW/CHESTER, Vt. – Do you live in Ludlow or Chester and participate in local selectboard meetings? Write for us! Please email publisher@vermontjournal.com or call 802-228-3600.

SNOW PLOWING

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

YARD SALE

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Pre-Estate Sale, weekends thru October. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., 20 Commonwealth Ave, Springfield. Tools, toys, trains, boats, cars, furniture.

OPINION POLICY

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Probation and parole conversation at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Town Library invites community members to a welcoming, judgment-free conversation about probation and parole on Monday, Oct. 26, at 1 p.m.

Join Mike and Nick at the library for an opportunity to ask questions, connect with others, and learn about local resources and support available in the community.

Whether you are currently on probation or parole, supporting a loved one, or simply looking for information, everyone is welcome. The conversation is designed to provide a supportive space where participants can seek information and connect with community resources.

To sign up for an event reminder, visit the Springfield Town Library calendar, www.springfieldtownlibrary.org/calendar.

Estate planning workshop at Fletcher Memorial Library

LUDLOW, Vt. – Join the Fletcher Memorial Library on Tuesday, Oct. 27, from 2-3 p.m., for an overview of estate-planning resources.

Estate planning may sound intimidating or like something that requires a lot of resources, but creating an estate plan just means making sure that your health, finances, and anything you own is handled according to your wishes. In this lecture, listeners will hear an overview of some common documents found in an estate plan. The lecture will also cover some free or low-cost resources and digital tools to help you get started with a simple estate plan.

Senior Planet, a program of Older Adults Technology Services from AARP, empowers older adults to use technology so they can learn, work, create, and thrive in the digital age. Its mission is built on the philosophy of "aging with attitude."

This program is brought to you by Black River Good Neighbor Services and Fletcher Memorial Library with support from the Godnick Adult Center and the Vermont Community Foundation. It is free and accessible. For additional information about this and other Senior Planet workshops, call the library at 802-228-8921 or Black River Good Neighbor Services at 802-228-3663.

PUTTING PEOPLE OVER POLITICS



(L–R) **JIM BEDNAR,** *Democrat* • **GEORGE HEBERT,** *Incumbent Republican* • **BENJAMIN NELSON,** *Democrat*

George Hebert, Sullivan County Commissioner and a Republican, endorses **Jim Bednar** and **Benjamin Nelson**—Democrats—to join him on the Commission to bring it back to its purpose to:

★ Serve ***all*** the people of Sullivan County instead of a select few.
★ Focus on attracting new businesses to increase our tax base.
★ Support and strengthen our communities.

Vote for both
Jim Bednar and Benjamin Nelson
Sullivan County Commissioners

Paid for by the Campaign of Benjamin Nelson, 50 Bible Hill Rd, Claremont, NH
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Info & sign up: https://galleryvault.org/workshops/

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opinion

To the Editor:

I am giving my support to reelect our State Rep. Tom Charlton, who represents the towns of Athens, Chester, Grafton, and Windham. He has done a great job, and he works as hard for us as he has managing and operating his own timber-framing business.

As a minister for 25 years and Boy Scout troop master, Tom has played an exceedingly important role in our community – a role that is vitally important in holding us together as a community no matter what differences, including political, we may have. He talks from what he knows and from the truth. When he doesn't know enough, he digs in to become effectively knowledgeable. A good example is the expertise he has gained on the issue of housing. There are few, if any, other members of the legislature who understand the complexities of this issue and who have developed sound approaches to alleviating our housing crisis as Tom has.

No one person is going to fix our problems, and certainly not overnight. Tom has made great strides in making connections, including across the aisle. He is one of a handful of House members who, when he rises to speak, the members put aside their smartphones.

We need to keep that going and give him another two years. Consider this: We can keep moving forward with all the time and energy Tom has put in working for us all, or we can start over again and, at best, stall or even fall back to the lack of common-sense voting and bad bills introduced under the supermajority.

Tom Charlton may be listed as a Republican on your ballot, but he represents us all with knowledge, hard work, common sense, and deep respect for us all.

Sincerely,
Randy Miles
Chester, Vt.

Paid for by the Chester Republican Committee, P.O. Box 16, Chester, VT 05143

To the Editor:

I am commenting on Suzanne Butterfield's letter regarding Prop 4 and Prop 3. I cannot speak from personal experience about the need to protect rights of marginalized groups, as Suzanne Butterfield has.

I can speak to migrant and farm labor and suggest that Suzanne is inexperienced in her opinions. Having worked in orchards in the Northeast and elsewhere for nearly two decades, I experienced my wages drop because H-2 visas made negotiations for pay raises impossible. My research showed that, in their first year of inception in orchards in Pennsylvania, crews of Puerto Ricans recruited with Department of Agriculture encouragement arrived to find that Jamaicans with H-2 visas had taken their jobs. That was my experience in Vermont. I would prefer a labor union to Department of Agriculture or Department of Labor management of food systems.

