

Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

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LOCAL STUDENTS ATTEND GOVERNOR'S INSTITUTE



Two Westminster Compass School students, Nolen Donovan and Lucas Saunders, were part of 90 teenagers from Vermont and neighboring states selected to participate in the Governor's Institute Engineering Program at UVM.

Students gathered to explore engineering solutions to societal problems and chose from a variety of specialities within the field of engineering. Donovan spent his week studying Biomedical Engineering while Saunders studied Sustainable Engineering. Also attending from Compass School was Gabe Morse.



The Governor's Institute provides prestigious, fun, accelerated learning residencies on college campuses for highly-motivated Vermont teenagers. Other Institute options include Arts, Asian Cultures, Current Issues & Youth Activism, Entrepreneurship, Engineering, Environmental Science & Technology, Mathematics and Information Technology & Digital Media.

In left photo, Nolen Donovan with Governor Shumlin; in right, Donovan and Lucas Saunders participating in one of many strategy team building activities.

COMPASS SCHOOL TO PROVIDE COMPUTER ACCESS FOR EVERY STUDENT

Since its inception 16 years ago, Compass School has been committed to real world learning for its students. Community Service Winter Term, the junior class Global Connections program to the Dominican Republic, all school spring trips and Project Week are seminal experiences to connect students to the world beyond the classroom walls. Next year, Compass will encourage even more connections by providing computers to assure every student has access to the technological world.

Compass School will join 25 other schools in the state partnering with the Tarrant Institute out of UVM to implement a 1-1 computer initiative. The primary focus of 1-1 is to improve equity by ensuring every student, regardless of family income, has access to the technology needed for success in the 21st century. The focus for Compass, according to Director Rick Gordon, is to further increase personalized learning for students.

"We have always been flexible in helping each student find pathways to success in school. Improved use of technology can help us do better with helping students be accountable for desired learning goals and providing structures for individualized learning opportunities."

Although 1-1 is the common term for the move to assure access for all, it doesn't convey the intent imagined at Compass. Louise Hodson, science teacher, explains, "We prefer the idea of 1 to world. The idea is to connect students to the world, not have each student tied to a computer screen."

John Downes, Assistant Director for Tarrant, emphasizes that in the 21st century, being connected to others around the globe and able to access information and tools for expanded understanding are keys for opening up opportunities for all.

School Director Gordon, along with teachers Kellie Crowder and Ryan



Hockertlotz, spent a week in June with 200+ other Vermont educators at Vermont Technical College to plan for the 1-1 initiative.

"The great thing about our work," Crowder observed, "is the focus is not the technology but, rather, on student learning."

Assistant Director Eric Rhomberg sums up the commitment at Compass, "Whatever our views on technology, it is part of the lives of our students. We need to get better at using technology and guiding our students to use technology responsibly, wisely and skillfully."

Compass School students Theo Sutton and Traven Gaffney working on their computers.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM OPEN FOR SUMMER

The Westminster Historical Society Museum is open Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. for the summer season. Come explore the history of Westminster with its many exhibits, new and historic.

"Weep Not For Me" is our new mourning exhibit this year using a full size hearse (1910-1920).

You'll be able to imagine a full team of magnificent black horses in front with the large wheels spinning or slicing through the fresh snow on sleigh runners. Compare this to the modern day hearse on the roads today that is a long and sleek black car, long enough to carry a coffin.

See the clothing and accessories on display that were used in the Victorian age and maybe even a gravestone or two.

Discover the many cemeteries in Westminster and learn about some famous people buried here.

You can purchase a book, *Old Cemeteries of Westminster, Windham County, VT*, or *Monuments and Headstones in the New Cemetery, East Parish, Westminster, VT*, listing all those buried in town, perhaps some of your family members.

Also, new to display are some of the many dairy and agricultural tools from our collection. Did you know that tobacco was once a prime crop in Westminster?

As you circle the museum floor, take the time to look at Barbara Greenough's contemporary paintings that portray many Westminster Community members, as well as, places and events that took place in our town.

We continue to work on the Bradley Law Office (circa 1810), also open for viewing. As the trunks, books & papers that William Czar Bradley left behind are examined, we become more aware of the man he was and his many accomplishments. His poems and possessions are treasures that really need to be seen.

Come take that step back in time through newly created exhibits and the time capsule of a small early law office in Westminster. Also, learn about the Re-enactment of the Westminster Massacre happening Sept. 12.

For further information call 722-4772, visit www.westminstervthistory.org, or on Facebook at Westminster, VT Historical Society for current updates.




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MYSTERY PHOTO IDENTIFIED

We had answers regarding last month's Mystery Photo from Sue Barnett, Barbara Greenough and Audrey Gochey.

The covered bridge in the photo was the Gage Bridge in Gageville, at the time, the oldest bridge in Windham County.



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WHAT'S UP AT TOWN HALL - LET'S TALK TRASH

The new trash program has been in effect for one month. Many folks have received the notice of non-compliance either by not having their trash/recycling picked up or by a voucher placed on their receptacle. The Town has asked for three things:

- A container of your choice (size, shape, color) with a lid for each.
- Place your house number on the container large enough so that the Hauler can see it from his truck.
- Place a sticker on the neck of the bag, stuck to its self with tails, so that the number can be seen. This prevents theft of your sticker as it will tear when separated.

