

Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

Vol. 12, No. 2 February 2016

WESTMINSTER STUDENTS CELEBRATE WINTER IN SONG



Westminster Schools Winter Concert "Be a Light to the World" featured 5th and 6th grade bands, 5th and 6th grade chorus, and all grades singing together to light up the night of January 21.

The School Calendar of events for February includes:

Winter Sports Monday afternoons, Feb. 1st and 8th.

Community Service Project Day for 6th Grade, Feb. 3rd.

Enrichment Day Friday, Feb. 12th.

Winter break from Feb. 15th - 19th.

TEAM sponsored skating for all, from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 26th.

Teacher In-Service - no school Monday, Feb. 29th and also no school March 1st, Town Meeting Day.



WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR WESTMINSTER?

Come to the Westminster Planning Commission's regular meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 8 at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall and talk to us for a few minutes about what you feel is important for the future of Westminster.

Tell us if you believe our town needs to change and adjust to new conditions, or how Westminster should stay as it is, or how Westminster should go back to being more like it was in the past.

We are especially interested in what our younger residents wish for Westminster. Students are welcome. The Planning Commission's regular meetings are open to any resident who thinks about what they want for Westminster.

The future of our town is important to all of us of all ages, but it is most important to those who have many years to live here.

Thanks, your Planning Commission.

LIBRARY RECEIVES PAINTING GIFTS

The Butterfield Library has been given two paintings by Julia S. Thompson in memory of Lorraine Thompson.

The pictures were given by Lorraine's children, Deanne Coulombe, Ann Shaffer and Arthur Benoit Jr. They are hanging in the vestibule at the Westminster Institute.

Please take a minute to look at them when you are in the building.

**BE PREPARED FOR TOWN MEETING!
A FULL COPY OF THE WESTMINSTER
TOWN MEETING WARNING CAN BE
FOUND ON PAGE 7**

LIST OF SCHEDULED ANNUAL MEETINGS

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

Wednesday, February 24, 2016 at 7:00 p.m.
in the BFUHS Auditorium

ANNUAL TOWN, FIRE DISTRICT #3 & SCHOOL MEETING

Saturday, February 27, 2016 at 10:00 a.m.
in the BFUHS Auditorium

Town Meeting Day

Vote on Australian ballot articles on Tuesday, March 1, 2016
from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Westminster Institute

LAST DAY TO BE ADDED TO THE CHECKLIST TO VOTE

Union High School District No. 27 Meeting
5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 17, 2016

Annual Town Meeting
5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 24, 2016

KURN HATTIN CELEBRATES MLK DAY

Each year at Kurn Hattin Homes for Children, Martin Luther King Jr. Day is used as an opportunity to learn more about Civil Rights history, and explore the important issues of justice, equality, and fairness.

The Kurn Hattin students opened Martin Luther King Jr. Day with an assembly in his honor. The program, coordinated by Social Studies Teacher, Richard Long; Music Director, Lisa Bianconi; and Principal Noah Noyes, featured joyful music and poignant essays that honored Dr. King's legacy.

Principal Noyes discussed the similarities between the Kurn Hattin's Core Values: Perseverance, Nurturance, Hope, Compassion, and Sense of Worth; and Dr. King's "Ten Outstanding Values" Courage, Non-violence, Soul Force, Justice, Community, Love, Suffering and Sacrifice, Human Dignity, Forgiveness, and Faith.

Several students read short essays about each



value, and how Dr. King had intended those values to be expressed for a better life and the common good. Afterward, the Kurn Hattin Select Choir joined the Vermont Academy students at their assembly in Saxtons River, performing songs such as "We Shall Overcome" in a joint concert.

Above, the Kurn Hattin Select Choir shares the stage with Vermont Academy students in celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

HEALTH CAREERS EXPLORATION FOR HS STUDENTS

Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center (SVAHEC) is pleased to announce that applications are open for the MedQuest 2016 program.

This program is for southern Vermont high school students currently in Grades 10, 11 and 12 who are interested in pursuing a career in healthcare. Students will explore a variety of healthcare careers through job shadowing, workshops and career exploration.

With the help of volunteer professionals in the hospital and medical community, students see health care in action and get an insider's look at rewarding career opportunities. Students will also receive CPR certification as part of the program. Students experience campus life in the company of new friends and University of Vermont College of Medicine students and experienced staff.

Interested students in Grades 10, 11, and 12 must submit an application and two references.

Application information is available at www.svahec.org, the deadline to apply is Friday, March 4th.

This is a competitive application process. The cost for the program is \$500, scholarships are available.

Please contact Beth Brothers at 802-885-2126 for more information.



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“WHY DOES THE TOWN NEED A HOUSE?” HERE’S WHY!

