

# THE BEARS NECESSITIES

The Quarterly Newsletter of Bears Crossing Community

Issue #9 / January 2025



## Cheers to 70 Years!

BY AMY SYRACUSE, EDITOR

*This year, Mount Snow is 70 years young and, so far, the season has given us some wonderful days on the slopes to celebrate. The mountain is marking its milestone with a 70th anniversary brew, anniversary-themed merch in shops, and a host of special events. Be sure to check [Mount Snow's calendar](#) to stay up to date on coming festivities.*

*In this edition of *The Bears Necessities*, we're paying tribute to the occasion with a Mount Snow trivia quiz and cherished memories from Bears Crossing's most "seasoned" owners. They may not have been here for the resort's debut in 1954, but they've certainly been around long enough to remember some historic highlights, from Fountain Mountain to the indoor ice rink, outdoor winter swimming, and more.*

*Of course, there's also the usual Community news and some special features, such as:*

- Will Galway's primer on home automation technologies to make managing your property a snap;
- Five reasons to sign up for Bears Crossing's annual Ski & Snowboard Race from Mike Goodman; and
- A refresher on snow removal protocols.

*There's still plenty of winter left, and much fun to be had. Join me in thinking SNOW and keep your fingers crossed for a 70th anniversary season for the history books!*

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## W&B Update: Ski Home Details & Shout Outs

BY GEORGE FRIEND, PROPERTY MANAGER

I'm happy to report that the winter season at Bears Crossing has been going smoothly. With several good dumpings of snow and cooperative temperatures between storms, many owners have been asking about availability of the Ski Home Trail. Here's what you need to know about everyone's favorite amenity.

Vail's take on the Ski Home Trail differs from what we've seen in the past. They consider it a backcountry trail. While Vail's been very good about grooming and cutting it back, they don't ski the trail every day and don't provide a daily open or close report. If Upper Fool's Gold is open, the rope will be down and you're free to ski home at your discretion. Of course, at any time Ski Patrol may put the rope up and deem the trail unsafe to use. To avoid confusion, Mount Snow will be removing the Bears Crossing "Open/Closed" sign at the entrance to Upper Fool's Gold. We're in the process of creating new signage to replace that.

If you were in the development for the recent Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday weekend, I hope you noticed how wonderfully Bears Crossing operated, despite hosting so many people. I'd be remiss if I didn't acknowledge some of the folks who made that happen. First, I want to recognize the 802 Dirt Works crew that's responsible for our plowing and shoveling. They've been taking a lot of pride in their work and it shows! Our snow removal this season has been spectacular. If you see them out and about, please give them a shout and a much-deserved "thank you" for their efforts.

Trash and recycling over the holiday weekend also went perfectly. Thank you to everyone for following the rules, breaking down all boxes, and avoiding putting plastic garbage bags into the recycling bin. When recycling is done correctly, we have plenty of room to make it through a busy weekend without having to divert recycling to the trash compactor.

Finally, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to all of the wonderful homeowners who remembered those who service the Community during the holidays. Your generosity is overwhelming, unnecessary, and greatly appreciated. Thank you. Until next time, enjoy the winter and be safe!



# Five Reasons to Get in the Race

BY MIKE GOODMAN, BOARD SECRETARY

Ladies, gentlemen, and Bears Crossing residents of all ages... If you've ever wondered what skiing or riding a race course is like, the answer is yours to experience at this year's Bears Crossing Community Race. I understand that you may be reluctant to sign up if you've never raced before—or, maybe, haven't since the good old days. Let me be the first to tell you that you'd be making a big mistake!