The Selectboard has created and implemented these steps as it protects all the residents from torn trash bags, paying for trash that is not generated in Westminster, and to comply with the Vermont State Law (Act 148) which demands accountability. For the most part, the program has made all of these objectives possible.

As I mentioned before the program is a work in progress as well as a learning curve for all of us. We are learning the routes with a new hauler and our times of pickup, we all are learning how to recycle to its fullest and keep our trash consumption to a minimum per week, and we are learning that change does not come easy.

I was told last week, that "trash is personable." I didn't understand that when it was said, but I am realizing now that it is personable because if non-compliance is going to be accepted and we assume that our efforts are close enough then we will need to be willing to pay more for curbside service. That is very personable. I would like to address a few questions that seem not to be clear in the packets that we all received:

All of our large recyclables or non-recyclables can be brought to the Windham Solid Waste Management District's facility on Ferry Road in Brattleboro or you can bring them to the Rockingham/Westminster transfer station on Route 5 near the Bellows Falls Union High School. These items would be as an example: large cardboard, paint cans, light bulbs, construction debris,

bicycles, mattresses & box springs, etc..

If you know anyone that is not able to comply with this program either financially, physically, or mentally please encourage them to call the Town Hall or be a good neighbor and call for them. There is help out there if we are willing to ask.

The bags that are holding your trash can be any size, style, or material as long as they do not exceed the 33 gallons or 30 lbs. capacity. So, the paper bags used for typically leaf and yard waste, can be used if plastic bags are not feasible in your household. Feed bags are also acceptable if you don't mind the lack of full capacity.

The recycling that you put out has no limit, but needs to be contained loosely with a lid. It cannot be in bags as the bags are not recyclable.

There is no limit to how many bags of trash you are allowed per week as long as they all have stickers, but you will need to buy more stickers to make up for the rest of the year at the Town Hall. If you cannot make it to the Town Hall in the normal working hours, please call and make arrangements with the Town Manager to get help obtaining more stickers.

We are being asked to place our house numbers on the two containers because this will help stop the out of Town trash that we are paying for. The driver sees the can number matches the house number or mailbox number and can feel assured that this is Town generated trash.

The numbers on the stickers were placed there for three reasons. First, is that it helped us count out over 68,000 stickers one at a time. The second reason was that it created another sense of accountability to comply with the State's new law. It was not to spy on anyone or any particular situation. The third reason was that it was no additional cost.

Please feel free to call the Town Manager's Office regarding trash and recycling concerns, issues or comments. It will take time, but we all will benefit in the long run. Thank you for your participation in making this transition as easy as possible.

SEVCA BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT FUNDRAISER SUCCESS

It was a rainy start to what turned out to be a beautiful day for a golf tournament. On June 26th, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) held its 14th Annual "Chipping Away at Poverty" Benefit Golf Tournament at the Brattleboro Country Club. The four Tournament Co-Sponsors were Black River Produce, Mutual of America, Cigna Healthcare, and Mountain View Apartments.

Over \$11,000 was raised to support SEVCA's essential anti-poverty programs serving low income individuals and families in Windham and Windsor counties.

Weatherization and Crisis Fuel Program vendors, regional businesses, local service providers, and other SEVCA friends and supporters sponsored and/or engaged in friendly competition to raise money for the agency, many returning from previous years.

A Hole-In-One Contest sponsored by Brattleboro Ford-Subaru gave participants the chance to win a new Ford Edge and other valuable prizes. One player actually hit the pole a foot above the hole, but unfortunately, the ball didn't go in. There was also a Putting Contest for a possible \$5,000 cash prize. Although no one sank the 80-foot putt for the grand prize this year, Jim Gould won a smaller cash prize for getting closest to the cup. Players enjoyed participating in a 50/50 raffle and a 'Vegas Hole' competition in addition to the team and individual golfing competitions.

Tournament winners were: 1st Place Team – Raven Bay Associates; 2nd Place – Mutual of America; 3rd Place – Claypoint Associates; Men's Closest to the Pin – Chad Illingsworth; Women's Closest to the Pin: Leslie Hoyt; Women's Longest Drive – Thalia Holmes; and Men's Longest Drive – Jake Obar. The

winner of the Vegas Hole Contest was Sean Bradley, who donated his winnings to SEVCA, and winner of the 50/50 Raffle was Jessica Leventry, who also donated a portion of her winnings back to SEVCA.

