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THE Vermont Journal

OCTOBER 21, 2026 | WWW.VERMONTJOURNAL.COM

VOLUME 26, ISSUE 42

Ludlow's 136 Main Street demolition in progress

LUDLOW, Vt. – The demolition of 136 Main Street in Ludlow, the former location of the Book Nook – which has since relocated to Lamere Square – began on Friday, Oct. 16. This is the first step in the planned redevelopment of the site. The foundation of the former Pot Belly Pub, located next door at 130 Main Street, was also removed.

The developers recently reported that, "After analyzing the feasibility of replacing the Pot Belly building with a restaurant and apartments, it was decided the abutting building, which was deemed unsafe, would be incorporated into the new design.

"The intent is to still build a beautiful new building with an all-new Pot Belly restaurant. To follow the requirements in modern zoning, the developers have engaged local permit specialist Ted Reeves and local builder Ed D'Ottavio of DCI Concepts to navigate the process.

"The site is being cleaned up and leveled for the safety of pedestrians, and to look presentable during the winter months…Hazardous materials were removed and mitigated at great expense. There were two newer furnaces that were removed from the Book Nook building and donated to a church in Cavendish.

"The first step is done, now onto wrapping up final designs of how the building will be sited. When completed, this new building will be the crown jewel of Main Street. [This process] takes time…Each table in the new restaurant commands a certain number of parking spaces. It is a puzzle that needs to be solved, along with the feasibility of building apartments that will help fund the overall construction.



Demolition of the building at 136 Main Street in Ludlow.
PHOTO PROVIDED

"The developers look forward to working with local officials and townspeople as they navigate this process."

Residents voice opposition to Chester Green policy

BY NICK GIBERTI

CHESTER, Vt. – An unusual number of residents turned out for the Chester Selectboard meeting on Oct. 7, primarily to voice opposition to a draft policy aiming to regulate use of the town Green. The Chester Green has seen significant use in the last several years as a place for large rallies and demonstrations, particularly the No Kings rallies which have become regular occurrences since the inauguration of the current presidential administration.

Though Board Chair Lee Gustafson noted that the draft had not been reviewed by the town's attorney, Jim Carroll, and would likely see significant revision once it had, nonetheless many residents wished to speak against any regulation prohibiting or significantly restricting noncommercial gatherings on the Green. While Gustafson expressed a preference for waiting on discussion until Carroll had his say, the other board members disagreed and elected to hear the concerns of those gathered. Several board members also voiced their opposition to aspects of the draft prior to opening the floor, notably Tim Roper, who said that the board has "no business trying to govern" the right to assembly.

Town Manager Julie Hance also expressed trepidation about the draft, saying that neither she nor Carroll were convinced that the town needed a policy at all. "This policy…is fraught with all kinds of issues," Hance said, adding, "Is it necessary? Probably not." Ultimately, however, Hance said she had assembled the draft due to repeated concerns about the safety of large gatherings on the Green, and that the policy is not intended to prevent any kind of assembly. "For me," Hance insisted, "I care only about public safety."

The board did, however, consider the possible need to regulate commercial uses of the Green, for which the town currently has no policy.

When the floor was opened for comment, several residents voiced concerns with the draft. Charlea Baker noted that the current draft includes a 30-day waiting period when applying to use the Green, stating that, in her view, this "obliterates the First Amendment" by effectively disallowing rapid response to events unfolding in real time. Robert Nied concurred, saying, "[If] we have a commercial problem, address it, but we don't have a First Amendment problem. The First Amendment exists, and everyone has a right to be [on the Green]."

Responding to the potential commercial-use policy, Julian Sottovia noted that any such policy need not be restricted to the Green, but could, and in his opinion should, regulate mobile vendors across the town, making a policy targeting the Green specifically unnecessary.

Evan Parks also expressed concern with the regulation of sound systems in the draft, which he said treated sound systems as a "nuisance." Parks noted that, at large demonstrations, sound systems are employed as safety devices, with uses such as crowd control, traffic direction, communication, de-escalation, and evacuation.

The board thanked those who spoke for their comments, and said that the policy would be placed on a future agenda pending Carroll's review.

The board also discussed adding pedestrian lighting to Depot Street as part of the Depot Street sidewalk project, at a cost of $450,000, 20% of which, or $90,000, would be paid by the town. This is part of a grant the town was awarded in 2018, and as such the funds cannot be allocated in any other way; they must be spent on lighting or not at all. The lighting would begin at the Chester Town Hall and continue down Depot Street, ending at Bargfrede Road.

