

# Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

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## Westminster Cares Honors Town's Oldest Citizens

Westminster Cares honored its 90-plus year-old residents at its annual meeting on Nov. 2 at the Westminster Central Fire Station. There are currently 18 Westminster people who are 90-plus years old, including one who is 100 and one who is 101. Ten of them were in attendance for the event.

They enjoyed talking with townspeople and having lunch and dessert to celebrate their birthdays. To accompany Pete Harrison's talk about each 90-plus year old, Don Dawson created a slideshow of photographs from the lives of the many honored guests. Some were photos of their early years; many were photos of the houses in Westminster and other towns where they lived in the past or currently live.

The following honored guests were present, from the youngest to the oldest: Three 90 year olds; Charlotte Kurkul, Charlie Kelton and Frank Cuomo; two 91 year olds, Shirley Kelton and Phyllis Anderson; one 92 year old, Bob Gay; two 93 year olds, Doc Buck and Dot Perry; one 95 year old, Arlene Bates; and one 101 year old, Artie Aiken.

Those unable to attend were: Jack Keil, 92; Dennis Payne 92; Betty Holton, 92; Evelyn Aubuchont, 93; Amelia Zezima, 93; Arlene Reed, 94; Everett Reed, 98 and Everett Garland, 100. Also included in the mix are two couples, Everett and Arlene Reed and Charlie and Shirley Kelton.

As in customary during each annual meeting, officers for the coming year were elected. For 2015 the following will serve: Connie Sanderson, president, Pete Harrison, co-vice president, Kathy Elliot, co-vice president, Regina Borden, secretary and Miriam Lanata, treasurer.

Other board members are: Heidi Anderson, Don Dawson, Sally Ryea and



Susan Harlow. Karen Walter and Phyllis Anderson are board members emeritus. President Pete Harrison thanked outgoing board member Barbara Carey for serving on the board. Barbara will continue to serve on committees. The Board also elected new member, Barbara Sherrod to a three-year term.

Pete thanked the Westminster Fire Department for the use of their facility throughout the year, the community for their continued support and the many volunteers time given to Westminster Cares. Westminster Cares welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to honor or remember a loved one or friend.

Westminster Cares is a nonprofit organization that creates opportunities for seniors and adults with disabilities to live with independence and dignity in the community. For more information, call Westminster Cares at 722-3607, e-mail [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net) or go to [www.westminstercares.org](http://www.westminstercares.org).

## KURN HATTIN STUDENTS SWEEP LOCAL ESSAY CONTEST

The Brattleboro VFW Carl M. Dessaint Post #1034 recognized the winners of its annual Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Contest at dinner on Nov. 8. All three top winners were students from Kurn Hattin Homes for Children in Westminster. Each won an award for their essays responding to the theme 'Why I Appreciate America's Veterans.'

Maia Brow, 8th grade Kurn Hattin student and winner of the contest, read her essay at the Kurn Hattin Veterans' Day Observance along with Hayley Labrecque (second place) and Reginald Watson (third place). Maia's essay will now be entered into the VFW district competition.

Post Commander, Mark Truhan, and Darlene Nebelski, President of the Post Auxiliary, came to the school on Nov. 14 and presented all of the Kurn Hattin students who participated in the essay contest with certificates of appreciation, as well as recognizing the top three contest winners.

The 2014 Patriot's Pen Youth Essay Contest is sponsored by the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States and is open to all sixth, seventh and eighth graders. Each year students are asked to type 300 to 400 words on an assigned theme. Over 100,000 students nationwide enter each year. One first-place winner from each state competes to win one of 46 national awards totaling \$46,000. The Vermont State winner competes for the grand prize, and could win \$5,000 and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, DC.

### HELP NEEDED TO LIGHT & PICK UP CHRISTMAS LUMINARIES

For the lighting of the Westminster luminaries, we are gathering together on Tuesday, Dec. 23 at 6 p.m. at the Westminster Fire Station to assemble the bags.