When we talk about Vermont farms, we have spent decades referring to dairy farms. We overlook vegetable, fruit, maple, marijuana, and fiber farms, and nurseries. We assign them to a sink-or-swim category and place our concerns with big dairy. However, smaller, more viable farms are more numerous, more apt to thrive, and less likely to pollute with herbicides, pesticides, and nitrogen in waterways. Bashing unionization broadly simply plays into corporate wealth production, including big dairy, and overlooks the finer-grained picture of food production.

Sincerely,
Julie Levy
Weathersfield, Vt.

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RE-ELECT TOM
CHARLTON
★ STATE REP ★
ATHENS CHESTER GRAFTON WINDHAM

"VERMONT will be AFFORDABLE when a working Vermont family can afford to stay in VERMONT"



CHARLTON4VERMONT.US

Paid for by the Charlton Campaign Committee
PO Box 1032, Chester, Vt 05143

Dear Editor,

Understanding Prop 3 is essential for every Vermont voter as we cast our ballots and consider amending our constitution.

At its core, Prop 3 prioritizes the interests of unions over the individual rights of the employees they are meant to serve. By empowering unions at all costs, Prop 3 places employees, taxpayers, small business, and our elected officials at risk.

Historically and today, books and journalism have surfaced the plight of the worker and the abuse of so many who have suffered at the hands of power and profit. "The Jungle," "The Bitter Side of Sweet," "Roses for Isabella," "Counting on Grace," "Cobalt Red" – many books have conveyed the depth of the struggle.

Humanity has made great strides, yet abuse and unfair practices continue, especially in the global south, where workers and the environment are preyed upon by the engine of greed. Unions, consumer awareness, and investigative reporting have all played roles in resolving issues and aiding workers in establishing fair wages, safe working conditions, and accountability by employers.

Prop 3 reads, "Article 23. [Right to collectively bargain] That employees have a right to organize or join a labor organization for the purpose of collectively bargaining with their employer through an exclusive representative of their choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions and to protect their economic welfare and safety in the workplace. Therefore, no law shall be adopted that interferes with, negates or diminishes the right of employees to collectively bargain with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety, or that prohibits the application or execution of an agreement between an employer and a labor organization representing the employer's employees that requires membership in the labor organization as a condition of employment."

The right to organize is guaranteed and protected in our First Amendment rights and state and federal laws, making the first sentence of Prop 3 redundant and unnecessary.

Proponents are using this to claim Prop 3 simply constitutionalizes existing law. This is a manipulated message that takes advantage of voters and our inherent, warranted support for employees, unions, and the right to organize.

The problem resides in the second sentence of Proposal 3.

In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled in Janus v. AFSCME that public sector employees can opt out of unions and not pay dues. This decision fell under compelled speech – a First Amendment violation in which an individual may not want a union speaking or negotiating on their behalf and has the guaranteed right to reject this representation. Due to this ruling, public sector unions lost substantial revenue and members.

Since then, private unions have scrambled to protect themselves and secure members and dues. Illinois is the only state to use similar language to amend its constitution, and it immediately faced litigation over federal preemption issues and conflicts with existing laws.

Prop 3 is a strategic move by private sector unions to protect themselves and their revenue. Please see this for what it really is, and please understand that Prop 3 is an immense threat to Vermont.

Employees should be able to choose if they want to join a union, regardless of employment in the public or private sector. Fundamentally, Prop 3 is about the infringement of individual rights, employee rights, and the freedom to choose. Private sector employees have no ability to opt out when union membership is a condition of employment. Litigation is guaranteed, as private unions secure their financial pipeline and member base at the expense of employees' individual rights.

Further, if unions negotiate contracts related to salaries, pensions, and healthcare for state employees and teachers which have an excessive financial burden on taxpayers, our elected officials are explicitly prohibited from intervening without threat of lawsuit.

If Prop 3 passes, Vermont will become a case study like Illinois, with unchecked union power and First Amendment infringements written into the constitution. Lawsuits will escalate at taxpayers' expense while the courts attempt to resolve these guaranteed issues.

Voting "no" on Prop 3 is not anti-union. Prop 3 is not about securing the right to organize, this is secured. It is not about protecting workers. Prop 3 is about guaranteeing unions hold all the power over employees and our democratically elected officials working on our behalf.

Please exert caution, this is our constitution. Let's vote for employees' right to choose, not a constitutional amendment that violates an individual liberty such as free speech. With guaranteed protections to organize and robust labor laws and board authority, there is no need for Vermonters to experiment with high-risk, compromised language in our Vermont Constitution. Problems cannot be resolved with a simple change in law, they will require another four-year process to reverse this mistake.

Please vote "no" on Prop 3. If a union is needed and acting in the best interest of workers, it will be supported. If it is not, then employees should be able to opt out, represent themselves, and choose to work.