Here are the top five reasons to join us for the Bears Crossing race on Feb. 22nd:

- #1 - It's free.** They say nothing in life is free, but there's no charge for signing up for this race *AND* owners can bring guests. Just register participants in advance and show up on race day between 9am and 1pm at the time that works for you.
- #2 - It's fun.** There's never pressure to win, and I can assure you that—as soon as you cross the line—you'll be thinking about how you could have started quicker or skied some of the gates better. You'll get back on the lift excited to do it all over again.
- #3 - It's a Bears Crossing tradition.** This annual event is a long-time favorite of Community owners, not to mention their families and guests. We've been doing it for years. Winners are commemorated on a plaque in the clubhouse. Don't miss your chance to have your name etched in the annals of Bears Crossing history.
- #4 - It's open to all ability levels.** Held on Charlie's Chase, directly under the Bluebird lift, the course's giant slalom setup allows enough time between gates that the race is fun and accessible to *all* abilities. Give it a try. You might just discover a new passion!
- #5 - Everyone's a winner.** The course setup allows two participants to race simultaneously, so you have the option of challenging a friend, neighbor, or family member... or go it alone. You're ultimately racing against the clock. We'll keep times for bragging rights and so you can aim to beat your time next year. For the fastest skiers and riders, we'll also award medals, Bears Crossing t-shirts, and a place of pride on our race plaque. *Everyone is invited to the post-race pizza party in the clubhouse after the mountain closes. There will be soda, adult beverages, and happy company, not to mention a Bears Crossing decal giveaway for all racers.* To paraphrase Wayne Gretzky, you miss every shot you don't take. Don't pass this one up.

## 2025 Bears Crossing Race Details & How to Sign Up

**When:** Saturday, Feb. 22nd, from 9am to 1pm

**Where:** Charlie's Chase; Check in at the start shack to confirm receipt of your registration and waiver.

**Format:** Practice runs are permitted from 9am to 11am; timed runs only from 11am to 1pm. Racers are allowed one timed run on each course. Total time for the two runs will be reported. This is the same format instituted last year, similar to World Cup or Olympic events. We'll share the course with the Seasons Community, but you can choose whom you'd like to race on the other course.

**What to Bring:** Bring a friend, family member, or neighbor to race with, and maybe even a cowbell to cheer on fellow racers! Most of all, bring a positive attitude and arrive ready to have fun with friends and neighbors.

**How to Sign Up:** It's *FREE* to race, but participants must register and sign a liability release no later than Thursday, Feb. 20th. Please check e-mails from W&B for race notices and forms, and e-mail [wmgoodman2@gmail.com](mailto:wmgoodman2@gmail.com) with any questions.

# Planning Ahead

Feb. 1-2 - Women's Weekend at Mount Snow

Feb. 15 - Bears Crossing Board of Directors Meeting, 3pm at Clubhouse

Feb. 17 - Grommet Jam at Carinthia

Feb. 22 - Bears Crossing Ski Race and Pizza Party; Mount Snow Pride Celebration

Mar. 22 - ReggaeFest and Sink or Skim at Mount Snow

Mar. 23 - Mount Snow Duct Tape Derby

Mar. 28 - Vermont Craft Beer & Chili Stroll in Wilmington

Mar. 30 - Last day of Bears Crossing's 2025 MOOver service

Check the Bears Crossing Community and Bears Crossing HOA Facebook groups for announcements about Community outings. Board meeting details can be found [here](#). For upcoming Deerfield Valley events, visit the [Chamber of Commerce Calendar](#).



The Bears Crossing Holiday Beer Swap was held in the clubhouse in December.

## Owner Directory Update

Our directory of Bears Crossing owners, available on [W&B's website](#), will be updated each winter.

- If you're new to Bears Crossing in the last eight months;
- If you want to update or change your directory information; or
- If you rent your property and want to add this information to the directory so other owners can refer friends and family...

**NOW** is your chance to add or edit your listing for 2025. Please complete the owner registration form before Monday, Feb. 10th, by clicking [here](#). If you don't submit an update, your current listing will remain as is.

## Dover Property Reappraisals

The Town of Dover has announced a town-wide property reappraisal for the 2026 grand list / tax year. Tax Assessor Linda Sherman is working with New England Municipal Consultants to conduct appraisals, which will take place in phases, beginning with condominiums. For more information on the reappraisal process, please visit the following links:

- [Press Release: 2026 Town-Wide Reappraisal is Underway](#) (Jan. 7, 2025)
- [Dover Select Board Meeting Minutes](#) (Oct. 1, 2024)



## A Refresher on Snow Removal

We've been fortunate to get fairly regular snowfall this winter. When storms come through, our plow crew's priority is *always* to keep roads clear. This ensures first responders have access to the Community in case of emergency. After the storm, plows are able to focus on driveways and parking areas.