In addition to the co-sponsors listed above, SEVCA wishes to thank the following businesses, organizations and individuals for their sponsorships and other support: 'Double Eagle' Level Sponsor –Kinney-Pike Insurance; Putting Contest Sponsor: Mountain View Apartments; Golfer Gift Bag Sponsor: Mutual of America; Hole-in-One Sponsor – Brattleboro Ford-Subaru; Breakfast and Luncheon Sponsor—IPG Employee Benefits Specialists; Hole Sponsors—Allen Brothers Oil, Burtco, Inc., Clark's Quality Foods, Durand Toyota Ford, GreenFiber, G.S. Precision Inc., Harriman's Heating, Leone, McDonnell & Roberts P.A., Northeast Delta Dental, Simon Operation Services, and WW Building Supply; General Supporters –Don's Heating LLC, Magee Office Products, Sam Streeter LLC, Westminster Auto Service, Farnum Insulators, PayData, Hugh Haggerty, Eugene Guy. In-Kind Contributors –Bellows Falls Country Club, Brattleboro Country Club, Hooper Golf Club, Pine Grove Springs Country Club, Tater Hill Golf Club, Cannon Solutions America, Putney Food Co-op, Leone, McDonnell & Roberts, P.A., Sunset Tool Inc., Vermont Country Deli, United Natural Foods, Walmart. Special thanks go to Brattleboro Country Club and their staff for their assistance and generosity in hosting our tournament this year.

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) was established in 1965 as part of the national War on Poverty and is in its 50th year of addressing the needs of low-income residents of Windham and Windsor County.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors did not meet in July, but we did receive some memorial and honorary donations which are listed below.

Westminster Cares creates opportunities for seniors and disabled adults to live with independence and dignity in the community. Your support to this care-giving organization is a way for all of us to take care of our friends.

Anyone interested in learning more about Westminster Cares, volunteering to deliver meals on wheels or driving neighbors to doctor appointments, working on a committee, making a contribution or attending a workshop may contact Donna Dawson at 722-3607 or by e-mail at wecares@sover.net. Check us out on the web@ www.westminstercares.org and like us on Facebook.

Services Provided:

Meals On Wheels – In June, WC volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 16 different people who are now on meals. In addition, two frozen entrees were delivered to nine people on Fridays for weekend meals (18 total per week). One new volunteer is currently being trained. She will ride along with another volunteer again this month. One new recipient started meals and mid-month. [333 meals total]

Transportation – During the month of June, three rides were provided by two different volunteers who drove two different Westminster residents to medical appointments, shopping or wellness programs for a total of 16 miles.

Nursing Program - During June, our community nurse made five home

visits and two phone check-in calls on behalf of six seniors for medication management, blood pressure checks, foot care and hospitalization follow-up. She also attended one blood pressure clinic at the June Senior Lunch where she saw an additional seven seniors.

Meetings Attended by Staff in June included – Attended Monthly Senior Lunch; meetings held with nurse and treasurer; Gazette Board, graphic designer, grant writer, Programs Committee, Evaluation Consultant, PR Committee and Garden Tour Committee.

Programs in June - two Secrets of Healthy Aging sessions, five Gentle Yoga classes, 26 Strength Training classes, four Artist in Each of Us classes and four Chair Yoga classes.

Assistance and Referrals - Assistance provided to several Westminster residents and their families, collaborating with Saxtons River Cares, social service agencies, Senior Solutions, the V.A., HCRS, SEVCA, Hospice, VCIL, and the Visiting Nurses.

Friendly Visiting - One volunteer making friendly visits to one senior.

Medical Equipment - In June we loaned out four pieces of equipment; three pieces of equipment were returned and two pieces were donated to us.

JULY MEMORIAL AND HONORARY DONATIONS 2015

In memory of Dorritt Merton and Barbara Keil from Beverly and Randy Major

In memory of Dennis Payne from Phyllis Anderson

In honor of Isabelle Abramson from Beverly and Randy Major

In honor of Judy Harrison's birthday from Anonymous

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Department holds their monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month and a combined drill on the third Tuesday of every month. Rescue training is the second Tuesday of the month.

Next association meeting July 7 at 7 p.m.

The Prudential Committee normally meets twice a month. A warning will be posted 48 hours prior to each meeting.

Number of calls in June: 29

Number of calls through July 29th: 22

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 197

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 22

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting July 7th with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 26 members present and 7 members excused. Currently there are 41 members of the volunteer fire department. A.J Cable was welcomed as a new member under the six month probation guidelines. Plans for hosting the community picnic July 18th and catering the annual truck show August 1st were discussed.

Community Picnic: Once again the fire department provided the food and beverages for the annual picnic. Hotdogs, hamburgers, water, soda and popcorn were enjoyed by many, all at no charge.

Tips for sunscreen and insect repellent: [Because the mosquito season is at its peak, we thought it made sense to repeat these tips] Apply sunscreen 30 minutes before going outside

reapply every 2 hours

unprotected skin starts turning red in 20 minutes

insect repellent is handy to have and apply before going into buggy areas

- also bugs and mosquitoes like dusk so just sitting outside can make you a target

always read and adhere to label directions and warnings to use products safely

5K RACE TO BENEFIT OUR PLACE DROP-IN CENTER

Our Place Drop-In Center is hosting a 5K race and walk to benefit its food programs Saturday, Aug. 15 at Vermont Academy in Saxtons River.

The 5K for Food will get under way at 9 a.m. over the trails at VA and will include a cool route through the woods, perfect for an August day. Registration begins at 8 a.m. at the Chivers Center on Shepard Lane.

The registration fee is \$15, with a maximum of \$30 per family.

The event will raise money to help stock the shelves at Our Place, which serves approximately 175 local families a month. Donations of non-perishable food will be accepted at the 5K.