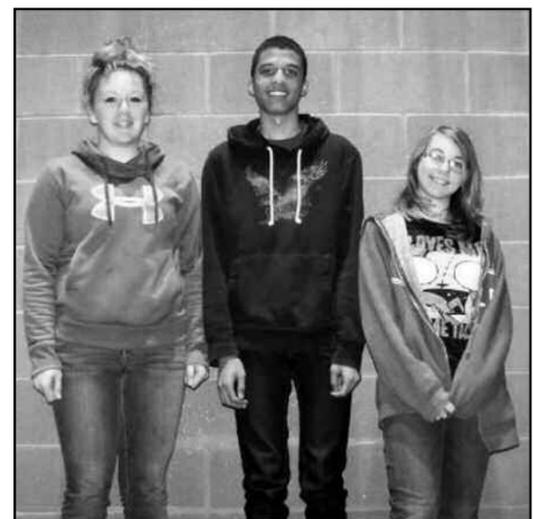
Gather at the Westminster Fire Station on Wednesday, Dec. 24 at 9 a.m. to set the bags along Main Street.

Please come together as a community to help light the 1,800 candles at 3:30 on Christmas Eve afternoon, the candles will burn for 12 hours.

On Christmas morning at 7 we will gather together at the Westminster Fire Station to pick up all the bags. We need community members to help. any who participate will be greatly appreciated.

Anyone wishing to make a contribution may send them to Diane Bazin, P.O. Box 12, Westminster VT 05158, or drop off at the town hall, or bring to the Fire Station on the 23rd while we assemble the bags.

All of the students who enter compete for cash and prizes at their local VFW Post with a first, second and third place winner. Post winners then advance to District One VFW level and compete against the winners of all posts in southern Vermont for \$200 in cash prizes. The District One winner will then advance to the Vermont State competition. The state winner's essay then proceeds to a national competition.



*In photo, winner Maia Brow, right; second place, Hayley Labrecque, left; and third place, Reginald Watson.*

### WESTMINSTER CARES ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Westminster Cares' annual appeal is underway! Through the generosity of community members, we raise funds annually to meet our budget requirements and pay for the services we provide to seniors in our community who need help.

All of us are faced with rising costs and more demands on our resources each year, but Westminster Cares still depends on private donations for much of their funding.

Funds generated from this appeal will support our healthy aging programs and services such as Meals-On-Wheels; equipment loans; rides to appointments; a community nurse and our healthy aging programs.

Thank you to all community members and businesses who have been loyal supporters in the past. We hope you are able to contribute to this year's campaign and help us by supporting this worthwhile local organization.

**OPEN MIC NIGHT AT THE WESTMINSTER INSTITUTE**



Above, Kurn Hattin Homes' girls stopped by the Coffee House Open Mic Night at the Westminster Institute to charm the audience with a few tunes.

(Photo by Ginger Cook)

**LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO**

Last month's mystery photo was of the Gageville Bridge, and it was burned down by a young arsonist in August of 1967. Correct answers for last month's photo were Christian Blake, Barb Greenough, Bob Gay and Bill O'Connor.

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## DINNER AND HOT LATIN JAZZ AT COMPASS SCHOOL DEC. 13TH

On Saturday, Dec. 13, Compass School will host a Caribbean dinner and a musical performance by Eugene and Julian's Latin Party Band featuring renowned musicians Eugene Uman and Julian Gerstin.

Eugene Uman is a pianist and composer who has performed with Sheila Jordan, Jay Clayton, George Mraz, Jimmy Heath, Donald Byrd, and many others. Uman has written over 120 wide ranging jazz compositions; three of his original compositions were recorded by Latin Jazz star Sammy Figueroa on his 2005 Grammy Nominated CD.

Uman appears in numerous ensembles including The Convergence Project, the As Yet Quintet, and Zabap, and he is the director of the Vermont Jazz Center and serves as an adjunct professor of music at Amherst College and Marlboro College.

Julian Gerstin, Ph.D. is an ethnomusicologist and percussionist specializing in music of Africa and the Caribbean. He has taught at Wesleyan University, Clark University, Marlboro College, and is currently at Keene State College. His percussive explorations have led him from the folk traditions of Ghana and Cuba to popular music from Nigeria to Brazil, as well as jazz styles from New Orleans brass bands to avant-garde experimentalism. He currently appears with the Caribbean jazz group As Yet Quintet and the AfroCuban dance ensemble Grupo Palo Santo among others.

Eugene and Julian will bring their 5-piece Latin Jazz Party Band to the Fiesta where they will surely be ripping it up! Don't miss it!

The evening begins at 6 p.m with a fabulous, multi-course Caribbean dinner, and concurrently there will be a silent auction which will include gift certificates to area businesses, fine arts, furniture, clothing, and much more. All-inclusive tickets for dinner and music are just \$15 adults and \$10 students.