Hance also expressed her opinion that, should the board approve this pedestrian lighting, it would likely in the future want to discuss further lighting continuing to Main Street and into the village, as it would be "awkward" to end the pedestrian lighting before it reaches the denser areas of town with higher foot traffic. Gustafson agreed with Hance's assessment.

Opinions among those at the meeting were mixed. Resident Laurie Goodrich told the board she carries a flashlight when necessary and does not believe further lighting is needed. Sottovia and Evan Goodrich differed, with Sottovia saying he felt the pedestrian lighting would improve the ambiance of the village.

There was some concern among the board about recurring maintenance costs, but ultimately a motion to approve the lighting carried, with only board member Peter Hudkins voting against the measure.

The Chester Selectboard meets on the first and third Wednesdays of every month, at 6:30 p.m., at the Chester Town Hall.

Duane Hart, Susan Morris join Weston Selectboard

BY PAULA BENSON

WESTON, Vt. – The Weston Selectboard was once again a consortium of five at the Tuesday, Oct. 13, selectboard meeting. The two new members, Duane Hart and Susan Morris, were elected to the selectboard by voters of the Town of Weston at a Special Town Meeting held on Sept. 26.

At Tuesday's meeting, Vice Chair Jim Linville asked Hart if he would consider being either chair or vice chair of the board in addition to being the town road commissioner. Although Hart acknowledged it would be his preference to serve as town road commissioner, he replied, "I would be happy to be chair of the board if that's what the board thinks is the best use of my time. One of my goals was to realign and stabilize the Weston Selectboard and try to regain the public's trust…probably being chair would better suit that."

Linville presented the nomination, Morris seconded, and the board voted unanimously to name Hart as board chair. Additionally, the board voted for Linville to remain vice chair, and Brian Gehlich was elected as secretary.

Later in the meeting, during new business, the board set out to appoint a road commissioner. Linville made a motion to elect Hart, who formally recused himself and declined consideration for the position. Hart stated that managing dual executive roles would cause operational overload and compromise administrative efficiency.

Linville was then appointed to the road commissioner position, in a motion made by Gehlich and seconded by Katie Fitzpatrick.

Weston Town Clerk and Treasurer Kim Seymour put in a request for the board to authorize the purchase of a new toilet for the town office, citing a list of repeated malfunctions that were escalating and threatening costly infrastructure failure. After some discussion about next steps, Hart asked who the point person was to arrange for that type of service, and Seymour told him that would be the selectboard. Hart then suggested each board member take responsibility for one of the town-owned buildings and act as the point of contact for the property. The board will add the item to the Oct. 27 meeting agenda.

Katie Moriarity-Fitzpatrick took a moment to address previous complaints made by resident Karen Sironi criticizing the board's lack of effort to enrich the town's appearance and community spirit, and Fitzpatrick admitted that, in some cases, Sironi was not wrong. One item Sironi brought to the boards' attention was the lack of flags placed around town – something most other towns in the area support. Sironi also mentioned public areas that were not being successfully maintained. Fitzpatrick proposed that a discussion of forming a Weston beautification committee be added to the next meeting's agenda.

In the discussion of the proposed bridge design committee, Linville listed the names of "stakeholders" who had contacted the board expressing their interest in working with the newly formed committee. The list included names like Annie Fuji, representing the Ladies of the Green, Deb Granquist from the Weston

*See **WESTON** on Page 2*

Ludlow Fire receives largest FEMA firefighter grant in Vermont

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Ludlow Fire Department is pleased to announce it has been awarded $288,325.95 through the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program, securing critical funding to improve firefighter safety, emergency communications, and operational readiness.

The Assistance to Firefighters Grant program is a highly competitive federal program that provides financial assistance to fire departments and emergency medical service agencies across the nation. Ludlow submitted its application in June 2026 and received notification of its successful award in late September, with funding approved for all requested equipment and associated expenses.

Of the 10 Vermont agencies receiving awards during this grant cycle, Ludlow received the largest award in the state. The national average award for operations and safety equipment was approximately $189,328, placing Ludlow's award substantially above the national average.

The total project cost of $288,325.95 includes $274,596.14 in federal funding and a local match of $13,729.81. The local match will be covered through the Town of Ludlow's established grant-matching fund.