To ensure plows can effectively clear roads, driveways, and parking areas, please don't park in roads or areas where snow is pushed. Plowing works best when someone can move cars while plows work. Never leave unattended vehicles in non-parking areas or roads in anticipation of plows cleaning up parking areas or driveways.

Properties get snow shoveled from walks and porches by the same company that does our plowing. *Please be patient*, and keep a snow shovel and a bucket of sand available in case your property isn't cleared as quickly as you or your guests would like.

## On the Board: President's Report

BY DAVE STREETER, BOARD PRESIDENT

Hello, neighbors. I hope you had the happiest of holidays and are ready for an exciting year ahead. It's Bears Crossing's busy season and the neighborhood is bustling. Here's an update on what's going on in the Community.

First, the ski and snowboard season is off to a strong start. Early snowfall has brought some great trail conditions, not to mention a winter wonderland just outside our doors. With some help from Mother Nature and our friendly neighborhood snow groomers, I'm cautiously optimistic that the mountain will be able to build on that base, so we can enjoy a full season of skiing and riding.

In addition, Mount Snow has some wonderful events on its calendar—both on snow and off. From live music at the Snow Barn to Bruce Jacques at Cuzzins and the Grommet Jam for youngsters over at Carinthia, there's something for all ages and interests. My kids participated in the Grommet Jam every year when they were young, and always had a blast. They still have fond memories of the giveaways and chance to stand on the podium at the end of the day. If you have youngsters, be sure to check it out.

Speaking of making memories, our annual Community Ski and Snowboard Race is just around the corner. You don't want to miss this Bears Crossing tradition. Mark your calendar for Feb. 22nd, even if you've never raced before. It's a unique opportunity to try something new with absolutely no pressure. You can bring family and friends to join you on the course, and celebrate after at the pizza party in the clubhouse.

When you're not skiing or snowboarding, you can also enjoy the beauty of winter via Bears Crossing's snowshoeing trails, starting at the southeast corner behind the tennis/pickleball courts. They're well marked, with some interesting sights along the way, including the ruins of a church, a pump house, and plenty of wildlife. The trails lead to the Ski Home Trail, where you can enjoy a scenic walk up the mountain and end up at either Fool's Gold or the base of Sunbrook.

As for Bears Crossing business, our next Board of Directors meeting is Saturday, Feb. 15th, at 3pm. These meetings are a great way to stay informed about developments, share ideas, and connect with fellow residents. I hope to see you there, either in person or by Zoom.

As you enjoy our wonderful Community throughout the winter, please be aware of your speed on the roads. Many people are out walking their dogs, on their way to the MOOver, or sledding. Be mindful that someone can pop out from a snowbank at any time, and your ability to quickly stop may be somewhat limited by snow and ice on the roads. We want to ensure the safety of all residents and their guests.

Thank you for being a part of Bears Crossing. Together, we make this a wonderful place to live. Stay warm and stay connected!



## Memory Lane: Torch Parades, Turkeys, Vows & More

Whether Bears Crossing has been your happy place for a few months or a few decades, you're bound to have cherished memories of your time on the mountain. In honor of Mount Snow's 70th anniversary, we asked some of Bears Crossing's most "seasoned" owners to share their favorites. Here's what they told us:

"Our history starts in the 1980s as original owners. Our fondest memories include Bears Crossing/Mount Snow Ski Races....and the Candle Lit Torches for a special young friend, Michael Robson, who passed from Super Storm Sandy. There's a special atmosphere within our Community and Mount Snow!" — *Helga & Christine Beyer*

"About 25 years ago, my husband Donald, my son Sean, and two friends were skiing....They were at the top of Iron Run, ready to go down. As they descended, a flock of turkeys took off right next to them, in front and on both sides and flew low to the ground for about 150 yards side by side." — *Valerie Tuthill*