All proceeds of the evening will benefit the Compass junior class Global Connection trip to the Dominican Republic. The Global Connections Program focuses on cultural immersion and international understanding. It is an integral part of the junior class curriculum through which Compass provides a transformative experience to inspire students to broaden their horizons, bond as a group, and work for social justice.

This year the class will travel to the DR where they will have a period of full immersion home stays in a rural Dominican village, and will engage in community service and travel across the country.

The Global Connections Program began in 2003 and since then Compass has had over 100 participants travel to the Mexico/Arizona border, India, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and the Dominican Republic. Former participants have been inspired to make international social activism a key part of their lives.

For example, Jake Saunders of Westminster returned to the Mexico border for his senior project to volunteer with No Mas Muertos, an organization that gives aid to lost migrants in the Arizona desert. Katelin Wilton of Putney dedicated her college years to working with HIV-infected teens in West Africa and was nominated for a Rhodes scholarship for her work. Sophie Taylor-Havens



At top, Compass Students in the Dominican Republic; above, performer Eugene Uman.

of Saxtons River is currently in Thailand studying agriculture and development.

This fundraising dinner and concert is key to making this travel program affordable to all 11th graders regardless of family income. Come out, hear some great music, eat delicious food, and support this unique opportunity. Admission is \$15 for adults \$10 for kids and students and \$45 for families. Tickets will be available at the door or can be purchased ahead of time from Compass School (463-2525) or at these outlets: Village Square Booksellers in Bellows Falls, Swirl in Putney, and Everyone's Books in Brattleboro.

The Compass School is an innovative, nonprofit, nonsectarian independent day school in Westminster, Vermont founded in 1999. It offers an exciting educational option for area students in grades 7 – 12.

### WESTMINSTER CARES FINDS NEW HOME IN THE INSTITUTE

By Susan J. Harlow

Westminster Cares is 26 years old this year, just a youngster compared to the Westminster Institute, which celebrates its 100th birthday in 2016. But the two community institutions join forces this month, when Westminster Cares moves into its new home at the Institute. Our director, Donna Dawson, will staff the office, on the lower level of the Institute in the former book sale or historical room.

The organization has had offices at the Westminster Motel since April 2001, when Ronnie Friedman was hired as director. Before then, Westminster Cares had functioned out of the home of Karen Walter, who helped found Westminster Cares in 1988.

During the 13 years that Westminster Cares rented space at the Westminster Motel, Shirley and Charlie Kelton were generous hosts. When Westminster Cares was notified that its side of the motel would be closing in October, the organization looked for other options. A search committee was formed and spent months considering various local sites. For many reasons including location and accessibility, the Institute was the top choice.

Fortunately, the Institute's board of directors and a group of community members have been working to restore the Institute as the vibrant center of the community once again. On Nov. 10, the Institute board approved Westminster Cares' request to rent space and has been cleaning and painting the space. The office opens Dec. 1.

The board plans several improvements to the Institute building over the next few years, including painting the front entryway and steps and replacing the front iron railings next spring. It also hopes to rebuild the back entryway, upgrade the kitchen, and add ceiling fans and energy-efficient lighting to the gym.

Donna Dawson, director of Westminster Cares, commented, "Westminster Cares is thrilled to have found a new home for our office at the Institute. The motel space served us well in the past; we believe the Institute will serve us well

as we look to the future. Providing services to seniors and those with disabilities from a central, accessible location is important to our work and the Institute fit the criteria we were looking for. Although our office will be here, most of our healthy aging programs will still be offered at various sites throughout the town. I think this is a win-win; Westminster Cares, the Institute and the community all benefit from this arrangement."

The U.S. Census estimated that more than 16 percent of Windham County's population in 2013 were over 65, an increasingly aging population, said Janice Wojeik, chair of the Institute board. "To maintain strength in our communities and meet the needs of its people, we need to communicate, co-operate, and coordinate resources. This is our intent on partnering with Westminster Cares," she said.

The Westminster Institute was built with donations of land and money from town resident George Dascomb, who founded Connecticut Valley Orchards, and by funds from Isaac Butterfield, who had willed money to the East Parish of Westminster for a library. Ground was broken in 1920, and the brick building was completed in 1926. It houses the Butterfield Library and has been the site of many community activities and celebrations over the years, from the Fire Department's roast beef suppers to Westminster Central Elementary School basketball games years ago, as well as private and public parties, weddings, and memorial services.

Westminster Cares will hold an open house in its new office after the first of the year to which the community is invited. Meanwhile, please contact Donna at the same phone number, 722-3607, or by e-mail, wcares@sover.net. Or stop by during office hours, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Thursday, or by appointment on Fridays.