“Why does the Town of Westminster need a house?” is heard frequently today on the street. An article in this year’s Annual Town Meeting Warning asks the voters to raise money by taxation to purchase a house. This is why.

The Select Board is planning to use the second floor meeting room in Town Hall for meetings and hearings that attract more people than can safely be accommodated in the first floor meeting room. They have received a grant for an elevator. Since 1972 the Westminster Historical Society collection of over 10,000 artifacts has been housed and exhibited there. Where will they go? What will happen to the collection?

Purchasing the house and 1.7 acres of land located just south of the Town Hall will accomplish a number of things. It will create a location for a good size off-street parking lot, which will allow the town to sell the Post Office property across the street from Town Hall. Town records that are now in a paid storage unit, which is harmful to the paper, will be stored in the house.

It will make it possible for the historical society to move into the 1794-1805 Georgian style house, freeing the space on the second floor of town hall for meetings. Having the historical society active in the house, will preserve the house and you can be sure the society will retain the historic architecture and early features in the house.

Historic records, textiles and a hearse made in Westminster can be returned from off-site storage locations to the society’s central facility. The museum will be handicap accessible. The Sheriff will have space to complete his paperwork. Westminster Cares will have an area to store their overflow medical

equipment, which they lend to residents. The purchase will give so much more to our community than a parking lot.

Every year at the Annual Town Meeting, the taxpayers of Westminster vote to raise thousands of dollars in taxes for organizations that are not located in the Town of Westminster because they help our residents. The Westminster Historical Society has never come to the voters to ask for financial help.

Of the 3,200 men, women and children living in Westminster, 84 are dues paying members. If the Society is asked to leave their present space, all of the objects, old photographs, documents and books will have to go into storage, be given to another collecting institution or sold, as directed by the Society’s Collection Policy.

Lost or hidden from view would be the rare baby’s corset, the hand-made 18th century toddler’s shoe, the collection of muskets, the Revolutionary era drum and all the early documents, books and photographs. Also gone would be the architectural artifacts from the old Meeting House and Cumberland County Court House. The horse drawn town hearse has been exhibited there for at least 30 years.

The Westminster Historical Society is asking you to consider the added tax for the purchase of the house and land as a donation to the Westminster Historical Society.

We believe that this is not too much to ask to make life easier for so many and to preserve the valuable collection of your history. It does not amount to much and will be only for this year.

WHAT’S UP AT THE TOWN HALL: WINTER PARKING, TOWN MEETING

Snow is finally in the forecast which brings up our parking ban and plowing regulations. From November 1st until April 10 of every year, we have a parking ban during a snow storm and 24 hours after the storm. This ban is to stop people from parking in the traveled way of any town road so that the plows can do a complete job and don’t have to worry about doing damage to your vehicle.

The plowing regulation is about plowing your private driveway across the town road. This is prohibited because of the residue that this causes on the newly sanded or salted town roads.

Town meeting is in just a week or so (Saturday, Feb. 27th) and again we are asking for your participation this year. Town meeting is one of the last true liberties for citizens to voice their concerns and opinions which could make a difference in a Town’s future. Westminster prides it’s self in history, values and family. Please participate if you can and make the Town yours.

The Town Report is in its final phase of compilation and will be available at the Town Hall the week of Feb. 15th. A very big thanks goes out to Karen Astley for her efforts on the Town Report. This is a very timely, complex process with gathering and receiving information in various formats from different sources and making them compatible for the town report.

If you have read the Warning for the Articles this year, you know that the Selectboard is requesting some changes in the real estate that the Town owns. If you haven’t, the Town owns the Post Office across from the Town Hall on US Route 5 and is contemplating selling it and buying the house on the south side of the Town Hall for its parking needs, office space, and some much needed storage. This transfer of property will be voted on at Town Meeting and we surely could use your input.

As always, feel free to call or visit the Town Manager’s Office regarding concerns, issues or comments to any Town issues that affect your life.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

Westminster Cares, Inc. Board Meeting

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors met January 6th at the Westminster Institute at 4:30 PM with Vice President Pete Harrison presiding. The following board members attending: Reggie Borden, Robyn Lawrence, Sally Ryea, Barbara Sherrod, Don Dawson, Susan Harlow, Miriam Lanata, board member emeriti, Kathy Elliott and Director Donna Dawson. Connie Sanderson and Heidi Anderson were unable to attend. Westminster Cares creates opportunities for seniors and disabled adults to live with independence and dignity in the community. Your support to this care-giving organization is a way for all of us to take care of our friends.

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

Services Provided in December:

Meals On Wheels – December: WC volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 12 different people who are now on meals. In addition, two frozen entrees were delivered to eight people on Fridays for weekend meals (16 total weekend meals).

