

# Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ <http://westminster.govoffice.com>

Vol. 7, No. 2 February 2011

## LIST OF SCHEDULED ANNUAL MEETINGS

### UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 27 (BELLOWS FALLS UNION HIGH SCHOOL) ANNUAL MEETING

Wednesday, February 23, 2011 at 7:00pm in the BFUHS Auditorium

### ANNUAL TOWN, SCHOOL & FIRE DISTRICT #3 MEETING

Saturday February 26, 2011 at 10:00am in the BFUHS Auditorium

### TOWN MEETING DAY

Vote on Australian ballot articles on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 from 8:00am to 7:00pm at the Westminster Institute

### LAST DAY TO BE ADDED TO THE CHECKLIST TO VOTE

Union High School District No. 27 Meeting- 5:00pm on February 16, 2011 at 5:00pm.

Annual Town Meeting- 5:00pm on Wednesday, February 23, 2011

*Due to lack of participation there will not be child care provided at the Annual Town Meeting  
Scheduled for Saturday, February 27, 2011 at 10:00am.*

**WARNING FOR ANNUAL MEETING  
2011  
WESTMINSTER, VERMONT TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
TOWN OF WESTMINSTER, VERMONT  
WESTMINSTER, VERMONT TOWN FIRE DISTRICT NUMBER 3**

( On Page 3 )

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

Kurn Hattin Homes  
Westminster School District  
Town of Westminster  
Durand Automotive Group  
Westminster Activities  
Commission  
Sojourns Community Health  
Clinic  
Westminster Cares  
Westminster Fire & Rescue  
Association  
The Current operated by the  
Connecticut River Transit  
Bartleboro Subaru

Copies of Town Reports will not be mailed this year. They will be available February 16, 2011 at the Westminster Town Hall, Westminster West School, Westminster West Library, Westminster Center School, Butterfield Library and the Health Center in Bellows Falls. The Town shall mail or distribute a copy of the report to any voter or resident upon request. To do so please contact the Town office at 722-4255

**FINAL INSTALLMENT  
OF  
PROPERTY TAXES  
FOR 2010-2011**

**ARE DUE  
ON**

**FEBRUARY 10, 2011**

**IT'S TIME TO PURCHASE  
YOUR 2011  
DOG LICENSES**

**DUE BY**

**APRIL 1, 2011**

**2011 Rabies Clinic  
will be held at the  
Town Garage  
on  
March 26, 2011  
between 10am and 12 noon.  
Cost: \$10.00 and  
Dog Licenses will be  
available at that time.**

## Westminster Schools: Two Options

The Westminster School Board created an ad-hoc committee of 5 residents and 3 board members for fact finding to consider the viability of keeping both the West and Center Schools open for the coming year. The Board is proposing a budget that keeps the two-school option and has a reduction in the tax rate for the coming year. This committee reported the following points:

### Reasons to have two schools:

- Gives a choice for all families and children in the district in grades 1-4
- Increased parent involvement in both schools
- In-district placement possibilities for kids for whom one setting isn't working
- The West School is smaller setting that might work better for some children
  - o Potential to attract or keep students in the public system who might be led to other small school options for younger grades
- Different programs in each school may address a greater range of learner needs
- Two school option can help even out class size fluctuations, likely to prevent the need for an additional classroom as cohort of 24-26 goes through the system
- Allows multiage setting with cross age support, more obvious demand for differentiation by teacher, different roles for students in different years.
- Keeps spaces for preschool program, afterschool program, meeting room
- Some room for additional student move ins or growth in student numbers at grades 1-4
- Retain neighborhood school in West Parish.

The two-school option depends upon expected enrollment above 20 with outreach to community and clear articulation of the choice available to all families and students in the district.

### The board also discussed reasons to consolidate into one school:

- Assures all students have access to consistent program and opportunities
- Increase numbers at Center can concentrate resources there, offer more social outlets and program possibilities in that setting, may be able to bring more services to bear at a central location (i.e. Counselor, Nurse, Therapists)
- Common single grade program at Center promotes teacher interaction and professional collaboration
- Could accommodate one more class in space currently used for afterschool program,
- Simplify administrative supervision in one site

### Costs and Savings

Student numbers determine staffing—consequently, closing the West School would not reduce any full time faculty, as they would be needed for the increased numbers at the Center School.

- Possible savings for building expenses, transportation, travel reimbursement for teachers, heat, etc. add up to approximately \$30,000
- If we were able reduce staff by one paraprofessional position if the schools consolidate, adding another approximately \$28,000 of potential savings.

### However, there may be offsetting expenses or revenue loss from consolidation including:

- Cost of upkeep of building if closed and not sold—heat, security, upkeep outdoors.
- May lose some students to private school or home school options
  - o Revenue via equalized pupil reimbursement of approx. \$13,000/student
- Reduced options for student placements may create needs for tuition payments for other settings

### Tax Implications

For households with incomes more than \$47,000, the tax savings will be between 0.56% and 1.07% of your current school tax. To estimate the effect on you, find the school tax on your tax bill. This is the "Homestead Education" tax minus the "State Payments" shown just above your net tax due. You savings will be about 1% of that amount or maybe half that amount. This is true whether your school tax is determined by household income ("income sensitivity") or by home value.

### Here are some typical tax situations based on your current school tax:

- \$1400 school tax (typical with a household income of \$50,000 and not an expensive home or many acres)  
The tax decrease would be \$8 (\$30,000 scenario) to \$15 (\$58,000 scenario).
- \$2000 school tax (typical for an income of \$70,000 with a moderate home—or any income with a \$130,000 home).  
The tax decrease would be \$11 (\$30,000 scenario) to \$21 (\$58,000 scenario).
- \$3000 school tax (usually an income of at least \$90,000 and a \$200,000 home)  
The tax decrease would be \$17 (\$30,000 scenario) to \$32 (\$58,000 scenario).
- \$4500 school tax (usually an income of at least \$90,000 and a \$300,000 home)  
The tax decrease would be \$25 (\$30,000 scenario) to \$48 (\$58,000 scenario).