You can access the office through the rear door of the Institute. Walk straight back and turn to the right. Or go in the front door of the building, turn left and go down the stairs. The office is the first door on the left at the bottom of the stairs. There is a lift inside the entryway for those who need it.

## 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 is Dec 2. at 6 p.m.

The Prudential Committee meets twice a month on the first and third Monday after the first Tuesday at 7 p.m. A warning will be posted 48 hours prior to each meeting.

Number of calls in October: 28

Number of calls through November 26th: 22

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 339

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 163

**Association Meeting:** The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting November 4th with President Paul Millman presiding. There were 26 members present and 4 members excused.

Currently there are 44 members of the volunteer fire department. Laura Mayer was welcomed as a full member having successfully completed the 6 month probation period.

Jacob Louison was accepted as a new member under the 6 month probation period guideline. Also, Caleb Rounds became a Junior Member and will become a full member when reaching the age of 18 and completing successfully the probation period.

**Hot coals and ashes:** When removing hot coals and ashes from a wood stove or fireplace, first put them in a covered metal container. Then put them outside away from the house or other buildings. Several homes are lost each year when hot ashes are left in a container on a wood floor porch or deck or left too close to a building that a spark could reach. Also, be careful not to spread them in an area where there is dry leaves or dry grass that may ignite very quickly.

**Extension cord safety:** Extension cords are meant for temporary use only. Overloading an extension cord or leaving one connected for too long could cause them to overheat and start a fire.

**Christmas Trees:** Be sure to keep your Christmas tree watered so it won't become dry and be a fire hazard. Always keep the tree away from open fires and heating appliances.

**Thin Ice:** Be careful when using ponds and lakes for skating. The ice will be very thin at first and unsafe for skating or walking. Be very sure of the thickness before venturing out. Inform and educate your children often about the dangers. Be on the lookout for slippery walking in general. Injuries from

falling can take a long time to heal, especially for the elderly.

**Preparing vehicles for winter:** In order to be ready for driving during snowy conditions, four snow tires are the best and surest way to go, even if your car is not 4-wheel drive. Extra washer fluid, a full tank of gas in case you get held up or stranded, a small shovel and a flashlight are some of the ideas for preparedness.

**Lifeline:** The holidays are upon us and it is a time when many people travel. If you have a Lifeline or a Lifeline type system in your home, it is a good idea to contact the provider to let them know if you are going to be away from home. There should be a telephone number listed for contacting them. If there is an accidental trip of the alarm the provider will know if the residence is unoccupied or not. This will save the responding agencies from going out for a false alarm.

**Luminaries:** The Fire House will be made available again this year for the annual Christmas Eve luminary display preparations. Many local volunteers gather at the Fire House to put the sand and candles in bags and set them out on Rt. 5, Grout Ave. and School St. Wednesday the 24th. Hopefully, the weather will cooperate this year.

The display attracts the attention of many people both locally and out of town. A huge thanks in advance goes out those who are involved with the set up and clean up. This is a very special occasion for Westminster and many look forward to it. Four years ago, the event was featured in *Yankee Magazine* and the Westminster Church 2012 birthday calendar pictured that year's display.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Association welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember a loved one or a friend. Donations for November: Kathleen and Roger Lockerby

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 Westminster West.

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 at [www.westminsterfireandrescue.org](http://www.westminsterfireandrescue.org).

## DONATIONS NEEDED FOR SEVCA'S CARE FOR KIDS & FAMILIES COLLECTION DRIVE

SEVCA's "Good Buy" Thrift Stores are now offering customers the opportunity to give to local kids and families in need and get something back at the same time. Now through Dec. 20, everyone who donates personal care items to SEVCA's "Care for Kids & Families" Collection Drive will receive 10% off any purchase at our Good Buy Stores.

Diapers, baby formula, shampoo, and toothpaste are some of the items urgently needed by local shelters and food shelves for families in need.

"The Good Buy Stores already provide a service to our communities by offering low-cost clothing, furniture, and household goods, but we wanted to do something extra around the holidays," said Tonia White, Director of SEVCA's network of stores. "A lot of people think about donating food at this time, but it turns out that one of the biggest unmet needs in our area is actually for baby care and personal care products."

The organizations that will distribute the items collected include the Our Place Drop-in Center in Bellows Falls, and the Springfield Family Center. They offer

groceries, meals, and shelter to hundreds of families in crisis every month, but often come up short when it comes to providing the personal care essentials most people take for granted.