The grant will fund several significant equipment replacement projects, addressing aging and unserviceable equipment while improving firefighter safety and the department's emergency response capabilities. This includes the following:

– Firefighter protective gear, $60,000: Purchase of 10 new sets of firefighter turnout gear to continue replacing aging and unserviceable personal protective equipment, ensuring firefighters have the protection necessary to safely perform their duties.

– Fire hose replacement, $100,666.48: Replacement of the department's existing fire hose inventory, much of which is more than 30 years old and has exceeded the department's recommended replacement timeline. This investment will improve firefighting capabilities, equipment reliability, and operational safety.

– Protective gear washer and dryer, $30,742.52: Purchase of a specialized gear extractor washing machine and dryer to replace the department's broken and no longer serviceable extractor. This equipment will support the proper cleaning and maintenance of firefighter

*See **FIRE** on Page 2*

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Ludlow Rotary Club 35th Chili Cook-off a success —

LUDLOW, Vt. – More than 500 chili lovers gathered in beautiful downtown Ludlow on Saturday, Oct. 10, for the Ludlow Rotary Club's 35th annual chili cook-off. Blessed with a bright blue Vermont fall sky, the event brought together locals and visitors for a delicious day of chili tasting, friendly competition, and community spirit.

Held beneath the big tent on Main and Depot streets, this beloved annual tradition once again proved that great chili brings people together. In fact, attendees traveled from as far away as Colorado to enjoy the festivities and sample the many delicious chili creations.

The Ludlow Rotary Club extends a huge thank-you to all the talented chili makers who shared their recipes and culinary skills with the crowd. Their hard work and creativity made this year's competition a flavorful success.

The judges for this year's competition included Steve Messina, Sarah Sheehan, and Tina Danyew, who had the challenging task of tasting the entries and selecting their favorites. Their choices were: Best Overall Chili, "Better with Bacon" by Wallingford Locker; Team Spirit, "Devil in Disguise" by Mojo Cafe; and Spiciest, "The Reaper" by Squeels on Wheels.

The People's Choice Awards winners were: first place, "Devil in Disguise" by Mojo Cafe; second place, a tie between "Better with Bacon" by Wallingford Locker and "Bird's Nest" by Shelli Steinfeld; third place, a tie between "Ian's 10 Pepper Palooza" by Ian Gordan and "Pew Burner" by Contractors 4 Christ; and Honorable Mention, "Castle Harvest Chili" by The Castle Hill Resort.

Congratulations to all the winners and participants. Every chili maker helped make this year's cook-off a memorable culinary adventure.

An event of this size takes a tremendous amount of teamwork and community support. The Ludlow Rotary Club would like to express its sincere appreciation to all of the chili sponsors, chili makers, tent sponsors, in-kind sponsors, volunteers, and attendees. Their generosity, time, and enthusiasm are what keep this 35-year tradition going strong. Event sponsors included Homestyle Restaurant, Jeff Milligan & Associates Inc., LaValley Building Supply, Okemo Mountain Resort, Singleton's VT Inc., Wright Construction, Belmont Septic Design, Burns & Associates, James A. Young PC, Ted Stryhas Builders, Stemwinder, Summit Solutions Property Services, American Legion Post 36, Aubuchon, Black River Mechanical Services, Chef Mei, David Ladd Fine Art, Green Mountain Fireside Specialties, HB Energy Solutions, Prime Lending – Victoria Blodgett, Side Hill Cronchers Snowmobile Club, and Wine & Cheese Depot. Tent sponsors included Cota & Cota, Ludlow Sunoco, A Friend of Rotary, Mary W. Davis Realtor, William Raveis Vermont Properties, and Okemo Mountain Resort. In-kind sponsors included Benson's Chevrolet, DJ's Restaurant, Okemo Mountain Resort, The Castle Hill Resort, Shaw's Supermarket, The Hatchery, Frank Ellison, and Four Square Hospitality.

For more information about the Ludlow Rotary Club and its community projects, visit www.ludlowrotary.com.

Learn about snakes with Groff

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Nature fans are invited to join the Londonderry Conservation Commission for a lively talk by Luke Groff on the snakes of Vermont. Our state has 11 different species of snakes, including just one venomous type, the timber rattlesnake. Groff will provide a brief overview of these species, and will focus on those that can be found locally.