Note that these estimates assume no change in school population. If there is a drop in the number of pupils as a result of a closing, the tax benefits may disappear.

For families earning below \$47,000 income, the "circuit breaker" would prevent any savings going to these families as their property tax rate is a fixed percentage of income.

Conclusion: Given what seems like minimal potential savings, a revitalized interest in making more clear to parents the value of the choice of both schools for all residents, and the educational value of the West program for some students in the district, the Board is advocating keeping the West School open, with the qualification that if enrollment ever drops below 20, the Board will review the viability of keeping the school open in ensuing years. We hope the community supports the Board's decision and the hard work of this ad hoc committee to investigate the options thoughtfully.

**Send Submissions to:  
[westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)**



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**The Planning Commission WANTS YOU!**



Long hours reading while falling asleep, evening meetings, writing, remembering tiny facts, possibly awakening hostility in old friends. Serve on the Westminster Planning Commission and seriously help your town. Prefer persons with prior experience in planning ahe

### WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

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**Provided by the**

**Community**

**westminsternews@gmail.com**

Connecticut River Transit is now...

## The Current

**Let The Current take you there!**

We have a new look, but we're the same safe, reliable service you've come to depend on. When you call **The Current**, you'll get the same helpful, professional staff answering the phone. When you board **The Current** buses, the same professional drivers will take you where you need to go.



**Why change the look?**

In a rural region, many residents don't know public transit exists! The goal of **The Current's** look is to make it difficult NOT to notice us. The more people notice public transit, the more they are likely to get out of their cars and onto a bus!

When you leave your car behind and ride **The Current**, you decrease your energy consumption, improve environmental quality, and save commuting costs. If you are unable to drive or don't have transportation, you can benefit by riding on our Dial-a-Ride and volunteer network.

We Provide the Ride... so please tell us how we can improve to make that happen for you. Thank you for riding Connecticut River Transit last year and **The Current** this year.

**Bellows Falls - Brattleboro Commuter Schedule**

Bellows Falls to Brattleboro											Brattleboro to Bellows Falls																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																																	
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WARNING FOR ANNUAL MEETING  
2011  
WESTMINSTER, VERMONT TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT  
TOWN OF WESTMINSTER, VERMONT  
WESTMINSTER, VERMONT TOWN FIRE DISTRICT NUMBER 3

The legal voters of the Westminster Town School District, the Town of Westminister, and the Westminister Town Fire District #3 are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium in Westminister, Vermont on Saturday, February 26, 2011 at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 A.M.) to take action on the Articles following Article 1.

The meeting will be recessed to the Westminister Institute, East Parish, Westminister, Vermont to meet at eight o'clock in the forenoon (8:00 A.M.) on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 for the consideration of Article 1 by Australian Ballot. The polls shall remain open until seven o'clock in the evening (7:00 P.M.), at which time the meeting will recess to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium at eight o'clock in the evening (8:00 P.M.) on Tuesday, March 1, 2011 to consider any remaining articles, if necessary.

- Article 1: To choose all Town School District Officers, Town Officers, and Town Fire District Number 3 Officers. (Australian ballot, Tuesday, March 1, 2011 from eight o'clock in the forenoon [8:00 A.M.] until seven o'clock in the evening [7:00 P.M.]).
- Article 2: To hear the reports of the Town School District Officers for the last year and to take action thereon.
- Article 3: To see if the Town School District will authorize and instruct its School Directors and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, on the credit of the Town School District for its current expenses in anticipation of the collection of taxes and receipt of money due from state aid.
- Article 4: To see if the Town School District will vote to pay its District Officers compensation, and if so, how much?
- Article 5: To see if the Westminister Town School District will apply the sum of Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$90,000) from the fiscal year 2010 fund balance to create a reserve fund to be used for capital improvements at the Westminister Schools and authorize the board to expend said funds.
- Article 6: To see if the Westminister Town School District will apply the sum of Fourteen Thousand, Five Hundred Dollars (\$14,500) from the fiscal year 2010 fund balance to create a reserve fund for a feasibility study and development of bid specifications of a solar energy facility and to authorize the board to expend said funds.
- Article 7: To see if the Westminister Town School District will apply the sum of Seventy-Two Thousand, Eight Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$72,850) from the fiscal year 2010 fund balance to create a reserve fund to offset expenditures in fiscal year 2013 in order to reduce taxes.
- Article 8: To see if the Westminister Town School District will apply the sum of Seventy-Two Thousand, Eight Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$72,850) from the fiscal year 2010 fund balance to create a reserve fund to offset expenditures in fiscal year 2014 in order to reduce taxes.
- Article 9: To see if the Westminister Town School District will apply the sum of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) from the fiscal year 2010 fund balance to create a bus sinking fund and to authorize the board to expend said funds.
- Article 10: To see if the Westminister Town School District will apply the sum of Six Thousand, Six Hundred and Sixty Dollars (\$6,660) from the fiscal year 2010 fund balance to create and expend a technology reserve fund and to authorize the board to expend said funds.
- Article 11: To see if the Town School District will raise money for the maintenance of its schools for the period of July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012; if so, how much?
- Article 12: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town School District Meeting.
- Article 13: To hear the reports of the Town Officers and to take action thereon.
- Article 14: To see if the voters of the Town will authorize its Selectboard to use any Federal and State funds received to provide basic services to the Town as outlined in the Federal or State regulations and to enter into and approve any contract or regulation called for by the Federal or State Agency to properly implement the use of said funds.
- Article 15: To see if the voters of the Town will authorize and instruct its Selectboard and Treasurer to borrow money on the credit of the Town for its current expenses in anticipation of the collection of taxes, or payment to the Town of money due it from the State of Vermont or payment to the Town of money due it from Federal Funds.
- Article 16: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate the sum of \$11,500 to support the home health, maternal and child health, and hospice care provided in patients' homes by the Visiting Nurse Alliance of Vermont and New Hampshire, Inc.
- Article 17: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) to assist Westminister in responding to the emergency needs of the community and providing all available and applicable services.
- Article 18: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate the sum of \$3,210 for Health Care Rehabilitation Services to assist Westminister in responding to the mental health services needs of the community.
- Article 19: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,500 for the Westminister Recreation Club to be used for the purchase of insurance and maintenance of its swimming pool.
- Article 20: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate the sum of \$130,000 for the Town Highway Equipment Reserve Fund.
- Article 21: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for the Bridge Rehabilitation Reserve Fund.
- Article 22: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminister will raise and appropriate money to pay the indebtedness of the Town, repair highways and other general expenses of the Town beginning July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012; and if so, how much?
- Article 23: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town Meeting.
- Article 24: To hear the reports of the Town Fire District Number 3, and to take action thereon.
- Article 25: To see whether the Town Fire District Number 3 shall raise and appropriate money to pay the indebtedness and other general expenses of the District for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011, and ending June 30, 2012, and if so, how much?
- Article 26: To see whether the Town Fire District Number 3 shall authorize and instruct its Prudential Committee and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, to meet current expenses on the credit of the District, in anticipation of the collection of taxes and/or receipt of any State or Federal Funds.
- Article 27: To transact any other business proper to be brought before the Town Fire District Number 3 meeting.