"Once people pay their rent and utilities, they don't even have enough to meet their food needs, so they come to us. They certainly don't have enough money to pay for things like infant formula and diapers, which are extremely expensive," said Lisa Pitcher, Executive Director of Our Place. "And those who are eligible for 3SquaresVT can't use their benefits for anything but food."

Items needed for the Care for Kids & Families Collection Drive include disposable diapers (especially sizes 3, 4, & 5), baby wipes, infant formula, baby lotion and powder, shampoo and conditioner, toothpaste and toothbrushes, deodorant, soap, feminine products, tissues and toilet paper. "Good Buy" Store locations in Springfield and Bellows Falls are all accepting donations. The location, hours, and contact information for the stores can be found at [www.sevca.org/thrift-stores/locations](http://www.sevca.org/thrift-stores/locations) or by calling SEVCA at (800) 464-9951.

## The Magnificent Spruce

by Babs Lynde, a Vermont Master Gardener

The spruce tree is one of the most recognizable evergreen trees in the world. In fact, there are thousands and thousands of businesses that, either purposely or unwittingly, use the symbol of the spruce tree when advertising their tree services, forests and parks, nurseries, and most important, our world-wide symbol to represent the Christmas tree.

It is a coniferous evergreen, or cone-bearing tree, that keeps its needle shaped leaves all year round. There are several varieties of spruce including white, black, red, blue, Norway, Serbian, and Sitka. Some varieties will grow to about 60 feet, while other mature spruce can grow between 150 to 200 feet tall and live for hundreds of years.

In fact, the Sitka spruce can grow up to 300 feet, and the oldest known spruce to date is a white spruce which is over 850 years old, which is about the same time the cathedral, Notre Dame, was first being built in Paris!

Spruce wood has been used in many different ways, including lumber for building homes and garages, musical instruments and ships' masts. Tannin is a very important additive that comes from the bark of the tree which is used in leather production as well as in many inks. Its resin is used in several different ointments and oils that are used to relieve muscle tension, rheumatism, and to increase circulation.

In some parts of the world, spruce bark extract is used in making beer. The wood of the white spruce is generally lighter and softer and is most preferred for easy carvings, from furniture to crates. Many chewing gum manufacturers use the gum extract from the red spruce. Many different expensive pianos and violins come from the red spruce as well because of the texture of the grain and

lighter feeling of the wood.

As a Christmas tree, the Douglas fir, Scotch pine and white and blue spruce are the most common evergreens sold in the U.S. The blue spruce has a very distinctive bluish tinge to its needles which makes it very recognizable and a preferred tree for the holiday. Although the white spruce has poorer needle retention, its thicker branches for heavier decoration, faster growth and easy care makes it one of the most common trees grown in tree farms for seasonal uses.

I remember many years as a child when my dad, younger brother and myself would trod out into the snow-covered woods out beyond our home, and Dad would use a small axe to take down a spruce, (his personal favorite,) that was usually no taller than himself because Mom always needed room for the hand-made star that we kids had made.

We dressed our spruce with strings of popcorn, tinsel, and a handful of extremely fragile balls that always seemed to be at least one less than the year before. When we were done decorating the tree, Mom would bring out her sugary popcorn balls and hot chocolate, and we would all sit back and admire our magnificent Christmas tree!

I wish all of you a safe and joyous holiday season!

Would you like more information concerning the spruce tree? The Master Gardeners of Vermont are trained to help you with all your needs. Call their Helpline toll-free at 1-800-639-2230, send questions by e-mail to [mastergardener@uvm.edu](mailto:mastergardener@uvm.edu) or visit their Web site at [www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/](http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/) for extensive information.

# Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

## 60 PLUS: A NEW ERA FOR SUPPORT GROUPS

By Sandy Conrad and Joyce Lemire

We often suggest support groups as a helpful resource for elders with chronic health challenges, and for their caregivers. Yet at the same time, we recognize that many people find it difficult to attend meetings for various reasons: demanding schedules, limited transportation options, or health issues that make it difficult or embarrassing to go out.

So, although we are fans of getting out of the house to see the world and its inhabitants now and again, we want you to know other options exist. There are a number of support groups that meet through the telephone or internet.

Support groups can provide practical information and answer questions. But perhaps more importantly, people often find it a great relief to communicate with others who "understand what it's like." For many, experiences such as feeling understood, emotional relief, and a sense of camaraderie can improve quality of life and produce beneficial physical effects. Their importance should not be underrated.