Voting "no" on Prop 3 is a vote for employees, taxpayers, free speech, and our elected officials. Please support workers' rights to choose. Please vote "no" on Prop 3.

Sincerely,
Alison Despathy
Danville, Vt.

Working Class Vermonters,

Politicians come and go. Laws change. Constitutions remain.

On election day, Nov. 3, all Vermonters will be going to the polls and voting on whether or not to forever enshrine our right to form and belong to a labor union into our Vermont State Constitution. If passed, Proposal 3 would forever protect the rights of all workers in the Green Mountains to be union.

The billionaires, bosses, and elite hate this constitutional amendment because they dream of a day when they can buy enough lawmakers in Montpelier to make us a so-called "right-to-work" state. In short, they oppose unions because they know that when we come together, when we are organized, we, the working class, are the great majority, and as such we have more potential power to shape our world more than their wealth can ever realize. If they could break us, they would. But we are union strong, and we know that laboring people make up 99% of the population. And it's about time that we gained rights and protections in our constitution so that we, as a labor movement, can continue our fight to achieve livable wages, universal healthcare, paid family medical leave, affordable housing, food security, higher education, jobs, and a more direct participatory democracy for all.

While I know that together we shall pass Proposal 3 on election day, the rich and powerful out-of-staters are spending millions to try to trick, fool, and cajole working people to vote against our own collective interests. They are sending out mailings, paying for radio ads, submitting op-eds, and they have no shame when it comes to lying in order to advance their corporate agenda.

Here are the facts. Proposal 3 simply takes existing Vermont labor law and places it into our constitution as an unalienable right, so that no future politician, by hook or by crook, can seek to diminish or negate our present union rights. That is all.

Look, we are the working class – and we are the majority. Our power is growing. And we need each and every one of you to show up on Nov. 3 to vote "yes" on Proposal 3. But we need more than that. As president emeritus of the Vermont AFL-CIO, I implore you to make a point to speak with your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors, and ask them to support the rights of working people by voting "yes" on Proposal 3. And together, let's all get out and vote "yes" on 3 and thereby send the oligarchs and the Trump administration a message they cannot ignore: Vermont stands with workers, Vermont is union strong!

Sincerely,
David Van Deusen
Vermont AFL-CIO President Emeritus
Moretown, Vt.

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opinion

Dear Editor,

My name is Leslie Thorsen, and I am writing to get the vote out for William Hoser, a Chester resident and physician's assistant who is running for the Vermont House of Representatives for Chester, Windham, Grafton, and Athens.

Will raised his family in Chester, so he knows what a good education means. He has run two small businesses, was born in a rural state, and grew up on a cow farm. For most of his career, he has served all residents of this area as a physician's assistant in two different emergency rooms. He knows how healthcare, or the lack thereof, personally affects the lives of fellow Vermonters.

We need a representative in Montpelier who understands the implications of healthcare, from basic to the most complicated. Being well versed in how insurance covers care or does not, and the gap that is needed to fill the care required would be a game changer in Montpelier. His recent shift to providing healthcare in a mobile van shows his commitment to bringing healthcare to those who may be housebound or who do not have care providers.

His challenger, Tom Charlton, had his time in Montpelier to make a difference, and has not. Glancing at his voting record, I see he voted against Act 217, an amendment to the bill that would expand supplemental childcare grants to preschool and daycare facilities so parents could work. These grants are income based. He voted "no." Skills learned at this early stage in life set the path for future success on all levels.

Tom Charlton voted "no" on Bill 727. This bill was introduced to regulate the transparency of data centers that use and discharge our water after it has been used, as well as total electricity being used. Bill 727 protects local homeowners from being subjected to higher rates of electricity used by a data center in their neighborhood. Voting "no" shows he doesn't care about the environment or the rising cost of electricity, and "yes" to data centers that do not increase jobs in Vermont. Once they are running, there is very little need for local employees. He voted along the Republican party line of Gov. Phil Scott and other House Republicans.

His website shows him shaking hands with Scott. At a candidates forum in Athens, Vt., he publicly stated he is not a politician. Recent letters to the editor promoting his reelection show they are paid for by the Chester Republican Committee. I found it disingenuous to claim he is not a politician, yet he is accepting the endorsement and money provided by a Republican committee.

Will Hoser recognizes urban versus rural. Where a person lives should not affect a child's education or a family's healthcare. He also has children who would like to move back to Vermont, yet, as we all are aware, jobs and housing solutions are going to take hard work. Will has taken on challenges his entire life, and has energy and a willingness to work hard and listen to people, whether it is his patient or a community member. He is up for the challenge of representing the needs of local Vermonters. He also wants to continue to hear from those he represents if he gets elected.