Dated at Westminister, Vermont this 27th day of January, 2011.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL  
DISTRICT  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Richard Miller, Chair  
Daniel Axtell  
Rick Gordon  
David Ramos  
Jackie Trepanier

TOWN OF  
WESTMINSTER  
SELECTBOARD

Toby Young, Chair  
Craig Allen  
Peter Barrett  
Paul Harlow  
Jeffrey Ruggiero

WESTMINSTER FIRE  
DISTRICT NUMBER 3  
PRUDENTIAL CMTE

David W. Wright, Chair  
Robert J. Haas  
Christopher J. Hackett

### Community Service Winter Term Takes Learning into the World Compass School News by Rick Gordon

The regular Compass School schedule will be put on hold from February 7-18 as students are asked to apply their learning to help address real needs in our community. Compass' Community Service Winter Term is organized around requests for assistance from community organizations in the region. As students address these real world needs, they develop and extend their problem solving skills and ability to work with others to make a real difference in the community.

This year's projects include developing a video for Westminster School District about their two school options, creating science exhibits to engage teens for the Nature Museum at Grafton, storytelling in local elementary schools, studying youth voice in the media, making engaging activities for Kidsplayce, exploring how to include more locally grown food for Our Place Drop In Center, and painting murals to brighten up the new Warming Shelter in Bellows Falls. In addition, the junior class is in the Dominican Republic at this time studying economic development issues and living and working with indigenous rural communities.

Working in small groups with peers from grades 7-12 and a teacher-leader, students meet with the community partner sponsoring the project, clarify expectations, and organize themselves to help address the community need. This work asks students to take knowledge and skills developed in their classes and apply it to real world problems. As research on learning shows, this transfer of academic learning to new situations is one of the great challenges in education. Winter term at Compass gives students the chance to work together to apply their learning outside school in service to the community.

#### 2011 KURN HATTIN SUMMER SPORTS CAMPS

Westminster, VT— It's not too early to starting planning for your children's summer sports camps. The Kurn Hattin Summer Sports Camp provides your child with a variety of learning experiences and places an emphasis on high quality individual and small group instruction. Our philosophy is learning by doing. Trained instructors from a variety of backgrounds will instruct in all facets of basic skills and strategies. Staff evaluation through observation and constructive feedback will aid the campers in development of the target skills. The camp schedule is as follows.

<b>Girls Softball Camp</b> —Ages 11-14 Camp Director: Sara Frantz	June 27-July 1	9:00-noon Cost: \$70
<b>Girls Basketball Camp</b> —Ages 11-14 Camp Director: Tom Fahner	July 11-15	9:00-noon Cost \$70
<b>COED Basketball Camp</b> —Ages 8-10 Camp Director: Sara Frantz	July 18-22	9:00-noon Cost: \$70
<b>Boys Basketball Camp</b> —Ages 11-14 Swimming and lunch included. Camp Director: Jarrod James	July 25-29	9:00-3:30 p.m. Cost: \$125
<b>COED Soccer Camp</b> —Ages 11-14 Camp Director: Dean Kinville	August 8-12	9:00-noon Cost: \$70

For additional information, a camp brochure or to register, contact Tom Fahner at (802) 721-6918.

### NEW IDEAS ON GARDEN DÉCOR by Babs Lynde, a Vermont Master Gardener

Gardens aren't just for plants anymore! Even a well-planned flower garden can stand to have a little something extra to add to the décor. I've often told my readers that your gardens are quite often an extension of your home, another room to be proud of – if you like – and we should decorate our gardens in a similar fashion to keep them interesting and with the feeling of being lived in.

Just like your living room or bedroom, a lovely sculpture or a glossy wind chime can add a lot to your garden. Depending on the size of your garden area, the accents or décor that you choose for your garden can be as small as a fairy statuette to a screened-in gazebo complete with furniture. February is when many plant sellers begin sending out their colorful magazines filled with the newest bulbs or plants that are bigger, better or stronger in color, but now they are also beginning to offer charming or interesting accents. If you've wandered through any nurseries and lawn and garden stores as of late, you'll find hundreds of outdoor decorating ideas to choose from this year.