For online support for people with specific illnesses, you might wish to start by searching [www.patientslikeme](http://www.patientslikeme) or by simply doing an internet search on "support group" and the name of the condition. There are also groups on Facebook if you like that.

Each support group is different, and you may need to try more than one to find a group that meets your needs. Many of the best groups have lots of participants who stick around after they've gotten help, offering their support and experience to benefit others.

Support groups also vary in emphasis. Some focus on dealing with emotional factors, while others are more about practical information. Most, though, are open to anything relevant. Some groups have a moderator, while others do not.

We recommend support groups for the wellbeing of both the caregiver and the elder being cared for. Appropriate support can prevent burnout and stress-related health issues in the caregiver, and is also a factor in reducing the risk of elder abuse.

Caregiver Action Network (formerly the National Family Caregivers Association) has an online support group and other resources at <http://caregiveraction.org/resources>

SAGE provides a telephone support group and other resources for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender caregivers of elders at <http://sageusa.org/programs/sagecap.cfm>

The Alzheimer's Association, in addition to their 24-hour HelpLine at (800) 272-3900, has caregiver support groups in various formats: local meetings, phone groups, and internet groups. To find a support group near you, plus other helpful information, see [www.alz.org/vermont/in\\_my\\_community\\_support.asp](http://www.alz.org/vermont/in_my_community_support.asp)

Cancercare offers caregiver online support groups at [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

If you prefer a face-to-face support group, we encourage you to see [www.SeniorSolutionsVT.org](http://www.SeniorSolutionsVT.org) or call the Senior HelpLine at 1-800-642-5119 to find out what is available in your area.

*Sandy Conrad is the executive director of Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, and Joyce Lemire is executive director of Senior Solutions in southeastern Vermont. 60 Plus is a collaboration between Senior Solutions of southeastern Vermont and the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging. Both can be reached by calling the Senior HelpLine at 800-642-5119.*

*This article is reprinted with permission. It first appeared in the 7/2/14 issue of the Rutland Herald.*

### FROM FINE ART TO THE ART OF MASSAGE, GAZETTE RAFFLE OFFERS VALUABLE PRIZES

The Westminster Gazette is a community newspaper reporting on the happenings in and around Westminster. It is managed by volunteers and supported by our underwriters, advertisers and donors. Over 1,400 households, business and organizations receive the Gazette every month!

This year, we will be holding a Holiday Raffle. Participants have a chance to win one of several prizes.

Tickets are a donation of \$1 each or 6 tickets for \$5. The drawing will be held on Dec. 19. Tickets are available from any Gazette committee member or at the new office for Westminster Cares in the Institute. Please complete your name and phone number on the ticket. A Gazette Board member will contact you if you are a winner.

Below is a sample list of available prizes:

Gift Certificate for oil change, lube and filter from Westminster Auto

Artwork by Scott Morgan

Hand Crafted Baby Quilt from an anonymous donor

Gift Certificates from Elizabeth Harlow for a 1 hour massage (2 separate)

A painting by Shane Harris

Earrings from Silver Forest of Vermont

Bottle of Wine

\$20 Lisai's Gift Certificate donated by Myra Ashcraft

Donation from Bascomb's

Two Weeks membership at Green Mountain Community Fitness in Brattleboro

## WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



### WHAT IS THIS BUILDING AND WHEN WAS IT ERECTED?

E-mail your answer to [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com) or [blynde@westminstervt.org](mailto:blynde@westminstervt.org), or phone Babs Lynde at 722-9516.

The answer and the winners will be announced in the next issue.

Last Month's Answer: On Page 3.

**If you have pictures you think would make a great mystery photo stop by the town office and see Babs Lynde.**

### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS WORKSHOP

There will be a Children's Christmas Workshop on Saturday, Dec. 20, from 10-11:30 a.m. at the Westminster Fire Station. Come make gifts for your family. Sponsored by the WAC

### GAZETTE WELCOMES NEW UNDERWRITERS

The Westminster Gazette would like to welcome our newest underwriters, The Dascomb Trust and Burto, Inc.

Underwriting support is a minimum donation of at least \$300 annually and does not include advertising. Underwriters are listed in the box on page 6 and have the option of a feature article once annually if they choose.