"For my 40th birthday, I bought a condo in Bears Crossing. They were just being built at the time and the only condition for the purchase was a sliding glass door off the bedroom. (There's only one condo with this.) We had the condo for three years. One day, I was riding a chairlift with Elliot Isban and he mentioned there was a house above him being built. I told my wife Judy and the next day I went out skiing. When I got home, she told me she had a long talk with the builder, Tom Cullen, and worked out a deal to take the condo and apply it to the purchase price of the house. The rest is history. We've lived in our home for 37 years. We love everything about Bears Crossing. We're looking forward to many more years here." — *Michael Goldberg*

"We've been coming to Bears Crossing since the beginning. My father and step-mother bought the condo brand new and we bought it from them in 2001. We have so many family memories of the Community and mountain. Some of our favorite times were nighttime sleigh riding under the lights near the base of Carinthia. This was allowed back when my kids were little—about 20 years ago." — *Keri Rozzi*

"Our best memories are of the community environment we've experienced over 27 years at Bears Crossing, including after-hours sledding with the kids, snowshoeing on the Ski Home Trail, summertime swimming, and cookouts." — *Burke & Karen Allred*

"Renewing our wedding vows on Feb. 14, 2020. It was at the top of the mountain, a fun gathering with cake and champagne afterwards! Everyone got to ski to the bottom happy and a bit tipsy." — *Cary & Mike Goodman*

"So many memories: our girls flying down the mountain in Duct Tape Derbies, the crowd cheering for my 94-year-old father in an Oktoberfest stein-holding contest, the years of Devo and the house packed with friends on weekends, late afternoons on the boat in Lake Whitingham. We are so grateful for it all." — *Sara Spinnell*

"My parents purchased their Bears Crossing home 30 years ago. But we've been coming to Mount Snow since we were kids. I remember the indoor ice skating rink and outdoor pool at the base. It seemed crazy to swim in the winter." — *Lisa Silverman*



Community photo, circa 1980s



Group photo at the Community race, circa 2000s

## The Long Run

Bears Crossing was developed in the 1980s, as Mount Snow's success brought visitors to the Deerfield Valley in droves. Today, the Community has 127 residences: 49 single family homes and 78 condos. Amazingly, more than a third of current owners have been part of Bears Crossing for two or more decades! Please join *The Bears Necessities* in recognizing these families, who have truly invested in Bears Crossing for the long run.

### More than 40 Years

Beyer (Cub Ridge Lane)  
Famiano (Brumm's Way)  
Goldberg (Bears Den Road)  
Isban (Bears Den Road)  
Rozzi (Polar Bear North)  
Salah (Bears Den Road)

### 30 to 39 Years

Brown (Bears Den Road)  
Confino (Bears Den Road)  
Farago (Bears Den Road)  
Friedland (Black Bear Lane)  
Kessler (Polar Bear North)  
Lodi (Bears Den Road)  
Mantz (Polar Bear North)  
Rodgers (Black Bear Lane)  
Silverman (Black Bear Lane)  
Spinnell (Bears Den Road)  
Stone (Bears Den Road)  
Weiner (Bear Paw Left)  
Wysota (Brumm's Way)

### 20 to 29 Years

Allred (Brumm's Way)  
Cavanna (Polar Bear North)  
Cournoyer (Polar Bear South)  
Failla (Brumm's Way)  
Fichera (Polar Bear South)  
Goodman (Black Bear Lane)  
Heuser (Bear Paw Right)  
Hoffman (Brumm's Way)  
Lancaster (Black Bear Lane)  
Little (Black Bear Lane)  
Mayer (Bears Den Road)  
MacCready (Cub Ridge Lane)  
McNally (Brumm's Way)  
Neugebauer (Bear Paw Left)  
Nitschke (Polar Bear North)  
Pepe (Bears Den Road)  
Rodgers (Brumm's Way)  
Rabasco (Cub Ridge Lane)  
Schacter (Bear Paw Right)  
Tuthill (Bear Paw Right)  
Wenz (Polar Bear North)  
White (Cub Ridge Lane)  
Wolson (Brumm's Way)  
Wong (Polar Bear South)