On a recent afternoon, Will and I went "door knocking." It was uplifting. We met people who opened their doors to us and shared a bit of themselves. Above all, they were proud of their choice to be a Vermonter, and hoped to keep their dreams alive. Each home showed us how hard people have worked for their lives here. Will wants everyone to have a place they can call home, a school their children can attend, a job their parents can go to or work remotely so we can all enjoy this gracious state. There should be no "othering" here. We can do this together. Please vote on Nov. 3 for William Hoser to be our collective voice in the House of Representatives!

Sincerely,
Leslie Thorsen
Paid for by Leslie Thorsen, 296 Black-Berry Hill, Chester, VT 05143

Dear Friends,

I am Lisa DeBartolomao, and I am a candidate for state representative in District 3, representing Charlestown, Newport, and Unity, N.H. I am running because I want to help make New Hampshire a better and more affordable place to live, work, raise a family, and retire.

I am a lifelong New Hampshire resident. I grew up in a poor, working-class family, and I know firsthand what it means to struggle to make ends meet and to depend on social service programs to get through difficult times.

I have lived in Charlestown for 32 years, and all of my children attended Fall Mountain schools. I care deeply about our community and the opportunities we provide for our children. One of my biggest concerns is the property tax burden facing Charlestown. High property taxes make it harder for working families to afford their homes and can force retirees on fixed incomes out of the communities where they have lived for decades. I believe the state can do more to help property-poor communities like ours fund public education while reducing the pressure on local taxpayers. New Hampshire's approach to education funding should not leave students in communities with fewer resources at a disadvantage. We should be looking for ways to ensure that students at Fall Mountain have access to the same opportunities as students in wealthier communities.

I am also concerned about the rising costs that face working families, including housing, childcare, and healthcare. These are issues that affect all of us, regardless of political party. I don't believe Democrats and Republicans have to agree on everything, but I do believe they need to work together, listen to one another, and find practical solutions that make New Hampshire more affordable for everyone. I want to be part of that process and help bring respect and collaboration back into our politics.

I would appreciate your vote on Nov. 3.

Campaign Website: www.lisa4abetternh.com.

On Facebook: Lisa DeBartolomao for NH State Rep: Charlestown, Newport, Unity.

Sincerely,
Lisa DeBartolomao
Paid for by Lisa4abetterNH, 46 Scotts Drive, Charlestown, NH 03603

To the Editor:

Too many Vermonters are struggling. It is harder every year to buy a home, pay the rent, afford healthcare, cover childcare, and save for retirement. Wages have gone up, but it feels like we can't keep pace with higher prices. Our children can't start families at current housing prices, and our small businesses can't find enough employees. That is why I am asking for your vote for state representative in the Weston, Andover, Londonderry, and Winhall district. We need a Vermont that works for all Vermonters, not just the wealthy few.

After one term in Montpelier, I know the system, I know the people, and I know what needs to be fixed. I am an active member of the Rural Caucus and a founding leader of the Caucus for Vermont's Economy, which focuses on economic development and reducing government roadblocks. I am an independent thinker: I have voted against my own party when appropriate, and supported its initiatives when they were good for Vermont. I am socially liberal and fiscally conservative, and I believe Montpelier needs less ideology and more practicality.

I bring real-world experience to this work. I ran Northshire Bookstore for more than 20 years, so I know what it takes to meet payroll, follow a budget, and deal with difficult market conditions. I was the founding president of Local First Vermont, which works to keep our hard-earned money in our communities, and I served on the boards of Vermont Businesses for Social Responsibility and the Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

I grew up in Manchester and raised my family in Weston, where my daughters attended local schools. I have served on both public and independent school boards, Flood Brook and Long Trail, so I understand the dynamics and difficulties schools face. I am a graduate of the Snelling Center's Vermont Leadership Institute, and I have lived and worked overseas and studied in other states, which gives me perspective on how special Vermont is. My degrees in environmental policy, from Oberlin and the University of Michigan, mean I take climate change seriously and approach environmental questions from a scientific perspective.

I also believe the more Vermonters are involved in the legislative process, the better, which is why I publish weekly updates during the session and am happy about the Rural Vermont Rising movement. I would be honored to have your support.