This presentation is for all ages and will include a Q&A session that everyone can join. It will take place on Thursday, Oct. 22, at 5:30 p.m., in the Twitchell Building, 100 Old School Street, South Londonderry, Vt.

Groff is a herpetologist with Vermont Fish & Wildlife and is responsible for reptile and amphibian conservation statewide, as well as state lands management in Rutland and Bennington counties.

WESTON

From Page 1

Public Library, Dawn Binn from the Little School, and resident and homeowner Jeff Brown, among others.

Wayne Granquist read the state statute that controls the formation of advisory committees, and urged the board to "follow the law."

"What do you want the commission to do?" Granquist asked. "There has to be a charge to that commission that points out what these folks are going to get together to do. What do you want to get from this commission that will help the selectboard make their decisions?"

In response, Morris offered, "I drafted a charge, in case you needed one." Morris began passing copies around, stating, "I just took a stab at it, it's not the end-all be-all. I just figured it would help get the conversation going."

The board decided to table the discussion until the next meeting to give members time to digest Morris' document.

The next selectboard meeting will be Oct. 27, with Hart running the agenda as board chair.

Rotary presents duck race proceeds to Plymouth Fire

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Ludlow Rotary Club was pleased to present $3,050 to Plymouth Fire & EMS during the club's recent luncheon. The funds represent proceeds from the 27th annual Ralph D. Hogancamp Memorial Duck Race, held in August 2026.

The check was presented to Plymouth Fire Chief Jim Allen and Town Clerk Angela Kissell, recognizing the successful partnership between the Ludlow Rotary Club and Plymouth Fire & EMS in making this year's event a tremendous success.

This year's duck race reached an exciting milestone, with the combined efforts of Rotary members and Plymouth Fire & EMS resulting in the sale of all 1,000 ducks – a record for the club.

The annual Ralph D. Hogancamp Memorial Duck Race has become a much-loved summer tradition, bringing the community together for an afternoon of fun while raising funds that benefit local organizations and services.

The Ludlow Rotary Club extends a sincere thank-you to Plymouth Fire & EMS, everyone who purchased a duck, the volunteers who helped with the event, and the community for its continued support. Selling 1,000 ducks was truly a team effort, and the results demonstrate what can be accomplished when local organizations and community members work together.

Londonderry Cemeteries to close

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – The cemetery commission of the Town of Londonderry would like the public to know that the Londonderry Cemeteries will close on Nov. 1.

In order to allow for observance of Veterans Day on Nov. 11, cleanup of the cemeteries will begin on Nov. 15.

To that end, please remove all decorations that have been added to the cemeteries over the summer and fall. Any decorative items remaining on cemetery plots on Nov. 15 will be removed and discarded. The cemetery commission thanks everyone for their cooperation in this matter.

As a reminder, plantings in the cemetery are not allowed. Also, if anyone is aware of a veteran who is buried in one of the Londonderry cemeteries and who does not have the proper armed forces/veteran marker and flag, please alert the Londonderry Town Offices and the cemetery commission will attend to the matter.

Vermont Outdoor Economy Summit

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) will host its eighth annual Vermont Outdoor Economy Summit on Thursday, Nov. 12, at the Barn at Fox Run in Ludlow. This year's theme, "Build Together: Growing Outdoor Business in Vermont," focuses on collaboration and assistance for the businesses that drive Vermont's local economies and communities.

The program includes workshops, networking, demonstrations, the sixth annual Patrick Leahy Trailblazer Legacy Award ceremony, the third annual Outdoor Pitch Fest, and an apres-summit reception.

The third annual Outdoor Pitch Fest theme is "Resilience & Collaboration." Applications for the chance to pitch close on Oct. 25.

The event begins on Nov. 11, with the summit eve social, from 5-7 p.m., at Terra Italian Steakhouse, which can be attended independently or combined with summit registration. The summit runs from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Details and registration are available at www.vermontoutdoorbusinessalliance.org/summit.

FIRE

From Page 1

protective equipment, helping reduce exposure to harmful contaminants and supporting long-term firefighter health.

– Emergency communications equipment, $95,416.95: Purchase of 15 additional portable radios and apparatus communication headsets to strengthen emergency communications, improve incident coordination, and enhance firefighter safety.

The grant also includes $1,500 in eligible costs associated with professional grant-writing assistance utilized during the application process.