Three Generations of Bears Crossing Skiers;  
Photo credit: Valerie Tuthill

## Memory Lane (cont'd)

“When we bought our condo, our girls were four and seven. We taught them to ski here and went on many hikes and bike rides. Bears Crossing will always hold a special place in our hearts. Our girls, adults now, chose to get married up here! Our second Vermont wedding is in September at Farm Road Estate. Our older daughter got married there, too. Our grandson has been at our condo, and already has shown a love for this very special place.” — *Holly McNally*

“When Bears Den Road ended at what is now Brumm's Way... When you could cross country ski and snowmobile on the trails behind the odd-numbered houses on Bears Den Road leading all the way to the Hermitage Inn and back! And an unpaved Handle Road that turned from time to time into ‘Burma’ road (as in, WWII Jeeps sinking to their axles). You needed either a Chevy Suburban or Jeep Wagoneer to navigate—the only two available SUVs for sale for a while.” — *Muhammad & Mary Salah*

“We bought our condo at Bears Crossing on Feb. 2, 1996. We have three generations skiing now. Our favorite memories were snowshoeing up to the old church behind our condo. Sadly, it collapsed. Cross country skiing to the Hermitage for lunch was fun. So many memories and many more in the future.” — *Terri Rodgers*

“A favorite memory of ours is the Mount Snow Ski School’s Development Program end of season Parent/Child ski race at Charlie’s Chase. Our three daughters (now 32, 31 and 27 years old) were enrolled in the program for several years during their grade school and middle school years. They would leave us in the dust, flying down the race course. Good thing, as they bolstered our combined finish times. Good memories.” — *Dan Rabasco*

“We bought our condo on Brumm’s in 1987. In order to entice people to buy, the developer Tom Cullen gave buyers a \$5,000 Mount Snow bond at six percent, plus a free ski pass for 10 years. This helped us afford our condo at that time, and the rest is history. Also, our family used to watch the cars—mostly BMWs—try to get up the big hill on Bears Den Road. It was our Friday night activity before cars had four-wheel drive.” — *Bob Stone*

“Bear Trap *ALL DAY LONG*. I swear there was more snow and definitely more sunshine. Bumped up from top to bottom on both sides; music cranking; people watching, yelling, cheering; and burgers and beer at the bottom. You’d get so sweaty you’d leave your jacket on the hill. So much fun. Exhibition was the main run on the front. Bumps and groomed each day. There was no Bluebird, so the Quad line could be long but we stayed there anyway. *THE WOODS!* And each tree area had a name: the Boonies off One More Time; Sap Tapper off Ego Alley; Claim Jumper next to Mine Shaft; Dark Side of the Moon off Thanks Walt; the Trials—the longest—off Olympic and—the steepest—off Ripcord named The Plunge! The ESPN X Games were on the main face and then at Carinthia. Those events created so much excitement on the hill and in the Valley.” — *Helene Wolson*

“Originally, we owned a condo at the end of Brumm’s Way, purchased from Roberta and Bob Stone in 1989. We had our first child several years after becoming part of the Community. Some of our best family memories have taken place in Bears Crossing and at Mount Snow. We came up almost every weekend—even during the summer. I learned to ski at Mount Snow. Larry Peckham was my instructor and he proceeded to teach each of my four children. Coming down the Ski Home Trail is almost always the best run of the day. Another great memory was the Valentine’s Day vow renewal ceremony on the top of Sunbrook. Scott remembers one weekend where we got so much snow the lifts were closed. Scott and Anthony Famiano hiked to the summit and skied down Exhibition to Lodge just in time to find out the lifts had opened!” — *Connie & Scott Wysota*

“Three things come to mind when I think of favorite memories.... First, when they replaced the Summit Local—the triple that took skiers to the summit—with Bluebird, the mountain let season pass holders take the chairlift one last time and gave out commemorative t-shirts. I also have happy memories of the barbecues at North Face. You used to be able to ski up to the outdoor grills and get a hamburger, chicken, or sausage. It always attracted a huge crowd. Finally, there was one time when my friend Charlie Petrillo and I were coming down Long John and saw a moose. It was on the flat bit that now leads to Carinthia. We stopped to check it out, and the moose started to chase us. It wasn’t a great place to get some speed. Moose can move pretty fast.” — *Joe Lodi*