Sincerely,
Chris Morrow
Paid for by Morrow for VT, P.O. Box 23, Weston, VT 05161

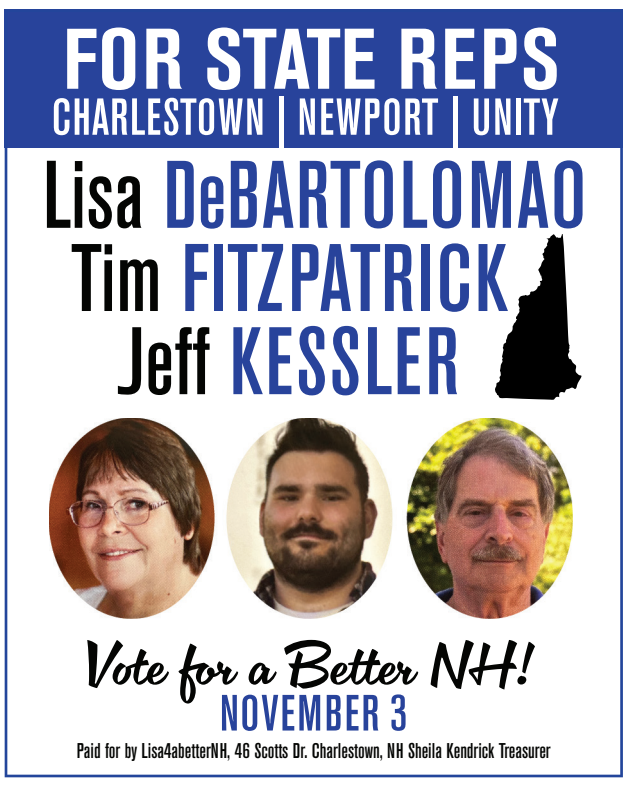
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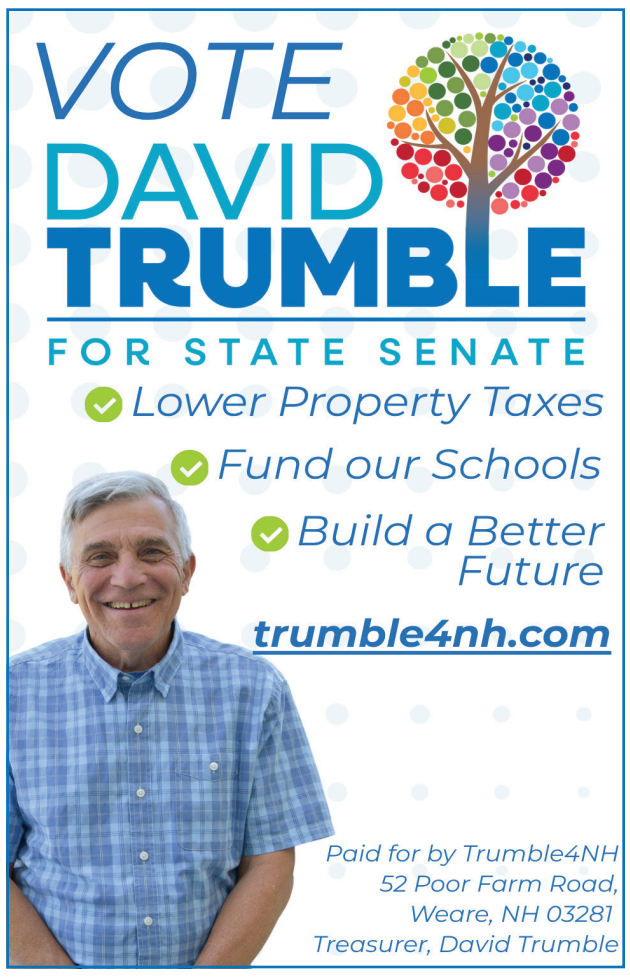
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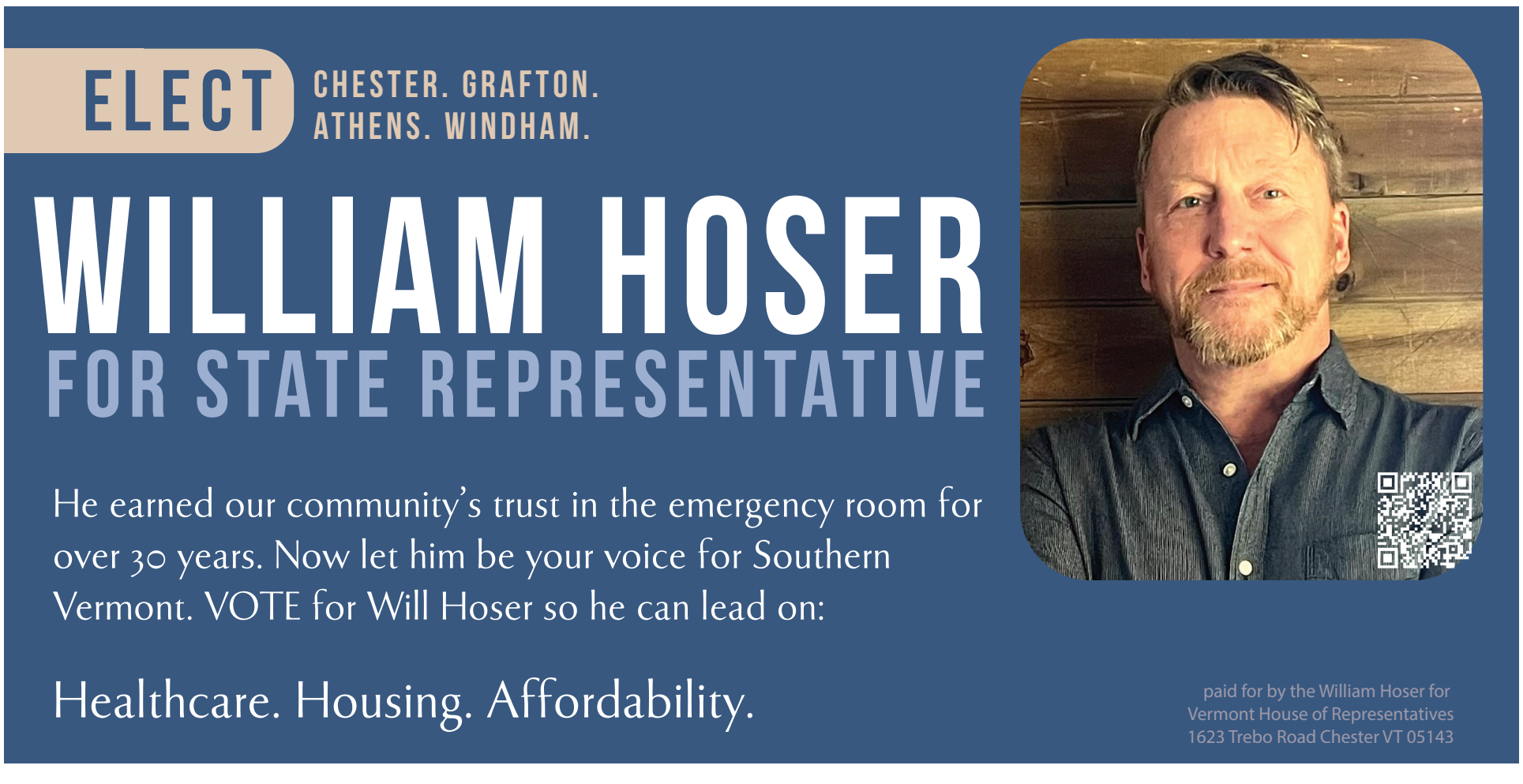
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arts & entertainment