Further information is available by contacting OP at (802) 463-2217, ourplace@sovernet, or on Facebook.

be aware of ticks and do a body check for ticks each night if you have been a possible tick infested area

Firewood: It's not too soon to be thinking about the next heating season. If you burn wood, be sure the wood is properly cured. Unseasoned wood can cause creosote which is very apt to plug up the chimney and cause a chimney fire. And the chimney fire can lead to a partition fire and the home could be lost or severely damaged. Have the chimney cleaned before starting a wood fire in the stove or furnace and have it checked regularly throughout the heating season.

Motorcycles: We have all noticed that there are more and more motorcycles on the road each summer due in part to the price of gas and that it has become a very enjoyable pastime for many. Motorcycles can be difficult to see as a part of oncoming traffic and their distance is often difficult to judge. Give at least a double look and even an exclusive look for the possibility of an oncoming motorcycle when pulling out into traffic.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Association welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember a loved one or a friend.

Donations received for July:

Darlene Kelly

We are always looking for new members: Anyone interested in volunteering their time to help the community in a time of need, please contact Chief Cole Streeter at 722-3178 or stop by the Firehouse any Sunday morning and pick up an application.

We would like to have additional volunteers from the Westminster West area. There is a Fire House, an engine and a rescue vehicle located in Westminster West and more help is always welcome to utilize that equipment during calls.

As always, we would like to thank the members of the community for its continued support of the fire department.

Check us out on our Website at www.westminsterfireandrescue.org.

The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association, Inc. operates independently from Westminster Fire District #3.

RELIVE THE INDIAN WARS AUG . 4

Just what went on in the Connecticut River Valley region before our farms and villages were ever settled? Find out at the Grafton Historical Society's Aug. 4 special presentation "Indian Wars of New England" at 7 p.m. in the historic White Church on Main Street in Grafton.

Noted author Michael J. Tougias will provide an exciting visual journey through the conflicts between New England's native Americans and colonists. He will take the audience on a historic journey from the Pilgrim's first arrival to the closing days of the French and Indian War as both fought for control of this area.

For more information about the special event, please contact the Grafton Historical Society at grafthis@vermontel.net or call 843 2584.

Bird Banding at Hog Island

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

From June 21 to June 26, Lynn Morgan and I attended the Audubon Camp in Maine on Hog Island, 50 miles north of Portland on Muscongus Bay. The Camp holds about 12, 6-day birding and nature sessions from the end of May until mid-September each year. We had applied and received scholarships with the understanding that we do a program on our return.

The Camp is well known for Project Puffin. Dr. Steve Kress, an instructor at Hog Island believed that breeding pairs of Atlantic Puffins could be restored to neighboring island, Eastern Egg Rock. The project has met with success, taking several years for the return of the birds. The highlight for every camper is a boat trip to see puffins. They are a short, blocky black and white bird with a large colorful bill. How exciting it was to see them right beside the boat.

Each weekly session is different but with a strong emphasis on birds. Our session was 'Hands-On Bird Science' focusing on preparing bird study skins, census breeding birds, netting and banding birds and recording bird songs. We could attend different topics each day or focus on one. Lynn concentrated on preparing bird skins while I concentrated on banding birds, mostly hummingbirds.

Many years ago, I had helped band birds but never hummingbirds. Banding cannot be done by just anyone. Volunteers can work directly under the supervision of someone who has a permit to band birds. In our case, it was Sandy.

The first step is to set up the mist nests which are black nylon nets strung between two poles. They must be set up and taken down each day. The birds fly into the nets. Sometimes they stay there quietly and other times get quite tangled. Care is taken getting them out of the net as the utmost importance is for the safety of the birds

The nets are checked every 20 minutes and the birds put in separate little bags. They are calm in the bags which are taken back to the birding station for identification. If there are more birds than we can handle quickly or if the bags get wet, we release them so they don't get chilled.

This step is different for hummingbirds. Instead of nets, we set up wire cages similar to bird cages only bigger near feeders. These cages have doors that are left open the first few days so the hummers can fly in and out and get used to the cages. Then all the doors are shut except one so the hummers can be caught.

At the banding station, each bird is taken out of the bag and held between



the index and middle finger. The hummingbirds do not go into a bag but immediately are placed in a little nylon stocking. A serially numbered band of the proper size is taken from a string of different size bands and is placed on a leg. Pliers are used to open and then close the band, being careful for a proper fit. Measurements are made of the length of leg, wing and tail. Fat content is observed by gently blowing on the feathers on the breast. The last step is weighing. Data is written down at each step. Then the bird is released. This sounds like it would take considerable time with each bird but experienced banders require very little time.

As volunteers, what a thrill it was to hold a hummingbird. We each had a chance to hold one. If its feet were underneath it but not standing up, it would just sit here for a few seconds before flying off. We banded more females than males, apparently because there were more females flying around. With banding, the most important thing is the safety of the bird and the second is correct data recorded.

What a great week we had and how hard it was to return to the 'real world.'

Above, Bird banding at Hog Island. Photo courtesy of Hog Island Web site.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

ADVANCE CARE PLANNING - GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

By Bettina Berg, Brattleboro Area Hospice Volunteer

You have probably heard the adage or seen it on a bumper sticker: "Life is a Journey, Not a Destination." Perhaps that philosophy is at the root of the popularity of GPS devices in cars. Because the GPS can take care of some of the details of getting from place to place we are freer to take in the scenery or enjoy the music on the radio.