“We built our house in 1986 and there was nothing beyond our house. When we first came to Mount Snow it was incredible that there was an outside heated pool and an ice skating rink inside the lodge! We also loved taking part in the barbecue at the bottom of the North Face chair with our Bears Crossing friends when weather got warmer!” — *Jim Confino*



The Wysota Family framed their ski passes through the years.  
Photo credit: Connie Wysota



Gondola 2 Base Station;

Photo credit: [Vintage Mount Snow Vermont Facebook page](#)



Fountain Mountain

Photo credit: [Vintage Mount Snow Vermont Facebook page](#)

*For answers to the trivia quiz,  
check the answer key on page 8.*

## Think Snow: A 70th Anniversary Trivia Quiz

How well do you know Mount Snow? Take this trivia quiz to find out! For more Mount Snow history and photos, watch [Mount Snow - The First 40 Years](#) from Made Here/Vermont Public Radio on YouTube.

(1) Which of the following statements about Mount Snow Founder Walter Schoenknecht is true?

- A. He was dubbed the Walt Disney of Vermont.
- B. He was inducted into the Ski Hall of Fame.
- C. He invented new types of lifts, such as a gondola where skiers kept skis on.
- D. All of the above

(2) Schoenknecht named Mount Snow after Reuben Snow, the farmer from whom he purchased the land for the resort. What was the mountain previously called?

- A. Mount Deerfield
- B. Mount Pisgah
- C. Horace Hill
- D. Pitchfork Mountain

(3) In which television show was Mount Snow featured?

- A. Newhart
- B. Murder, She Wrote
- C. Route 66
- D. Bewitched

(4) True or False: In the 1950s, Mount Snow was known for its high capacity lifts that were able to move 900 skiers per hour.

(5) Which of the following is NOT the name of a former Mount Snow chairlift?

- A. Moondance
- B. Little Beaver
- C. Mixing Bowl
- D. Ski Baba

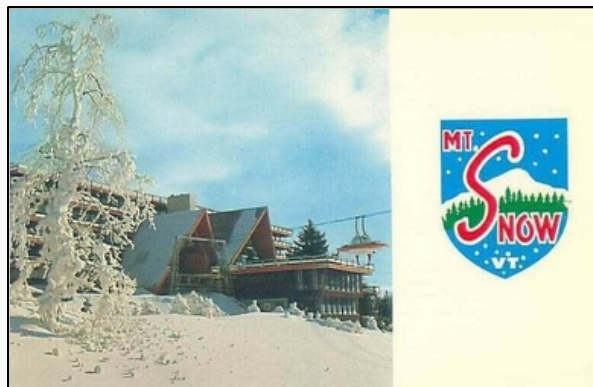
## Skiing ‘Mascara Mountain’ and Other Tales from the Early Years at Mount Snow

BY ELLIOT ISBAN (BEARS DEN ROAD)

It was 1969 when I first experienced skiing at Mount Snow. Some folks called it “Mascara Mountain” back then for obvious reasons. It was a wild place in those years, amid a social revolution. My friends and I were single, and it was so crazy I’m not going to talk about it.

Mount Snow Founder Walter Schoenknecht was a visionary. He had many alternative ideas of what a ski area should look like. He created Fountain Mountain in Snow Lake. Skiing on that beautiful blue ice was really a daunting experience, but we always had fun. One of the things that made the mountain so unique was the “Air Car,” a futuristic aerial tram from Snow Lake Lodge to the base. Schoenknecht also used a railed mining cart, which served as a lift called Sap Bucket, from the top of Canyon on Exhibition to the summit. There was a gondola lift from the base to the summit, a covered bubble on the 9 chair, an indoor ice skating rink, and a heated outdoor swimming pool. It’s said that Schoenknecht once wrote a letter to the Atomic Energy Commission asking them to drop an atomic bomb on the north face so he could have the steepest trails in the east. Thankfully, it went unanswered! But he certainly was an out-of-box thinker.

The best part about my time in Vermont and, eventually, here at Bears Crossing, was the early friends that became friends for life. Our families grew up together, many even retired here, and some live at Bears Crossing, as well. It has been like a big family.