The newest décor seems to be anything solar. There is solar lighting, solar statuary and other solar accents that look like butterflies, flowers and toadstools, made from ceramic, polished metal, wrought iron and even glass. These solar ornaments can be used to light a walkway or to just add incidental lighting. When you find something that grabs your eye, even if they advertise the item for outdoor use, check to make sure they are weather resistant and won't fade, chip or fall apart easily. Also keep in mind that some ornaments can be captivating to little fingers and pets as well, so take care to choose what won't cut or hurt them.

Other items available are garden bells, decorative flags, stepping stones, traditional sundials, colorful whirligigs and metal stakes that can hold floating birds, butterflies and shimmering glass objects. Wind chimes are making a huge comeback, but not just as the standard chiming pipes that we are the most familiar. Chimes made from glass bottles and plates, silverware and pottery pieces are

### The Hills (and Valley) Were Alive with the Sound(s) of Music!

The Westminster elementary schools held their winter concert on Thursday evening, January 20th. The concert theme was "celebrating our planet in every season." There were songs about rain, an avalanche, a river, and peace.

Our youngest children sang about "All (they) Really Need," followed by the second grades and two wonderful songs about peace. After only a few months with their new instruments, the Saxophone Ensemble wowed the audience with "A Country Walk." We heard saxophone, piano and clarinet solos, and soaring vocal solos, too. 3rd and 4th graders sang about our "Wonderful World" and "A Perfect Winter Day." We Vermonters love our state song, "These Green Mountains," sung by students from the West School. 5th and 6th graders rocked the crowd with "Surfin' Safari," and the Chorus closed the evening on an uplifting note with "Dona Nobis Pacem."

Many many thanks to our new music teacher, Ashley Paine, for designing a terrific showcase of student talent. And thanks also to guest musicians, technical and custodial support, and to all our families for coming out in force for a great community event.



### Cuban Musicians Entertain Westminster Students

Concluding their month-long USA tour, the Cuban band, Septeto Tipico Tivoli made their final stop at Kurn Hattin Homes on Tuesday, January 3. Kurn Hattin students and their neighbors, the Westminster Center School danced to the rhythms of traditional Santiago de Cuba music.



new and different. Some chimes are designed to sound like specific cathedral bells or seaside buoys. Imagine walking through a field of blue and white forget-me-nots while listening to the tinkling of beaded glass from nearby tree limbs!

Older standbys are just as impressive, however. A single hand-knotted chair amongst a bouquet of peonies or a large mica-filled rock can catch an eye – it doesn't need to be costly. One of the best accents I ever saw was a simple two-seater wooden bench that was nestled quietly in a stand of deep pink crabapple blossoms. And water features always make a nice presentation. Whether you decide to build a pond or buy a water sculpture, the sound of the trickling water is calming and relaxing to both young and old.

If you have little money to spend, try these ideas: Any bird or butterfly feeder can add dimensions by placing them in the middle of your perennials. You can also make your own bird bath by using an old china platter with a half to an inch depth and setting it on a wide post or old tree stump. Have an old metal or wooden chair that's still usable but looks unsightly? Spray paint it with durable weather-proof paint and hand paint flowers or ivy on the seat or sides. If you have a pond, or you're thinking of making one, don't just add flat stones around the perimeter - plant low growing perennials, dwarf bushes or a handful of annuals to help break up the look of the stones. If you have a walkway, line it with enclosed string lighting, push tent stakes or eyehooks into the ground to keep the lights secure in one place, and cover the electric cord ends in simple plastic wrap or duct tape to keep the rain or moisture from causing damage.

Would you like more ideas on garden décor? 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 email to [master.gardener@uvm.edu](mailto:master.gardener@uvm.edu) or visit their website at <http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/> for extensive information.

## Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

### A FEAST FOR THE SENSES

Twice a month, an eclectic gathering of individuals enters the Westminster Fire Station to participate in the Secrets of Healthy Aging discussion group and potluck, a program of Westminster Cares. This group of seniors, ranging in age from the sixty's to ninety's, gathers to explore the unique issues faced in the aging process, engaging in an infinite variety and depth of topics. We've been meeting since 2002; some of the original members still attend.

It is my blessing and challenge (depending on the day!) to facilitate this group of outspoken, hilarious, sincere and generous-hearted people. All of us consider our meetings a feast of the senses! Let me offer some examples.

"The things this table has heard," declares one long time attendee! Sitting around the table, some of the things heard include: raucous laughter, life experiences, opinions that challenge and intrigue, welcoming of new members, and thoughts and stories that inspire.

Continuing with the sense of sight, participants gaze upon strangers who have become friends; a diverse group of people happy to be in each others' presence. Joyful shouting greets new arrivals (even the late ones!) while we try not to ogle each other's potluck items. Exercising a different form of sight, that of deep insight, one group member has called our gatherings a place where, "minds are working and souls are shared."

Touch comes into play as the group mascot, my "senior" dog, Minnie, wanders from person to person with her own calm, sweet, greetings. Here and there someone pauses to stroke soft fur and receive cold-nosed nuzzling. When a person new to the group arrives, everyone eagerly jostles to make space - figuratively and literally - at the table, ready to be touched by whatever it is that person may bring to the gathering. Or, as one person said, "touching each other's hearts with our spoken words."

Depending on the seasons of our meetings, the smells wafting through the room are sometimes subtle, and sometimes commanding, but always adding to our sensory participation! New-mown grass, whispering rain, the first snow...and, oh! Warm bread awaiting us - baked by one of the group. Sometimes, our discussion may focus on what sensory awareness people are having; it's not unusual for our waiting lunch to play a starring role!

And last, but certainly not least, is our shared meal; a sumptuous conclusion encompassing a feast of all the senses, especially taste. Over the years participants have found great pleasure in bringing a unique selection of edibles - which of course, is not complete unless chocolate is present! The unknown accompanies us with every discussion and every meal. We never plan what we'll bring to the table, verbally or gustatorily! Somehow it always works. No one is ever required to speak before they're ready, or bring food to share - there's always more than enough of both to warm our hearts, minds and bellies.