Alarm clocks serve a similar function. When we set our clock to wake us we can sleep better knowing that we do not have to be aware of the time during the night. Of course, neither a GPS nor an alarm clock is fool proof. We have all read about people driving into corn fields, streams or forests because they relied on their GPS unquestioningly, and I know from experience that a power outage or a dead battery can mean waking in panic because the alarm has failed to sound. Yet it is true that a bit of planning ahead can help us more fully enjoy the moment.

One area many of us shy away from (and why wouldn't we?) is what plans we would like in place if we were suddenly seriously ill or injured or when we are at the end of our lives. And yet if we can begin to think about what we would want to happen and can communicate that to others, both we and those we talk to will likely feel comforted by having a map of sorts to follow. Like any scary task we undertake, this one can leave us feeling empowered once we complete it.

It all starts with conversation. We need to talk to friends and loved ones about what we see as acceptable and not about the quality of our lives now and when we might be very ill or dying. Admittedly it can be a difficult conversation to get started. With that in mind Joanna Rueter, who is an advance care planning facilitator and instructor as well as the author of the blog "Sustainable Aging," recently trained a number of Brattleboro Area Hospice volunteers to be advance care planning facilitators.

These are community members, who can sit with you and help you walk through the process of selecting a health care agent (the person you assign to be your voice if you can't speak for yourself) and filling out the Advance Directive forms. For some, having a conversation with a volunteer can be a relaxed, unpressured way to begin thinking and talking about these important decisions. You might be surprised by what you discover.

My father didn't drive at the end of his life and so never used a GPS, and he was a poor sleeper so an alarm clock was not something he used often. However, over the years we had spoken about what he wanted and didn't want at the end of his life and he had filled out an Advance Directive. As he approached his death and after he died, I found profound comfort in knowing that my family and I had been able to do the things he had always said were important to him.

You can begin the process of advance care planning by calling Brattleboro Area Hospice at 257-0775 to schedule a meeting with a volunteer. Other resources include the Vermont Ethics Network on line (www.vtethicsnetwork.org) and Joanna's Web site, sustainable-aging.com.

OFFERINGS FROM THE WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY

The Westminster West Library has a fine collection of books, DVDs, and books on CD, all for lending, but this summer there is another reason for stopping by for a visit.

Anyone in town can borrow for a week a free pass for eight folks to Vermont's State Parks, or a pass to State Historic sites, or to a variety of other museums not far from home, including the Vermont State Museum in the Pavilion next to the Statehouse in Montpelier; the American Precision Museum in Windsor; and the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center.

Check our Web site www.westwestlibrary for free Friday night movies and other library happenings. Or, if you happen to be a young parent looking for something to do with your toddler, baby, or pre-schooler, come to the library on a Thursday morning between 10 a.m. and noon for the new Story and Play Time with Teresa Savel, formerly the head of the Green Valley School.

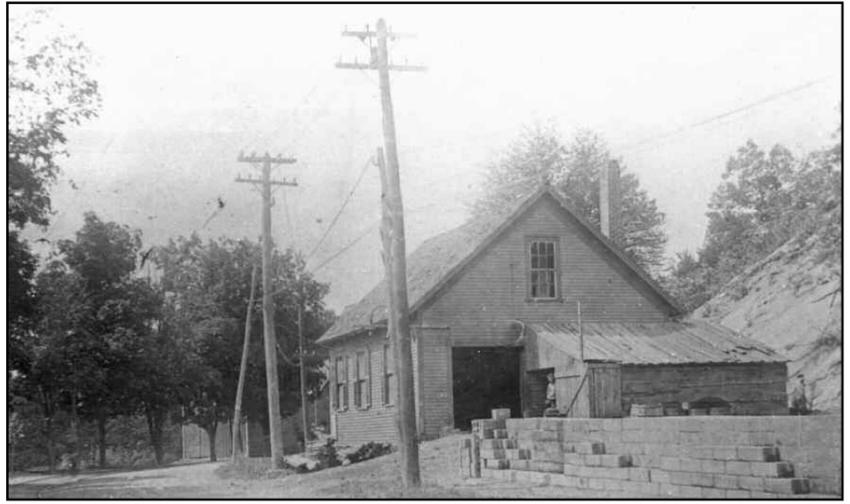
GAZETTE SEEKS TREASURER, DELIVERY HELP

Join a great team in helping to spread the Town of Westminster news! We need a volunteer bookkeeper, and help with delivering the paper in the Bellows Falls and Westminster areas once per month when it comes out.

The bookkeeper position includes tracking deposits, paying invoices from vendors, and issuing advertising and underwriting invoices to the Gazette's customers. Other duties include reconciling the sole bank account, attending the monthly one hour planning meeting, and participating from time to time in fundraising activities.

Here is a chance to participate locally, helping a community, non-profit paper that has been an important part of Westminster for a decade. E-mail westminsternews@gmail.com with any questions, and your interest in the positions.

WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



WHERE WAS THIS BUILDING LOCATED, AND

WHAT PRODUCT DID THEY MAKE THERE?