Vintage Mount Snow Postcard

Photo credit: [Vintage Mount Snow Vermont Facebook page](#)

# Get Smart: Using Automation Technology to Manage Your Bears Crossing Home

BY WILL GALWAY (BEARS DEN ROAD)

So you just had an epic weekend in Vermont. You're halfway home when you find yourself wondering... "Did I turn the water off? Is the heat on setback mode so the pipes don't freeze? Did I leave my back porch light on?" Then the sinking realization sets in that it'll be *weeks* before you're back to find out the answers. Here's the good news: It doesn't have to be this way! With home automation technology, you can solve these problems from wherever you happen to be using your computer, iPad, or cell phone.

In this column, I'll share some things I do for my home that you may find helpful. But, first, a disclaimer: These are just things I do and have been happy with. They may not work for you, attempt at your own risk, your mileage may vary, etc. And, of course, for everything I'll mention, a Wi-Fi internet connection is required. You likely already have this, but it's worth mentioning that—without internet access or power (obviously)—the following solutions just won't work.

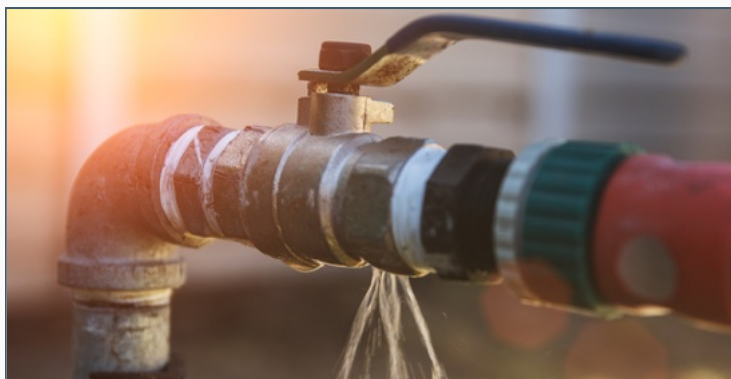
## Water Shutoff & Leak Detection Systems

It's always a good idea to turn off water when leaving your property, but what if you or your renters forget? I've found a solution that can remotely turn off the main water valve and doesn't require a plumber cutting into the pipes. It's a small motorized device that connects to the main water valve. You can remotely engage it to open or close the water valve, or simply to check the status of it.

This robot shut-off valve costs about \$400 and is a DIY installation, as shown above. There are also more permanent solutions that require working with a plumber.



Another interesting thing to consider is pairing a water shutoff device with leak detection devices. The latter are small sensors (typically about \$25 apiece) that run on batteries. You can place them strategically under different pipes around your home—sinks, toilets, washing machines, etc.—to be alerted if water is detected. Upon receiving an alert, you can also use your simple home automation system to automatically turn off the water supply.



## Heating Systems

This topic could be a whole column to itself since there are many different combinations of heating systems (e.g., electric baseboard, forced hot air, propane heaters, under tile floor heaters, etc). At my house, we have 11 individually-controlled electric baseboard units throughout the house, supplemented by a big Rinnai propane heater on each floor.

The Rinnai systems are too old to remotely control, but we replaced all of the old school manual thermostats with Mysa Wi-Fi-controlled thermostats. I can remotely control and set schedules for those. Simply having schedules in place has saved us a lot of money and, because I group them together in the Mysa app, I never have to worry about leaving one on.

Some people may be able to use Google Nest or similar devices to remotely control their heating systems. It's important to be able to remotely control temperature, and to set a reasonable "set back" temperature to keep the house above 55 degrees when no one's there. Regardless of the type of heating system you're trying to control, you'll want to research whether it can be controlled remotely via Wi-Fi.

## Wi-Fi Cameras and Remote Door Locks

Many of you already have Ring or Nest cameras, which run on Wi-Fi and make life easier for managing your property while away. For door locks, we use a Schlage Encode electronic lock. It allows us to create unique codes for guests and can be controlled via Wi-Fi. It's great for allowing access for contractors and repair people, too!