And on top of all that, at any given meeting, "we have been known to burst into song!" Come give us a try!

Our group meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at 11:30 at the Fire Station in Westminster. No reservation required!

If you would like more information about this gathering, please call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 or email: [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net)

Cheryl Richards, MA, CT is a End of Life & Grief Counselor & Educator

### WESTMINSTER CARES, INC.

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors met on January 5, 2011. 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. Services provided: Meals on Wheels - we added a new meals on wheels volunteer from the annual appeal. 14 people are on meals. 16 rides for 6 different people by 5 volunteers for a total of 420 miles + volunteer extraordinaire Neil Metrick; Visiting - volunteers visiting three people; Nursing program - visits to 11 homes and a blood pressure clinic; Equipment loan - several pieces loaned including a lift chair, a hospital bed, wheel chair and odds and ends of walkers and commodes. We have also received donations of many pieces of equipment. Meetings attended by the director in December: Development director, Executive Comm., Publicity Comm., bookkeeper, Gazette and website management. Programs in December: 2 Secrets of Healthy Aging session, 3 Yoga classes, 24 Strength Training classes held. The Artist in Each of Us classes have been postponed until spring.

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 Ronnie Friedman at 722-3607 or by email at [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net).

Equipment needed: Westminster Cares is in need of wheel chairs and walkers with seats and brakes. We get several calls for these items. If anyone has either of these in good condition we would love to have them to loan out. Or loan them to us. Equipment available: Wheel chair, walkers, hospital bed, commodes, shower chairs, etc.

Memorial donations received for the month of January:  
2010-2011 memorial gifts

From Real and Carol Bazin in honor of Trudy Byington  
From Joyce Rodgers in honor of Neil and Carroll Metrick  
From Mary and Dan Davis in memory of Doris Bowen  
From Cyndy Prozzo in memory of Jerry Prozzo  
From Doug Sherwin and Yvette Durell in memory of Pat Jennison  
From Ann and Frank Kebbell in memory of Frank Walter  
From Robert and Marylou Smith in memory of Barbara and Walter Smith  
From Lois Barber in memory of Nancy Aldrich  
From Phyllis and Hank Anderson in memory of Frank Walter  
From "The Canoe Crew" in memory of Marlene "Chickie" Morse  
From Everett and Arlene Reed in memory of Albert French  
From Joyce and Saul Miller in memory of Frank Walter  
From Gail Murray in memory Catherine & Gloria Murray  
From Jane B. Fitzwilliam in memory of my mother  
From Lori and Dick Miller in memory of Frank Walter

Westminster Cares welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to memorialize a loved one or a friend. Send to:  
Westminster Cares, PO Box 312, Westminster, VT 05158.

## WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



### Where was this picture taken? Approximate year of the picture?

You may email your answer to the [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com) or [wminster@comcast.net](mailto:wminster@comcast.net) Phone: Babs Lynde at 802-722-9516  
The answer and the winners will be announced in the next issue.

**January Answer:** *The accident happened on River Road, and I don't know the year as yet. The Historical Society really wants to know so they can log it in.*

**January Winners:** *Artie Aiken*

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

### News from Westminster Volunteer Fire and Rescue

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Department holds their monthly meetings at 7:00 PM on the 1st Tuesday of every month and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

Next association meeting February 1st at 7:00 PM

The Prudential Committee meets twice a month on the first and third Monday after the first Tuesday at 7:00 PM

February meetings: February 7th & 21st

Number of calls in December: 43

Number of man hours spent: 24,892

Number of calls through January 27th: 34

Number of man hours spent: 11,165

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 34

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 241

Private right of ways. The Fire Department will be out at various times for the next few months exploring the numerous private rights of ways in town. The project will involve taking a fire truck to the various sites to familiarize the department personnel with the areas. The drill will take place during the evening hours at the regular Tuesday night drill time. Anyone who has a private right of way can expect to see a fire truck arrive on their property at some point for this drill.

Snow on Roofs: With the frequent storms we have been having there appears to be several roofs that need shoveling. Porches, decks, out buildings, sheds are especially vulnerable to heavy amounts of snow. And if it rains or we get a heavy wet snow, the weight can be too much and roofs and buildings start collapsing. Try to rake or shovel them off before it is too late and an expensive repair occurs or worse yet someone gets hurt. Also, keep your driveways and walkways plowed and sanded to accommodate emergency vehicles. Keep in mind that fire trucks are wider than the ordinary vehicle and need wider pathways and ambulances are usually not 4-wheel drive nor do they carry chains.

Skating Rink: The ice skating rink by the Center School has been flooded by the Fire Department volunteers and should be in pretty good shape with all the cold weather we have been having.

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting January 4th with 31 members present and 5 members excused. Currently there are 43 members of the volunteer fire department.

THANK YOU: Chief Streeter wishes to extend a special thank you to the volunteers of the Westminster Fire & Rescue Department. There was an unusually high volume of calls in December at 43 and January is at 33 as of this writing.

Memorial Donation received in January:

In memory of Frank Walter from Lee & Byron Stookey

In memory of Frank Walter from Gerald & Mary Ann Dennis

In memory of Frank Walter from Cathey Ellis

In memory of Frank Walter from Hugh & Betty Haggerty

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

We are looking for help. 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 and an engine and a rescue vehicle located in Westminster West and more help is needed to utilize that equipment during calls.

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

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

# WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

## Activities

### Scottish Country Dance

#### Classes

Every Wednesday @ 7:30pm 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 beginners' workshop is taught at 8 pm, and the regular dance goes from 8:30 to 11:00 pm. A donation at the door will benefit the Pierce's Hall Building Fund. For more information, call (802) 387-5985.