BFOH haunted house

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Halloween is returning to downtown Bellows Falls with a weekend of spooky fun at the Bellows Falls Opera House (BFOH). The Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance (BFDDA) invites the community to enjoy classic Halloween entertainment while helping support the restoration of the opera house lower theater.

The festivities begin on Wednesday, Oct. 28, with a special screening of the beloved 1986 cult classic "The Worst Witch," part of the Opera House's Wednesday Night Classic Movie series sponsored by the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance. Starring Fairuza Balk, Diana Rigg, Charlotte Rae, and Tim Curry as the unforgettable Grand Wizard, the film has become a Halloween favorite for generations of fans and is the perfect way to kick off a weekend of spooky fun.

On Thursday, Oct. 29, the haunted house opens for a family-friendly, low-scare night, from 5:30-7:30 p.m., offering younger visitors and families the chance to experience the attraction with toned-down scares in a fun Halloween atmosphere.

For those looking for something more intense, the full haunted house returns on Friday, Oct. 30, from 6-9 p.m., featuring frightening scenes, unexpected surprises, and plenty of Halloween thrills throughout the lower theater.

The evening concludes with a special screening of George A. Romero's horror classic "Night of the Living Dead," beginning at 10 p.m.

Proceeds from the haunted house will benefit ongoing efforts to restore and revitalize the Bellows Falls Opera House Lower Theater, helping preserve one of downtown's historic gathering places while creating new opportunities for community events, performances, and entertainment.

"We're excited to bring Halloween back to the opera house while supporting an important community project," said Casey Griffin, executive director of the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance. "Whether you're bringing the family on Thursday, looking for a good scare on Friday, or joining us for one of the classic films, there's something for everyone to enjoy."

Community members interested in volunteering to help build, decorate, act, or assist during the event are encouraged to get involved. Local businesses and organizations interested in sponsoring the event are also welcome to participate.

Additional details, including ticket information, volunteer opportunities, and event updates, will be announced in the coming weeks.

For more information, visit www.bellowsfallsvt.com or follow Bellows Falls, VT on Facebook and Instagram.

Weston Theater Company launches Weston Works

WESTON, Vt. – Weston Theater Company recently announced the launch of Weston Works, a new initiative supporting the creation and development of original theatrical work while building lasting relationships between Weston and some of today's most exciting theater artists.

The 2026-2027 inaugural cohort includes director Nina Goodheart, playwright Julia Izumi, playwright Brendan Pelsue, composer Sequoia Sellinger, and playwright and lyricist abs wilson. Together, they will develop four new projects spanning plays, musical theater, and opera. The artists arrived in late September for a weeklong retreat at Walker Farm, beginning a structured development process that will continue in New York City and return to Vermont in 2027.