If you have pictures you think would make a great mystery photo, send them to westminsternews@gmail.com

When Mystery Photos are available, E-mail your answer to westminsternews@gmail.com

The answer and the winners are announced in the next issue, page 3.

WESTMINSTER TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S NEWS

On May 26th and June 4th the Westminster School Board hosted community forums for the purpose of engaging the community in developing a strategic plan for the board. Our hope is to get a sense of the values of the community in regards to our schools and to establish a culture of open dialogue with the community. It is important to the board to hear all of the diverse opinions and voices of the citizens of Westminster regarding the education of our children.

The forum on May 26th was an opportunity for members of the community to reflect on the positive and negative experiences they remembered from their own educational journey, thoughts on how other countries and states deliver education to their children, what programs exist at the Westminster Community Schools that are positive for current students, and what individuals hope our schools will look like in the next decade.

This was an engaging conversation that highlighted several common themes around positive experiences for students to connect with topics and people that interest and challenge them. Also, there were many questions and concerns about the heavy emphasis on testing and the looming consolidation law recently enacted by the State of Vermont.

The forum on June 4th began with overviews of Common Core State Standards, Education Quality Standards and Reviews, Proficiency Based Learning and Graduation Requirements, Flexible Pathways or Personal Learning Plans. These are all standards that the state and/or federal governments have implemented to ensure that all students are held to the same standards. Some of the comments around these initiatives questioned the use of repetitive testing to evaluate performance of schools.

It is believed by many that this testing is taking students away from learning opportunities too frequently to allow them the time to actually learn. Other concerns include forcing teachers to do too much paperwork to justify their work rather than coming up with innovative lesson plans tailored to their students' needs and interests. Some comments pointed out successes with individual learning plans and that students used to advance to the next grade because they had shown proficiency in the material.

The second half of the June 4th forum was a description of the new consolidation law, Act 46 and a discussion of the ramifications. The challenges presented by this new law will likely dominate the work of the board for the remainder of this session as well as future sessions. Some of the deadlines for any consolidation moves are a few years out, though there are tax incentives for the town to adopt one of the forms of consolidation allowable under Act 46 within the next few years. The shorter-term work will be in our upcoming budgeting process as we are limited to a hard cap on budget increases for the next fiscal year of under 2%, or face very stiff penalties. There were many concerns raised by the attendees of this forum.

There were many ideas and concerns raised by members of the community at these forums. Ultimately, the message to the board was that outreach to the community is very important as we move forward with strategic planning and with addressing the challenges presented to local boards by state regulations and budget limitations. We are very motivated to hear from the community and to answer questions they may have. We are very open to suggestions regarding how to best gather thoughts and opinions from the community.

Please feel free to call or email any of the board members with comments or suggestions. To read the minutes of the forums and regular board meetings, or to contact members of the board, please visit either the Westminster Community Schools or Windham Northeast Supervisory Union Web sites.

Westminster Happenings

Activities

Scottish Country Dance Classes

Every Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. in the Westminster Center School Gym. Bernard McGrath, instructor. All skill levels welcome. Contact Michael Daley for more information at 387-2601. No charge.

Putney Contra Dance

Last Saturday of every month at Pierce Hall on East Putney Falls Road, off Rt. 5 in East Putney. A beginner's workshop is taught at 8 p.m., and the regular dance goes from 8:30 to 11. A donation at the door will benefit the Pierce's Hall Building Fund. For more information call 387-5985.

Senior Potluck Lunch

Every 2nd Thursday of the month at noon. All Westminster seniors are invited to attend a potluck lunch at the First Congregational Church on Route 5.

Bellows Falls Gallery Walk

Downtown at 5:30 p.m. every 3rd Friday of the month.

Secrets of Healthy Aging

A facilitated discussion group and pot-luck. The 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at the Westminster Fire Station from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information.

Contra Dance

Every 3rd Saturday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Town Hall in Walpole, N.H.

Gentle Yoga

Every Monday at 10 a.m. at the Westminster Institute. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information.

Living Strong Classes

Mondays and Thursdays: at the First Congregational Church in Westminster from 9-10 a.m.; at the Westminster West Church from 6-7 p.m.; or at Greater Rock Fitness in Bellows Falls from 11-12. Call Westminster Cares for more information at 722-3607.

Knitting Together

Join us every Wednesday, from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Village Square Booksellers, downtown Bellows Falls. Bring your knitting needles, we have the yarn and casual instruction if needed to knit hats, mittens and sweaters for area kids.

All our yarn is from community donation and we distribute our completed work to all area schools and Parks Place. More knitters at all skill levels are wanted and we can promise you an enjoyable experience. For details or to donate yarn contact Caroline at 463-4653.

Westminster West Public Library Trustees

The Westminster West Public Library Trustees meet on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. at the library. They welcome visits from the public, but it would be best to check times with Bev Major at 387-5737 before coming.

Bellows Falls Farmers' Market

Stop by the Train Station in Bellows Falls every Friday from 4 to 7 p.m., for our Farmers Market. For details visit www.bffarmersmarket.com or call 463-2018.