#### Senior Lunch

Every 2nd Thursday of the month. @ 12:00 pm. All Westminster seniors are invited to attend. Join us at the First Congregational Church on Route 5

#### Bellows Falls GalleryWalk

Downtown @ 5:30pm every 3rd Friday of the Month.

#### Secrets of Healthy Aging

A facilitated discussion group and potluck. The 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each

month at the Westminster Fire Station at 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information

#### Contra Dance

Every 3rd Saturday of month at 7:30 pm @ The Town Hall in Walpole, NH.

#### Gentle Yoga

Every Monday at 10:00am @ The Westminster Institute: Call Westminster Cares @722-3607 for more information.

#### Living Strong Classes

Mondays & Thursdays @The First Congregational Church in Westminster 9:00 to 10:00 am

@The Westminster West Church 6:00 to 7:00 pm.

Call Westminster Cares for more Information: 722-3607.

#### Knitting Together

Every Wednesday from 1-3 p.m. at the Saxtons River Inn. For more information or if you would like to donate yarn please contact Caroline at (802)463-4653.

## Faith Community

### The First Congregational Church of Westminster

United Church of Christ

The Rev. Sami Jones McRae, Pastor

Main Street, Route 5, P.O. Box 122, Westminster, Vermont 05158, 802-722-4148

Sunday worship at 10:00 AM

Communion is the first Sunday of each month. Sunday School is held at 10:00 am from Sept 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.

#### Important Dates

Feb. 1 - Woman's Fellowship - 12:00 noon

Feb. 4 - Potluck and movie night 6:00 (COMMUNITY INVITED)

Feb. 6 - Worship and communion 10:00 am

Feb. 13 - Worship and Sunday School 10:00 am

Feb. 13 - Deacons and Trustees meet after service

Feb. 21 - Worship 10:00 am

Feb. 21 - Standing Committee meeting 7:00 am

Feb. 27 - Worship and Sunday School 10:00 am

#### Movie Night

On Feb. 4 at 6:00pm please join us for a potluck dinner and a movie night. We will be watching South Pacific. Everyone is invited!!

#### Souper WEDNESDAY

Please join us for soup and bread every Wed from 12:00-2:00. Donations accepted but not required. Also the soup kitchen could use help putting up and taking down tables, chairs etc. and cleaning up afterwards

### The Congregational Church of Westminster West (UCC Church)

Sunday Worship is at 10:00am. Holy Communion service is held on the first Sunday of every month. Prayer service is held on Thursdays, 12:30 to 12:50pm. Child care and Sunday School are available during worship hour. Choir meets most Sundays at 9:00am. Fully Wheelchair accessible.

Open and Affirming Susie Webster-Toleno, Minister

New Church Office Hours:

Susie Webster-Toleno will be at the church Monday 1-4pm and Thursday and Friday mornings until 12:30. Feel free to drop by, but it's a good idea to call if you really want to catch her, as she sometimes steps out to visit people in their homes or the hospital. She can be reached at the Church during her office hours at 387-2334, or a message may be left for her at home 254-4142 or by email ccww@sover.net

## Meetings

Selectboard meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.

### Planning and Development

Commission meets the 2nd Monday at 7:00 pm in the Town Hall.

### Westminster Activities

#### Commission

2nd Monday of the Month at 6:00 pm at the Westminster Institute.

### Westminster School Board

1st and 3rd Tuesday at 7:00 pm at the Westminster Center School Library.

### Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

3rd Thursday at 7:00 pm at the Westminster West Congregational Church

### Westminster West Public Library

Board 2nd Monday at 7:00 pm at the Westminster West Public Library

### Development Review Board

meets the 1st Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. at the Town Hall

### Community Improvement

Program Committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:00 pm.

### Westminster Cares Board

1st Wednesday of every month, at the Westminster Fire Station at 4:00 pm.

### Westminster Institute Board

1st Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm. at the Institute.

911 Committee meets as needed.

### The Westminster Fire & Rescue

Dept holds their monthly meetings on the 1st Tuesday of every month , @ 7:00 pm and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at the Westminster Fire Station.

### Westminster Historical Society

3rd Tuesday at 7:00 pm at the Westminster Institute.

### Westminster Gazette Meeting

Thursday, February 17, 7:30 am at Westminster Cares Office.

### Westminster Recycling Committee

Every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the Westminster Fire Station



## Fun & Clubs at the Westminster After School Program

Oh the joy of snow! As adults we groan as we push the shovels and blow the driveways, but children watch with fascination as that snow-plowed mountain reaches higher and higher into the sky. Here at the Afterschool Program we have made trails, slid on, and dug into these amazing white mountains. Yesterday, we noticed that when we sat on top of the mountain in our playground, we were as high as the basketball hoop behind us! I cannot wait to remind them of this in the spring!!

We actually have a Science Exploration club taking advantage of all the snow. Other clubs going on right now are Cooking and More, Guitar (back by popular demand) and SRG. SRG is Student Run Group and is a brand new club. It was created in response to the student request to run a group of their own. In SRG the students decide what the club afternoon will hold. So far we have had Hooola Hooping and Clay play. Up and coming in this group are some requests for weight lifting. The desire to run a club has us thinking about what skills are needed to do this. It needs to be planned and organized, and the club leader needs patience and kindness. These skills are also so valuable in life. So we are looking into holding Student Leader trainings and in Organization Classes for our children. Some of our wishes for an organization class are: How to keep a backpack organized and when should you ask your parents to sign a field trip slip? We are very excited about the possibilities for this class!

If you, as an adult in our community, have some excitement you would like to share and would like to run a club in our Afterschool Program please call me, Trish Adams at 722-3241 ext118, to talk about it! We are always looking for people who want to share their amazing hobbies and skills with our children.

Last but not least, as I mentioned before, we have a couple boys who would like to share their interest in weight lifting. If anyone has some weights or weight lifting equipment that they would like to donate to the Afterschool Program, please give me a call at the number given above.