Susanna Gellert, executive artistic director at the Weston Theater Company, said of Weston Works, "For 90 years, Weston has been a place where artists and audiences come together around extraordinary stories. Weston Works extends that tradition by inviting artists to develop projects for the stage, supporting their work from the first idea to the first encounter with an audience. There is something uniquely valuable about giving artists time – away from the pressures of production – to follow an idea, ask difficult questions, take risks, and discover where a piece wants to go. We're thrilled to welcome this extraordinary first cohort to Weston and to make the development of new work an ongoing part of our artistic life."

In winter 2027, Weston will present industry readings in New York City, providing focused rehearsal and development time with professional theater artists. The cohort will return to Vermont in fall 2027 for the first Weston Works Festival, where audiences will encounter work developed through the program.

Simultaneously with the festival, Weston will welcome its next cohort of artists for the 2027-2028 Weston Works program. As the Weston Works program advances each year, Weston looks forward to expanding its reach and impact with the introduction of a panel of advisors, the Artistic Extension, an open application process, and collaborations with partner organizations across the region.

For more information about Weston Works and the inaugural cohort, visit www.westontheater.org/westonworks.

Statewide square dance tour comes to Chester

CHESTER, Vt. – On Saturday, Oct. 24, from 5-7 p.m., "The Lonely Days Are Gone: Community Square Dance" Tour brings a free concert and square dance to the Chester Town Hall.

Inspired by the state's long tradition of contra and square dancing, the tour welcomes neighbors of all ages to connect through live music, participatory dancing, and shared meals. The tour is headlined by Dorset fiddler, singer, and educator Ida Mae Specker, alongside Shrewsbury caller Sarah Gibson and the Ida Mae Specker Band. Participants will learn the basics of square dancing followed by an evening of traditional American string band music and dancing with Ida Mae Specker and her all-star band. No prior dance experience or partner is required.

In addition to dances, tour stops include special events such as concerts for children and old-time music jams. All events are free and open to the public, and families are encouraged to attend.

The tour is part of the nationwide commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, highlighting the important role that music, dance, and town halls have played in civic life throughout New England.

"The Lonely Days Are Gone" tour is supported by Vermont Humanities, the New England Foundation for the Arts, and generous individual donors, with media support from Vermont Public. The tour is fiscally sponsored by the Chandler Music Hall in Randolph, Vt.

Please note that photos and video may be taken during these events for promotional and archival purposes. By attending, you consent to appearing in event photographs or recordings.

"Ghostly Getaways" at Newport Opera House

NEWPORT, N.H. – To celebrate Halloween, the Newport Opera House Association and Nathan Gardner, in association with Lumos Films, are proud to present "Ghostly Getaways: Live on Stage" on Oct. 30, at 8 p.m., at the Newport Opera House, 20 Main Street in Newport, N.H.

"Ghostly Getaways: Live on Stage" is inspired by the upcoming television series "Ghostly Getaways," is produced by Lumos Films in California, and was created by Gardner, who also produces the theatrical event "Real Ghost Stories," which he premiered at the Newport Opera House in 2021 with paranormal celebrity Adam Berry. The series features Gardner as he travels the country looking for the most haunted accommodations to be found with various guests. Investigating the hauntings by night and featuring the destination's spookier and quirkier daytime activities (and all the good food), the show seeks to be your paranormal travel agent and to show you how to build your own perfect ghostly getaway. The pilot episode releases soon on a streaming network to be announced shortly, and this new live show features Gardner's personal true ghost stories and evidence that inspired the series.

"'Ghostly Getaways' began as an idea for a book, evolving into a series concept when our friends at Lumos Films came on board," said Gardner. "Now, after putting together a pilot and distribution plan, we're expanding to my natural habitat: the theater. I'm beyond excited to begin this new theatrical journey with audiences in Newport at the Opera House I grew up with as we prepare to launch the show. And to share these stories in a legitimately haunted theatre on the night before Halloween? I couldn't be more excited."

During the event, Gardner will share personal stories of paranormal encounters that he's never shared before – including some locations local to the area, all of which inspired the series – and some of the visual and audio evidence he's captured along the way. Audience members will get to ask questions and learn insights and tips on how to investigate the paranormal themselves, and get tips on how to plan their own "ghostly getaway." A strictly limited number of add-ons will be available with tickets to join Gardner for a paranormal investigation following the performance.

Following the event in Newport, "Ghostly Getaways: Live on Stage" will be presented on the west coast, with dates lining up in California to begin with, and more rolling out after the series premier. To keep up to date with news on the "Ghostly Getaways" streaming premier, follow the show on Instagram, @ghostlygetawaysshow.

To purchase tickets for "Ghostly Getaways: Live on Stage," visit www.newportoperahouse.com, call 603-863-2412, or visit the Newport Opera House.