### HIKE TO VERMONT'S CHAMPION WHITE ASH ON DECEMBER 6

By popular request, there will be another hike to the largest White Ash in Vermont on Saturday, Dec. 6 from 10 a.m. to noon. The tree is located on Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association property off Headwaters Trail in Westminster.

Since the tree is not that easy to find – unless one has been there before – a guided hike by Forester Arthur Westing will lead hikers right to it. During this free program Westing will discuss the characteristics of a Vermont forest and the factors that affect the health of this truly remarkable specimen. Without leaves on the tree, its size and structure should be very obvious and most impressive.

Re-verified at the beginning of 2014 by Windham County Forester Bill Guenther of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation, the tree grew in the ten years since its last measurement and charted a circumference of 205.2 inches and a height of 113 feet, thereby beating out two other Westminster giants.

Participants should dress warmly, wear hiking shoes, bring water, and meet at the Holden Trail kiosk. Please visit [www.windmillhillpinnacle.org](http://www.windmillhillpinnacle.org) for a map indicating trailheads, as well as other information. Contact Arthur Westing at 387-2152 for further directions, information, and registration.

### GAZETTE SEEKING NEW BOARD MEMBER

The Westminster Gazette is seeking a new board member to serve as Secretary.

The Gazette is circulated to over 1,400 businesses and households and is dependent on volunteers. No newspaper experience required.

It's a great opportunity to give back to your community. The group meets for 1 hour a month and is expected to help proof the paper prior to publication. Please send letter of interest to [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)

### ROAD SALT REDUCTION PROGRAM

The Westminster Highway Department would like to inform the public that they will be under a road salt reduction program this winter.

The cost of road salt went up substantially this fall without notice and will place a large burden on the present budget. We will do our best to keep you and your families safe.

Please slow down and give your selves plenty of time to get to your locations and we will get through this. Happy Holidays from the "Road Crew".

# 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.

### 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](http://www.bffarmersmarket.com) or call 463-2018.

**Walking:** Meet at the Westminster Heights Park and Ride on Wednesday mornings at 9am and carpool to walking site. Most times the walk takes one hour and we are back by 10:30. Bring water, hat, walking stick, (if desired), sun screen and wear good sturdy shoes. We can walk at different speeds depending on the group. Call the Westminster Cares Office to find out more: 722-3607 or email [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net)."

### Contra Dance

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

## 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 Jennifer Hed and Margit Lilly.

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](mailto: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/](http://www.gb4hisglory.com/).

## Meetings

**Selectboard** 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 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 Fire Station 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**

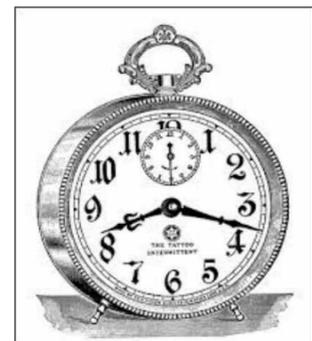
2nd Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

### **Westminster Gazette Meeting**

Monday, Dec. 29 at 4:30 p.m. at the Town Hall

### **Westminster Recycling Committee**

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



## HELP WANTED: CRISIS FUEL/FAMILY WORKER

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is seeking a part-time temporary Crisis Fuel Worker for the Westminster office with occasional hours in Brattleboro, to primarily assist clients with emergency heating situations and work in collaboration with the Family Services team to provide direct client services under emergency and non-emergency circumstances, information and referral, case management, and advocacy to low income clients.

Strong organizational, interpersonal, communication skills, and computer literacy are requirements, as well as the ability to work a flexible schedule when needed. Experience in human services field is preferred. Send resume and cover letter to Family Services Director, SEVCA, 91 Buck Drive, Westminster, VT 05158. EOE

**The Deadline for the January 2015 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, December 31 Publish Date is Tuesday, Jan. 6 To Contact the Westminster Gazette E-mail: [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)**

### **THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:**

Kurn Hattin Homes  
Westminster School District  
Town of Westminster  
Westminster Activities Commission  
Sojourns Community Health Clinic  
Westminster Cares  
Westminster Fire & Rescue Association  
The Dascomb Trust  
Burteo, Inc.

### **WESTMINSTER GAZETTE** **Editor: Robert Smith**

### **Board of Directors:**

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# THE PINNACLE ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES CLOSING THE GAP



In photo at left, the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association celebrated closing the gap in its long trail system from Putney Mountain to Grafton. At left is Libby Mills, a past WHPA Trustee whom Susan Roman, at center and present WHPA Chair, termed “acquisition person extraordinaire.” Mills explained the intricate series of steps and contacts involved in land acquisition. Beverly Major, at right, founding Chair of WHPA, related some of the history of the parcels and owners involved in the many land acquisitions that have taken place since WHPA’s inception in 1992 to make the through trail possible.