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Holistic Care for Whole People

*Have the Holidays got you Harried?*  
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Immune Support  
Apothecary

**VERMONT ACADEMY PRESENTS  
A STUDENT BLACK BOX PRODUCTION  
WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY VERMONT  
ACADEMY STUDENTS**

**FEBRUARY 10,11 & 12, 2011  
7:00 PM & 9:00 PM**

**DONATIONS GLADLY WELCOMED**

**HOROWITZ PERFORMING ARTS CENTER  
SAXTONS RIVER, VT**

**INFO: 802-869-6644 OR VISIT  
WWW.VERMONTACADEMY.ORG**

**The Deadline for  
The March 2011,  
Issue of the  
Westminster Gazette  
Thursday, February 24th  
by 5:00 pm**

**GOULD & STEARNS  
BACK IN CHESTER  
GREEN MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL  
SERIES 26TH SEASON  
CONTINUES WITH  
A VERMONT FAVORITE**

January 27, 2011, Chester, VT) Green Mountain Festival Series continues its 26th Season as it welcomes a Southern Vermont favorite duo, Gould & Stearns, to the GMUHS stage on Saturday, February 12, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.

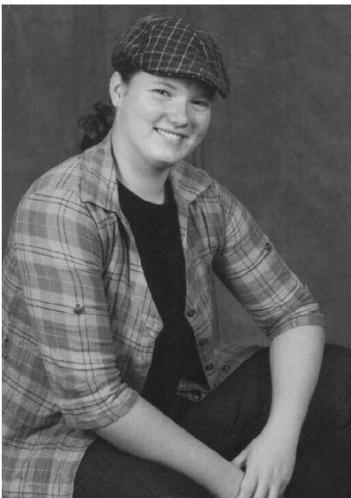
**MAKE A PLAY DATE WITH SAXTON'S RIVER MONTESSORI SCHOOL (SRMS)**

Saxton's River, VT: Saxton's River Montessori School (SRMS) will be hosting an Open House on Friday, Feb. 11th from 9:00 am to 11:00 am. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore the materials, observe a sample morning in the classroom, and meet the SRMS teachers.

SRMS, a non-profit, parent cooperative since 1991, is a community school for children from 3 to 6 years of age, which includes a full-day kindergarten. The Montessori method of teaching aims for the full development of the whole child, ultimately preparing him or her for a lifetime of joyful learning.

SRMS seeks to accommodate every family with reduced tuition slots and flexible scheduling, including half-day or full-day options. Applications are currently being accepted for the 2011-2012 school year.

The Open House is free and no registration is required. All are welcome. Come! Make a play date with SRMS! The school is located at 14 Westminster St. in Saxton's River. For more information, please call Nan at (802)869-3349 or go to [www.saxtonsrivermontessori.com](http://www.saxtonsrivermontessori.com).



**It is a pleasure to announce that Racheal Sylvester is the December Elks Student of the Month for Bellows Falls Union High School.** Racheal, a sophomore, is the daughter of Sierra Sylvester and lives in Westminster, Vermont.

Racheal is a great choice for this award. She is a dedicated student who works hard in her classes. She is attentive to detail, adds greatly to class discussions with her insights and asks good questions. She has a sincere interest in learning and turns in high-quality work.

Racheal is a pleasure to have in class and really helps other students understand events and topics through her questions and comments. Always willing to push herself, she is expressive in class and goes out of her way to help others.

Rachel also has excellent attendance and always has a great attitude in general, but particularly towards learning and school. Rachel really enjoys life, and it shows in her attitude in the hallways and in the classroom.

One thing Racheal should be commended for is her dedication to the recycling program at BFUHS. She goes through the school, often single-handedly, every week and collects the recyclables so they can be picked up and hauled off. Racheal has worked hard to keep the recycling program going and as a result has made the school and environment a better place.

Congratulations, Racheal. BFUHS is honored to have you represent us with this award.

**BIRTHDAY OPEN HOUSE  
"DOC" BUCK IS "90"  
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH  
FROM 1-4  
AT  
THE WESTMINSTER FIRE STATION**

**STOP BY AND SAY HELLO!**

**TAX TIME IS HERE AND SO ARE WE**

Annette Spaulding and Patrick Madden and Staff look forward to helping you again in this "Taxing Time"

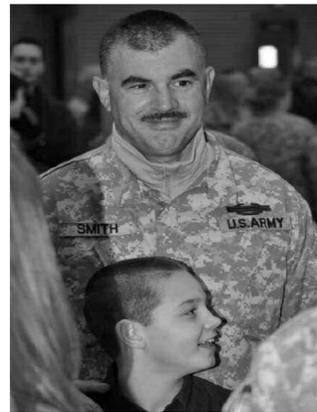
Let us take away the stress from this year's new IRS and State tax law changes

Monday - Friday 8:30am to 8:00pm  
Saturday 9:00am to 5:00pm  
Sunday by Appointment

Call now to make your appointment

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**Spaulding & Madden Tax Services  
5111 US Route 5  
Westminster Station, VT 05159**



**Welcome Home to SFC Jason**

**Smith** who recently returned from his 3rd tour of duty with the VT Army National Guard and other local soldiers.

SFC Smith received the Purple Heart on November 9, 2010, for injuries he received in Afghanistan in August when 2 of his men were K.I.A. while on a mission together. He also received the Bronze Star Medal for his leadership during that mission. SFC Smith has deployed during "3 Operations"-- Operation Desert Storm in 1991 as a US

Marine, Operation Iraqi Freedom to Ramadi, Iraq in 2005-2006 for 18 months, Operation Enduring Freedom to Afghanistan from 2007-2008 and again back to Afghanistan for this last tour from 2009-2010 with the VT Army National Guard.