Raku workshop through the Vault

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Gallery at the Vault is excited to offer a raku pottery workshop with Andrew Berends on two consecutive Saturdays, Nov. 7 and 14, from 12-4 p.m. each day. Register by Saturday, Oct. 31.

Berends will be teaching the Japanese firing technique known as raku. The firings take about an hour, and you get a finished piece at the end.

The class will include wheel-throwing, slab-making, and extruding instruction. The first day will include making all types of clay work, and the second day will be glazing and firing all the pots in the raku tradition. Emphasis will be on being creative and learning the basics of pottery, including making the work, glazing, and firing. The class is geared towards teens and adults, and is limited to four students.

The cost of the workshop is discounted for gallery members, and includes 25 pounds of clay, glazes, and firing costs in a gas-fired kiln. Wear old clothing and bring pottery tools if you have them. Directions to Berends' studio in Springfield will be given at registration.

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















home & real estate

Expand your options and make your home yours with a fixer-upper

REGION – While you may not immediately think of buying a fixer-upper as part of your homeownership plan, it can be a smart way to rethink your home search.

If you've been looking for a home and keep running into the same problem, whether it's price, location, or limited move-in-ready inventory, the answer might be to stop searching only for homes that are already "finished."

A home that needs some work could open the door to more possibilities, including neighborhoods you thought were out of reach.

A fixer-upper can expand your search

Most buyers naturally gravitate toward move-in-ready homes. But when everyone is looking for the updated kitchen, renovated bathrooms, and picture-perfect finishes, those homes may come with fewer options, more competition, and a higher price tag.

Expanding your search to include homes that need updating can give you more properties to consider and potentially more flexibility in your budget.

Maybe you love a particular neighborhood, school district, or commute, but renovated homes there are beyond what you're comfortable spending. A home that needs some TLC may offer more homes to choose from and a more affordable way into the location you want.

Instead of changing where you want to live, you may be able to change what you're willing to take on when you get there.

Why pay for someone else's renovation?

There's another potential advantage to buying a home that hasn't already been remodeled: You aren't necessarily paying a premium for someone else's choices.

That beautifully renovated kitchen may be included in the sales price, but what if you don't love the cabinets, countertops, or flooring?

With a fixer-upper, you have the opportunity to make improvements that reflect your priorities, your needs, and your style.

Maybe that means opening up the kitchen, creating a home office, updating an outdated bathroom, or replacing flooring throughout the house. Instead of adapting to someone else's vision of "move-in ready," you can create your own.

Financing a fixer-upper

Renovation financing allows qualified buyers to finance both the purchase of a home and eligible improvements through a single mortgage solution. That means you may not have to buy the home first and then figure out separately how you're going to pay for all the work.

And you don't have to become a renovation-loan expert, either.

PrimeLending can guide you through the financing process, explain your options, and help you understand what to expect along the way. We'll work with you to keep the mortgage side moving so you have more time and energy for the fun decisions, like choosing finishes, prioritizing projects, and imagining what that dated house could become.

A smarter way to buy?

It depends on the home, the improvements you want to make, and your financial situation. But if you're struggling to find a home that checks every box at a price you're comfortable with, it may be worth expanding the search.

During Financial Planning Month, consider looking beyond the listing photos and asking a different question: Could I buy the location I want and create the home I want?

If you're curious, let's talk before you start ruling homes out. We can help you understand your renovation financing options, how the process works, and what may be possible within your budget.

The right home might not be finished yet, and that could be exactly what makes it right for you.

Submitted by Victorial Blodgett, PrimeLending, Ludlow, Vt.

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fall home improvement

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Fire Prevention Month, keep your home safe



October is Fire Prevention Month. Keep your home and family safe.
PHOTO PROVIDED

REGION – October is Fire Prevention Month, making it a good time to take a few simple steps to help protect your home and everyone in it. A little prevention now can make a big difference. Follow these tips pulled from the National Fire Protection Association.

Test smoke alarms

Make sure you have working alarms on every level, inside bedrooms, and outside sleeping areas. Replace batteries as needed.

Check carbon monoxide detectors

With heating season approaching, make sure detectors are working properly and placed where recommended.

Inspect heating equipment

Service furnaces, fireplaces, and chimneys as needed, and keep flammable items at least three feet away from heat sources.

Look for electrical hazards

Replace damaged cords, avoid overloaded outlets, and don't use extension cords as permanent wiring.

Play it safe in the kitchen.

Stay nearby while cooking and keep towels, packaging, and other flammable items away from the stovetop.

Check fire extinguishers

Make sure they're accessible and haven't expired, and that adults in your home know how to use them.

Practice your escape plan

Identify exits, choose an outdoor meeting spot, and make sure everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

A safer home starts with a few simple habits. Add these checks to your fall home maintenance list and give yourself one more reason to feel good about the place you call home.

Submitted by Victoria Blodgett, PrimeLending, Ludlow, Vt.

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