## Wi-Fi Light Switches, Outlets, and Plugs

It's amazing what you can do with inexpensive Wi-Fi controlled electrical adapters. I use one to light up a decorative tree in my living room on a timer when guests are in the house. I use another for Christmas lights on my deck. Why light these things when no one's there? For my patio and porch lights, I swapped out the basic light switch for Wi-Fi controlled light switches. Now I don't worry about whether I left my super bright deck light on. I can check it and/or turn it off from anywhere.

## Get Smart: Home Automation Tips (cont'd)

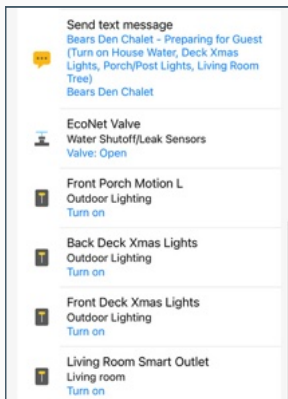
### *So How Do I Control All of This Stuff?*

Well, this part gets a little interesting. You basically have two options: Control each function using its corresponding device app or try a home automation app that puts everything in one place. Examples of the latter would be Samsung's SmartThings or Apple HomeKit. I use SmartThings because I find it works with most of my devices, and I can build in some automation routines. More on that in a moment...

You may find that some apps work well with the automation systems, while others work better in their native app. Honestly, your solution may end up being a mix. Find what works for you and the specific functions you want to control.

### *What are Automation Routines?*

Simply put, this is a list of things that you want to happen at a certain time. For example, I've created "arrival" and "departure" automation routines. For arrival, I want to turn on my Christmas lights and living room decorative tree at 4pm, and turn my house water on. When I depart, I want to do the reverse of the above, but also ensure that my backyard and deck lights are off. And, so I have a record that I actually did those things, I send myself a text message to document it. Below is a screenshot of what some of my automation routines look like using the SmartThings app.



Another powerful automation is for emergency water shutoff, as mentioned on page 7. As soon as a leak is detected by one of your sensors, the sensor can automatically tell the main house water shutoff valve to close. It's simple to set up, but gives invaluable peace of mind for property owners who find themselves hundreds of miles away and/or who may go long stretches of time without visiting.



*iPhone users can organize automation apps into groups for easy access.*

### *Do You Control Anything Else Remotely?*

Absolutely! I've set up my fire alarm panel so I can remotely control it from my phone using iBridge. I can control my skylight shades through the Velux app, my internet router via Eero, and my EV charger through Emporia Energy. In addition, you can remotely check for power outages by downloading Green Mountain Power's GMP App. The EyeOnWater App can tell you your water usage and help you check for leaks. Both are available in your app store and are absolutely **FREE!**

### *How Do I Get Started?*

Home automation options are rapidly expanding, and they're cheaper and easier to implement than ever before. If you're just starting out and feeling overwhelmed, my advice is to begin by picking an automation system that works for you. If you'd like to get an introduction to the SmartThings ecosystem, the home automation system I use, check out this article. You can download the Smart Things app from the Google or Apple app stores. Alternatively, you could start with one or two individual automation devices that are the most useful for your situation. In either case, I'm confident you'll find the benefits are well worth the investment.

**Think Snow Trivia Quiz Answer Key:** (1) D. All of the above. (2) B. Mount Pisgah (3) C. Route 66; In 1963 (Season 4, Episode 11), this series about two drifters traversing America was filmed at Mount Snow and included fantastic footage of the mountain and Snow Lake Lodge. Stream the episode on Tubi TV, FreeVee, or other streaming apps. (4) False. The actual capacity achieved by Schoenknecht's lift was 1,200 skiers per hour. This was double the typical lift capacity at the time! (5) A. Moondance. Little Beaver was a double conveyor lift installed in the 1950s and removed in 1984. Mixing Bowl was an early high-capacity chain lift removed in 1997. Ski Baba was a double—the last chairlift in Vermont without safety bars—and replaced by the Grommet magic carpet in 2016.

## Thank you, Bears Crossing!

The grand total raised through our holiday sweatshirt sale was \$1,350, which was delivered in November to Windham County Toys for Tots in support of its annual gift distribution for area families in need. You can find photos of Windham County Toys for Tots' 2025 holiday work on the Brattleboro Reformer's website. Thank you to everyone in Bears Crossing who gave so generously. — AS