Faith Community

The First Congregational Church of Westminster

The Rev. Sami Jones McRae, Pastor. Main Street, Route 5, P.O. Box 122, Westminster, 722-4148. Sunday worship at 10 a.m. Communion is the first Sunday of each month.

Sunday School is held at 10 a.m. from September to May. The church has a ramp and lift for wheelchair access as well as a handicapped bathroom. Westminster First Congregational is an open and affirming church, all are welcome.

The Congregational Church of Westminster West

The Congregational Church of Westminster West worships every Sunday at 10 a.m. The pick-up choir meets most Sundays at 9 to rehearse for that morning's anthem; newcomers to choir are always welcome!

Holy Communion is celebrated on the first Sunday of every month, and on the Second Sunday the church collects a special offering that goes to Our Place in Bellows Falls to help fund their food shelf.

The church building is fully wheelchair accessible, and the congregation is Open and Affirming. Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno is the pastor, and musicians are Fred Gray and Mary Westbrook-Geha.

Rev. Webster-Toleno currently holds office hours on Monday and Thursday afternoons, and people are welcome to drop by. However, since "office hours" sometimes means she's out visiting people in their homes, it's a good idea to make an appointment if you really want to catch her.

She can be reached at the church on those days at 387-2334, via cell phone at 579-8356 or e-mail susiewt@gmail.com.

Grace Bible Fellowship Services

The Grace Bible Fellowship holds its Sunday Worship Service at 9:15 a.m. at 38 Elm Street in Walpole, NH.

Find out more about the church at its Web site, www.gb4hisglory.com/.

Meetings

Selectboard 2nd and 4th Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Planning Commission 2nd Monday at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Westminster Activities Commission 2nd Monday of the Month at 6 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

Westminster School Board 1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Center School Library.

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association 3rd Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster West Congregational Church.

Westminster West Public Library Board 2nd Wednesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster West Public Library.

Development Review Board 1st Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Town Hall.

Community Improvement Program Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Westminster Cares Board - No Summer Meetings 1st Wednesday of every month, at the Westminster Institute at 4:30 p.m.

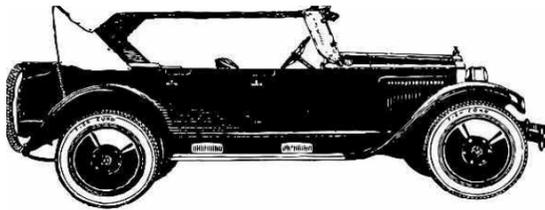
911 Committee as needed.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Dept. holds their monthly meetings on the 1st Tuesday of every month, at 7 p.m. and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Westminster Fire Station.

Westminster Historical Society 2nd Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

Westminster Gazette Board August 24 at 4:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute

Westminster Recycling Committee Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Fire Station.



**THE GAZETTE
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Kurn Hattin Homes
Westminster School District
Town of Westminster
Westminster Activities
Commission
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Westminster Fire & Rescue
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Donna Dawson
Alma Beals

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westminsternews@gmail.com

PINNACLE TRAIL GUIDES AVAILABLE

The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association has self-guiding nature brochures for two of its many trails. These guides present information about their specific territory that will enhance any hike. The Pinnacle hiking system features 20 miles of trails running from Putney Mountain to Grafton.

The Holden Trail, leading to the magnificent Pinnacle outlook (and a great spot for a picnic), offers "A Walk through Time." The Martin Sanctuary has long and short versions of the nature guide for its Dunn Nature Trail. Feel free to borrow the guides and then return them to their protected box at the appropriate trailhead when through. Find maps and directions to all trailheads at www.windmill-hillpinnacle.org under Trails & Maps.

ARE YOU A KNITTER? WESTMINSTER PLANS A MITTEN TREE

The Westminster Trustees of Public Funds would like to do a Mitten Tree this year in Westminster during the Holidays. The Campbell Fund can help if anyone is interested in making some mittens, hats and scarfs and needs yarn supplies, contact Mike Fawcett 722-4785, Pete Harrison 722-3080 or Barbara Taylor 722-4726, brwoodtaylor@comcast.net We're hoping to get a good jump on the Holiday Season.



**The Deadline for
the September Issue of the
Westminster Gazette is
Wednesday,
August 26
Publish Date is
Tuesday, September 1**

**To Contact the
Westminster Gazette
E-mail:
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WESTMINSTER CARES SAYS "THANK YOU" FOR SUCCESSFUL GARDEN TOUR

Westminster Cares held their 14th Annual Westminster Garden Tour on July 11th and 12th, 2015. The weekend weather was beautiful and the event was a big success! Over 300 people attended the tour; many were visitors from out of state including NH, MA, CT, ME and NY. Visitors enjoyed touring our town and strolling through the lovely gardens. At the Haywards' garden there was live music, refreshments and a delicious lunch was served. Several groups attended the tour; the "Red Hats" and a group from Holton Home.

Donna Dawson, director of Westminster Cares, and the Board of Directors wish to thank the many volunteers and sponsors who helped out, and all those who attended the event. "Fundraising events are comprised of many behind-the-scenes individuals and businesses whose contributions big and small are essential. Your continued support of this event allows Westminster Cares to provide programs and services for seniors and adults with disabilities in the community."