Following submission of the grant application, Ludlow Fire Chief Ben Whalen maintained ongoing communication and meetings with the office of U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders regarding the department's equipment needs and long-term public safety priorities.

These efforts were supported by letters submitted on behalf of the department from Sanders, Sen. Peter Welch, and Rep. Becca Balint.

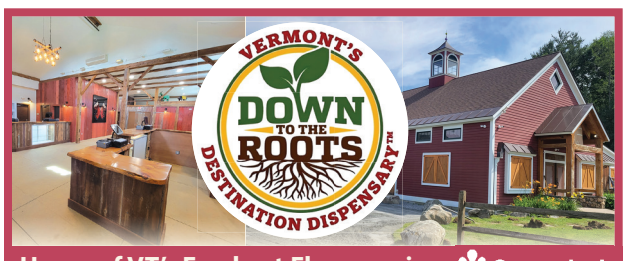
Sanders' office has also been exploring potential opportunities for future congressionally directed spending to further support the Town of Ludlow and its emergency services.

This award represents a substantial investment in firefighter safety, emergency communications, and the overall operational readiness of the Ludlow Fire Department.

By securing federal funding for these critical equipment needs, the department has significantly reduced the financial burden that would otherwise fall upon local taxpayers while allowing essential equipment replacement projects to move forward.

The Ludlow Fire Department extends its sincere appreciation to Vermont's congressional delegation for its support, the Town of Ludlow for its continued commitment to public safety, and the community for its ongoing trust and support.

For more information, please contact Chief Ben Whalen, Ludlow Fire Department and Ambulance, at bwhalen@ludlow.vt.us or 802-952-3942.



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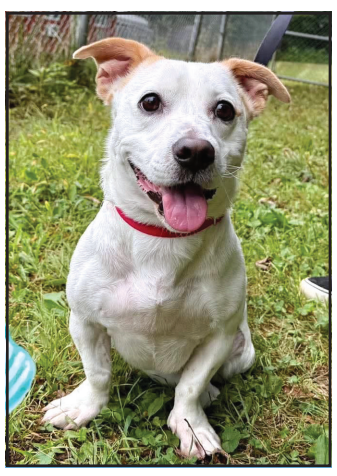
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CHARLIE

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!

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



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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.

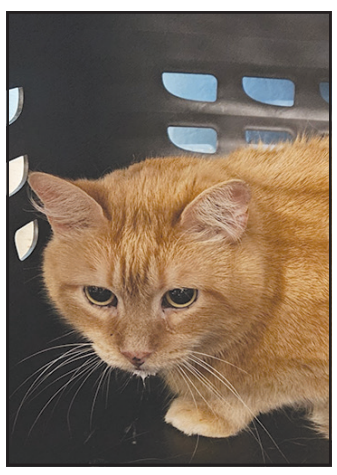
Springfield Humane Society, 802-885-3997, 401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, Vt.



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.

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

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ALICE

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

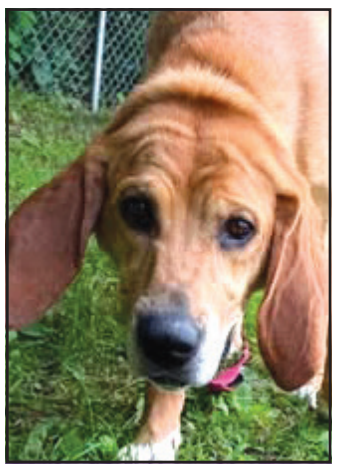
I am 1.5-year-old Bushing. I have been at SCHS for 6 months and no one knows why. I am a sweet girl that gets along great with other cats and just wants a family of my own!

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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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.

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.
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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

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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.

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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.

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LUDLOW, Vt. – PART-TIME HELP WANTED: Vacation rental company seeks a Ludlow-area local to inspect condos, handle guest issues, and coordinate repairs. Reliable transportation and some winter weekend availability needed. Earn extra income with room to grow. Text 650-300-9573 or email omg.ludlow@gmail.com to apply.

MANCHESTER, Vt. – Chimney technicians wanted! Black Magic Chimney and Scott's Clean Sweep. Manchester and West Dover, Vt. Starting at $22/hr. Full time, year-round work. Benefits, paid training. No experience needed. Call 802-768-7188.

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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All opinion pieces will be published in the opinion section of the newspaper. Viewpoints do not necessarily reflect the views of The Vermont Journal.