**2010 Grammy Winner To Perform In Bellows Falls  
Music Legend Buckwheat Zydeco headlines Creole Dance  
Celebration, Thursday February 10th.**

Black Sheep Radio today announced it will promote a concert with music legend and 2010 Grammy Award winner, Buckwheat Zydeco. The concert will be held at the historic Bellows Falls Opera House on Thursday, February 10th and is a Mardi Gras benefit for the non-profit community station.

It's been a big year for Mr. Dural who, after several previous Grammy nominations, picked up the award for best Zydeco and Cajun artist amid a blizzard of accolades from an adoring press. The New York Times gushed that "Stanley Dural leads one of the best bands in America. A down-home, high-powered celebration, meaty and muscular with a fine-tuned sense of dynamics...propulsive rhythms and an incendiary performance."

The son of a Louisiana farmer, Stanley 'Buckwheat' Dural was born in 1947 and, while still a boy, began performing as an organist with American originals like Joe Tex and Clarence Gatemouth Brown. In 1976 he joined Clifton Chenier's band, found his love for zydeco and took up the accordion, eventually forming his own zydeco band in 1979. In the past three decades he's shared stages with U2, Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, Willie Nelson, Paul Simon, The Boston Pops, Ry Cooder and a Who's Who list of luminaries.

The show is opened by area favorites, The Lil' Orphans Cajun Express who have been instrumental in WOOL's past Mardi Gras successes. Based in Alstead, NH, and a full eight-piece, they add a dimension to the show in the age-old pull and tug between cajun music - historically from New Orleans - and zydeco music, based hours to the west of the big easy near Lafayette, Mr. Dural's home town.

Doors open at 7:00pm There will be a full Mardi Gras cash bar downstairs at the Opera House featuring Louisiana - inspired drinks.

Tickets and information are available at [www.wool.fm](http://www.wool.fm) and also at these locations: Village Square Books in Bellows Falls, Brattleboro Books in Brattleboro, Turn It Up! in Keene and Brattleboro, The Vault in Springfield, Misty Valley Books in Chester, and online at [www.bfoperahouse.com](http://www.bfoperahouse.com).

For more information contact Kristen Fehrenbach at 802-460-9665 ext 109. High Rez Photos, further biographical information at <http://www.concertefforts.com/home/roster/buckwheat-zydeco/>

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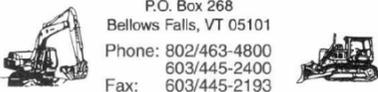
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**February Business of the Month**

Lawrence and Lober Electric, Inc. is co-owned and operated by Rick Hamm and James Lober. Our number one policy is "the customer comes first". It is our customers who keep us in business, and it is them we need to be thankful for. If it were not for our customers Lawrence and Lober Electric, Inc. would not be in business now for over fifteen years. We pride ourselves on our quality of work, our competitive rates, and our qualified electricians. There are no substitutions when it comes to quality! Small job, large job, odd job, residential, commercial, industrial, **GIVE US A CALL AND WE WILL BE THERE!** Thanks, from everyone at Lawrence and Lober Electric, Inc.  
Rick Hamm  
Co-owner

Lawrence & Lober Electric, Inc.  
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**Free Community Ice Skating Party**  
February 18 th  
from 6-9 pm  
At the Westminster School  
Sponsored by the Westminster Fire Department



Volunteers needed to help update the Westminster Town Plan in 2011.

This we must do every five years in order to be cool. You can select an element or we can choose one for you. Your committee can be old friends or new. Good to include members of established board.

You provide answers for the Town to use.  
Here are the questions!

- 1) How many policies and recommendations?
- 2) Which ones look fine as is?
- 3) Which ones do you suggest changing?
- 4) Which ones are being implemented?
- 5) How thoroughly implemented? By who?
- 6) Which ones not being implemented?
- 7) Any other suggestions for improvement?

ELEMENTS MY DEAR WATSON, ELEMENTS:  
NATURAL RESOURCES -- GROUNDWATER -- WATER SUPPLY  
SURFACE WATERS -- WETLANDS -- FISH AND WILDLIFE  
NATURAL AREAS -- SCENIC RESOURCES -- AGRICULTURE  
FOREST LANDS -- EARTH AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
CULTURAL RESOURCES -- REC AREAS -- HISTORIC SITES  
LAND USE -- ENERGY -- HOUSING -- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
FACILITIES, SERVICES & UTILITIES -- EDUCATION  
TRANSPORTATION -- COMMUNICATIONS  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES  
SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING -- SEWAGE DISPOSAL  
TOWN GOVERNMENT  
Please express your desires on the Town Planning Survey.

We need your help to define "rural character" and what is contrary to it.

This we need to do in order to have the Town Plan and the Westminster Zoning Ordinance support the goals, policies and recommendations that sustain rural character.

You provide answers for the Town to use.  
Here are the questions!

- 1) What does "rural character" mean to you?
- 2) What is in a "rural countryside"?
- 3) What is mildly contrary to rural character?
- 4) What is moderately contrary to rural character?
- 5) What is a major offense against rural character?
- 6) Any other suggestions for improvement?

THE ELEMENTS OF THE TOWN PLAN THAT CAN PROTECT RURAL CHARACTER OR CHANGE RURAL CHARACTER:

NATURAL RESOURCES -- GROUNDWATER -- WATER SUPPLY  
SURFACE WATERS -- WETLANDS -- FISH AND WILDLIFE  
NATURAL AREAS -- SCENIC RESOURCES -- AGRICULTURE  
FOREST LANDS -- EARTH AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
CULTURAL RESOURCES -- REC AREAS -- HISTORIC SITES  
LAND USE -- ENERGY -- HOUSING -- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
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TRANSPORTATION -- COMMUNICATIONS  
PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICES  
SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING -- SEWAGE DISPOSAL  
TOWN GOVERNMENT  
Please express your desires on the Town Planning Survey.

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**Westminster Gazette**

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