Sincere appreciation goes to the hosts who opened their private gardens to the public: Gordon and Mary Hayward, Cyndy Fine, Fran Renaud, Ann Kebbell, Kathy Leo and the Westminster Center School garden-Irene Canaris. This event would not be possible without their gardening talents and generosity.

The following contributors helped make the tour a success:

•Sponsors: Durand Toyota/Ford, Chroma Technology Corporation, Silver Forest of Vermont, Vermont Country Store, Brattleboro Ford/Subaru, BurtCo. Inc., People's United Bank, and C & S Wholesale Grocers.

•Auction and Raffle prizes: Vermont Botanical, Sarah Waldo, Raine Kane/Rainey Day Leaves, Connie Sanderson, Miriam & Larry Lanata, Wilma Skovinski, Jackie & John Connors, Village Square Booksellers, Joy Wah restaurant, Susan Roman, Cyndy Fine/Genius Loci, Agway of Walpole and Morning Star Perennials,

•Food and beverages: Old Athens Farm, Lisai's Market, Sally and Hollis Ryea, Miriam and Larry Lanata, Heidi Anderson; Emma's Market and Deli Catering and BJ's Club.

•Donations of equipment and services: Walpole Rent-A-Center, Best Septic, Westminster Fire and Rescue, and Kurn Hattin Homes.

•Printing and graphics: C & S Wholesale Grocers for printing garden tour materials, the local businesses who purchased ads in the program, and Amie Walter of Amie Walter Design for design of all promotional materials.

•Music: Daron Tansley and Martha Mitchell.



Above, Visitors having lunch in the Hayward's garden.

•Plant Sale and Flowers: MorningStar Perennials; Judy Petry and Raine Kane.

Special thanks go to the volunteers and board members who served on the garden tour committees and donated their energy, time and effort in planning and executing the garden tour. "It truly is a labor of love!" "A special shout-out to Carol Bazin and the Kurn Hattin crew: thank you for your energy and excellent customer service."

Phyllis Erwin of Guilford was the high bidder on the Vermont Botanical by Maggie Lake. The winners of the Raffle Prizes were:

- 1st Joanne Cordano
- 2nd Wendy Schoeneman
- 3rd Mimi Ewald
- 4th Paula Paolantonio

Proceeds from the tour support the services and programs of Westminster Cares, a volunteer organization whose purpose is to create opportunities for seniors and disabled adults to live with independence and dignity in the community.

MEETING WITH NO ORDINARY SPACEMAN



At left, students from Kurn Hattin Homes for Children pose with U.S. astronaut Clayton C. Anderson at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. Anderson, who recently published his autobiography, *The Ordinary Spaceman*, spent 167 days living and working on the International Space Station, including more than 40 hours of space walks. He retired in 2013 after a 30 year career with NASA. The children were visiting Washington, DC to participate in the National Fellowship of Child Care Executives Youth Leadership Summit, thanks to a Community Action Grant from the Ben & Jerry's Foundation.

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August Business of the Month: Heidi Bernier, Realtor, CBR

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Trained in representation of homebuyers, as well as sellers, I earned my CBR designation (certified buyer representative) in 1996. Many people and services are required to bring a transaction to a successful closing, including: Mortgage Brokers, Engineers, Building Inspectors, Insurance Agents, Attorney's and Title Companies.

My years of working full-time in the field of Real Estate have gained me the contacts and experience needed to guide my clients and customers through the process.

If you are considering selling or buying property, I would welcome the opportunity to be of assistance. Call 802-380-1585, 802-254-6400 ext. 135 or e-mail heidi.bernier@berkleyveller.com.



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WESTMINSTER WEST COMMUNITY FAIR

This year the Westminster West Community Fair is on Saturday, Sept. 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., in and around the church in Westminster West.

The theme this year is "Keeping the Spirit Alive", and the Grand Marshal will be Susie Webster-Toleno, pastor of the Congregational Church of Westminster West, to recognize the many ways she supports spiritual connection and internal reflection in this community.

Other events include: A bake sale, a parade through the village, music on the lawn by the Grafton Cornet Band, a veggie chop-o-matic, a fun run for kids and a 5K running race for adults, a silent auction, a talent show, a delicious chicken barbeque, a Fortune Teller and Face Painting, various crafts and booths and an awesome Golden elephant sale. See the full schedule for the day at www.westminsterwest.org.

It's fun for the whole family and the biggest fundraiser of the year for the little village church in Westminster West – a wonderful resource that serves our whole community. Come on out and see your neighbors, share a laugh or a talent, enjoy a delicious meal or pick up a treasure that you never before knew you needed!

And, as you clean out your attic, basement, or garage please keep the fair in mind. Set aside treasures to donate for both the silent auction and the tag sale. Please no computers, TVs (they cost money to get rid of), clothes, or books (the Westminster West Library takes these for their book sale the same day). We also appreciate donations of baked goods for the bake sale or contributions from your garden for the delicious meal. Too many tomatoes, zucchini or basil? We can help!

If you want to make a donation, volunteer to help or you just have other questions call Nick Keil at 387-4555 or Laura Williams at 387-2765.

Our Monthly Community Newspaper August 2015 Vol. 11, No. 8

Westminster Gazette

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