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
Nelson4NH.com

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(12/09/26 - 52)

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OPEN Wed. to Sat. 11-5

Upcoming Workshops
Paint Fall in Watercolor w/ Rob O'Brien Oct. 24
Needle-Felted Holiday Ornaments w/ Lisa Caron Hickey Nov. 7
Raku Pottery w/ Andrew Berends Nov. 7 & 14
Make a Wreath w/ Joanna Bombadil Nov. 21
Info & sign up: https://galleryvault.org/workshops/

Open Wall - ***Nature's Jewels*** Oct. 21 to Dec. 26
(01/06/27 - TFN - 13)

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No job too big or too small. Also offering general contracting. Free Estimates & Fully Insured. "Dangerous Trees are our Specialty." 802-376-7000.
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Navy Seabee Veteran owned. We pride ourselves on customer service, and getting the job done right the first time. We are looking to book up our season. Decks, custom tile shower, siding, doors, windows, drywall, foundation repair, you name we do it. Check us out on Instagram @nedthehammer. Ned Mortensen, cell 802-376-3275, edwin.mortensen@gmail.com.
(03/17/27 - 52)

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(04/07/27 - 26)

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

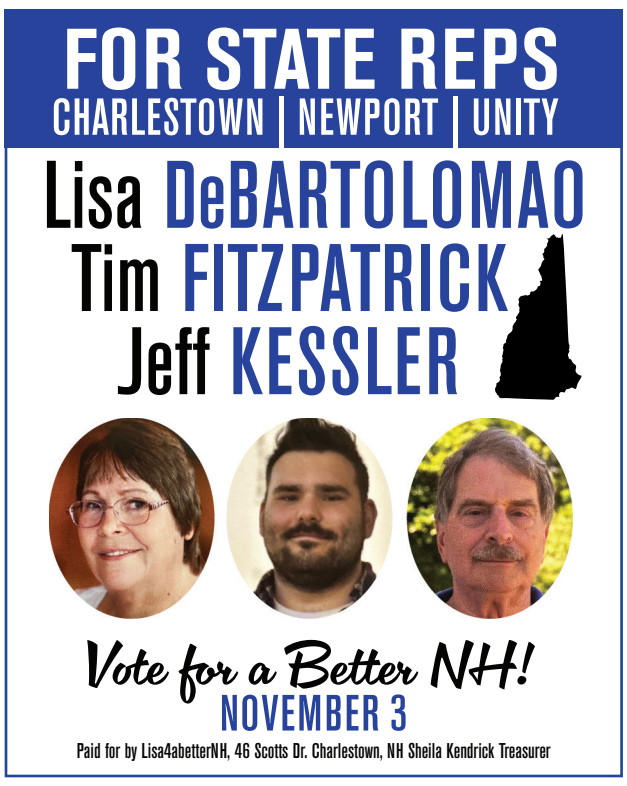
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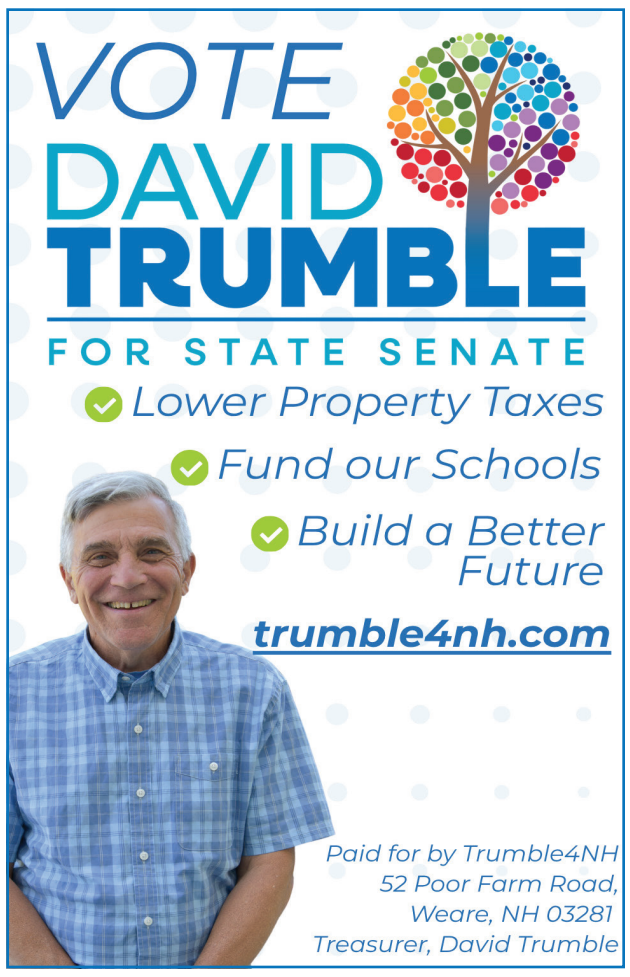
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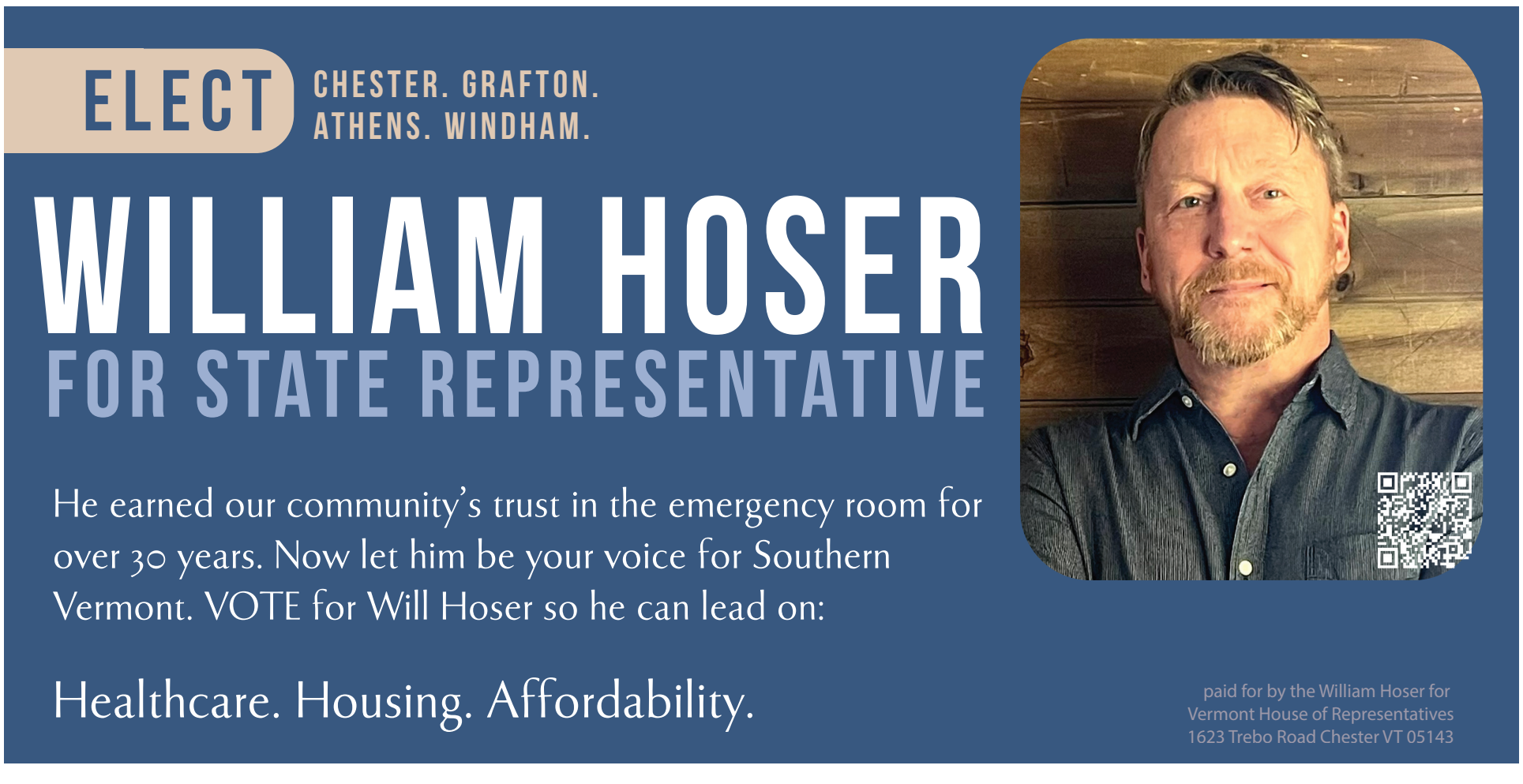
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arts & entertainment

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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