It’s done! The gap in the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association’s trail system from Putney Mountain to Grafton is closed! Members observed the feat with a celebration on Sunday Sept. 28.

The celebration culminated a 20-year-effort to acquire the necessary lands and easements to make the long through hiking trail possible for the public.

In her opening remarks Susan Roman, Chair of the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association [WHPA], thanked all the volunteers, trail crews, and donors who made the new links and trail system a reality.

She especially acknowledged, on behalf of the Pinnacle Board of Trustees, Eleanor Bemis for selling her property to WHPA, Veronica Brelsford for a permanent trail easement near the Martin Sanctuary that allowed the new Bemis Hill Trail, and Crescent Dragonwagon and Fraser Cooper-Ellis for trail licenses permitting the David Koff and Sugar Grove trails that extend access from the dead-end part of the Windmill Ridge Trail down to Bemis Hill Road.

She also gave special thanks to the Vermont Trails Association for recognizing the high quality and significance of Pinnacle Association trails by granting WHPA membership this year.

The Pinnacle now longs to hear from those who hike the whole through trail. Photos and a write-up of their experience should be e-mailed to whpa@sover.net for posting on www.windmillhillpinnacle.org. The Pinnacle’s website features maps indicating the different trail systems and trailheads, as well as information about upcoming Pinnacle programs. The next guided hike will be to Vermont’s Champion White Ash on Dec. 6.

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**December Business of the Month:  
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In 1960 Malcolm Streeter created a business named Westminster B&B (Blasting & Building), in the 80's we had to change the name to Sam Streeter LLC due to insurance reasons.

We are general contractors and electricians. I, Cole Streeter started working for the company in the early 80's, Donnie Fullam joined in 1986, Tim Wilder joined in the mid 90's.

In 2000 my father retired and passed the business down to me. Nine years later Gene Hotaling joined the group to form our current team.

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**COLD SNAP COINCIDES WITH START OF SEVCA'S CRISIS FUEL SEASON**

When temperatures plummeted below freezing last week, it was a wake-up call for many of us, and we rushed through the routines of filling our furnaces, changing our filters, and putting on our storm windows. But for many area households, winter is a time of year filled with dread as they face the prospect of stretching their limited income to heat their homes. The good news is that thanks to SEVCA's Crisis Fuel Program, households that find themselves facing a home heating crisis this winter have somewhere to turn.

"SEVCA can help many qualified households facing a fuel emergency," said Pat Burke, Director of SEVCA's Family Services Program. "But funding cuts and rule changes mean that households may be eligible for assistance only once all winter. Last year, the state had to find extra money for a "Special Warmth Fund" because there were simply too many people at risk of being without heat. Even with this extra funding, and even though the need was as high as ever, the number of assists SEVCA was able to provide dropped 22% from the previous year."

To be eligible for Crisis Fuel assistance, households must have incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, which is based on household size; e.g., \$3,976/month (gross) for a family of 4. There are also other requirements

before a household can qualify for help. One of these, introduced by the state last year, is that families must first apply to the state for Seasonal Fuel assistance before they can be considered for Crisis Fuel (whether or not they are eligible to receive Seasonal Fuel Assistance). That's why SEVCA urges everyone who might have difficulty meeting their home heating needs this winter to apply for Seasonal Fuel Assistance as soon as possible.

Crisis Fuel Assistance is available from Nov. 24 to approximately mid-March. To apply, schedule an appointment by calling the nearest SEVCA Outreach Office between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday – Friday. To find the phone number and location of the nearest SEVCA office, call (800) 464-9951 or visit [www.sevca.org](http://www.sevca.org). Applicants must bring paystubs or other proof of income, know how much fuel is left in their tank (if oil heat), and provide information about their fuel dealer. SEVCA may also be able to assist households whose furnaces stop working or are unsafe, with an emergency furnace repair or replacement. To apply for Seasonal Fuel, apply online at [www.mybenefits.vt.gov](http://www.mybenefits.vt.gov) or call (80) 479-6151. This is also the number to call for Crisis Fuel Assistance on weekends and holidays, and for furnace repair or replacement assistance on weekends, holidays, or for after-hours emergencies.

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**Westminster Gazette**

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