Transportation – During the month of December, four rides were provided by one volunteer who drove one Westminster resident to the mechanic and shopping.

Nursing Program – During December, our community nurse made eight home visits and two phone check-in calls on behalf of seven seniors for medication management, blood pressure checks, foot care and hospitalization follow-ups. Due to the Holiday Senior Luncheon at Kurn Hattin, there was no blood pressure clinic this month.

Meetings Attended by Staff in December – Attended one Healthy Aging potluck. Meetings held with nurse, treasurer, and board president. Also met with Gazette Board, and Programs Committee.

Programs in December– One Secrets of Healthy Aging sessions, four Gentle Yoga classes, 24 Strength Training classes, three Artist in Each of Us classes and three Chair Yoga classes.

Assistance and Referrals – December: Two clients moved to Riverview Apts. and another two clients were admitted to Thompson House Residence.

Friendly Visiting – Volunteers made four friendly visits in December. Two new community members expressed interest in making friendly visits.

Medical Equipment – In December we loaned out two pieces of equipment; three pieces of equipment were returned to us and four pieces of equipment plus a large bag of disposable supplies were donated to us. Our storage is currently full and we temporarily cannot accept new equipment due to space limitations.

Westminster Cares welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember or honor a loved one or friend.

Memorial and Honorary Donations for December 2015 through January 26th, 2016:

In honor of Artie Aiken from Kathleen Pirruccello
 In honor of my family from Susan J. Clifford
 In honor of S. J. Clifford from Patrick Clark
 In honor of Rocky from Neil Metrick
 In memory of Phyllis Norman from Scott and Wanda West
 In memory of Giles Harte Friedman from Frances Harte; and from Richard and Ronnie Friedman
 In memory of Hank Anderson from Jim and Colleen Grout; and from John and Teresa Anderson
 In memory of Milt Bellows from Pat Bellows
 In memory of Peggy Porter from Mark Porter
 In memory of Mr. & Mrs. Harold Shattuck from Barbara Greenough
 In memory of Mr. Almon Flagg from Ken Flagg
 In memory of Rosalie Coven from Judy and Tony Coven
 In memory of Red Smith from Barb and Russ Hodgkins
 In memory of Frederick J. Robling, Jr. from Fred and Deb Robling, III
 In memory of Margret O. Palmer from Carleton Palmer
 In memory of Patricia Shea from Karl Behnke
 In memory of Phillip Wilson from Linda Wilson
 In memory of George Shuster from Anonymous
 In memory of Jamie C. Latham from Alison Latham
 In memory of Priscilla Wilson from Phyllis Anderson
 In memory of Larry Wunderle from Phyllis Anderson
 In memory of Walter Jennison from:
 Doug Sherwin & Yvette Durell
 David Schumann
 Mary Brandt
 Miriam and Larry Lanata
 In memory of Dr. Ralph Buck from:
 Kandace and Spaulding Bisbee
 Mary Brandt
 Regena Cote
 Susan J. Harlow
 Ruth Grandy
 Barb Greenough
 Anonymous
 Phyllis Anderson
 Pete and Judy Harrison

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. 1 at 7 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 December: 29

Number of calls through January 25th: 18

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 18

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 208

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting January 5th with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 22 members present and 10 members excused. Currently there are 41 members of the volunteer fire department.

Chimney Fires: Because of the usually high number of chimney fires this winter, we thought it would make sense to mention some prevention techniques. Take down your stove once a month or so to clean out the buildup of soot. While the pipe is down and during daylight hours, take a mirror that can fit into the hole where the pipe goes and look up into the flue. It should be wide open and clear of any buildup. If not, get it professionally cleaned or do it yourself if you have the equipment and the expertise. Many fires where houses are lost or severely damaged by a fire start out as chimney fires and work their way into the partitions. The fire department is always available for information and inspections.

Caution: Please remove any ice or snow from your roofs. There are two reasons. One, the weight of the snow and ice could cause your roof to collapse and two, when it slides off the roof it could do damage or hurt someone includ-

ing a pet.

Ice Skating Rink: The ice skating rink on the East Side of the Westminster Central School is ready for use. Some of the volunteers of the Westminster Fire Department have been busy flooding the area. The rink is open to the public.

Vents: If we ever get an appreciable amount of snow, check vents for heating appliances to be sure they are free from ice and snow. A plugged vent can cause a fire.

Scholarship Fund: The members of the association decided they would like to repeat the setting up of a scholarship fund to be given to a Westminster resident who graduates from the Bellows Falls Union High School. The amount of the scholarship is to be determined. To qualify, the student must be pursuing a career in some area of emergency work. Check with any member of the department for particulars.

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

Donations received for January: Kathleen Lockerby, Bill and Joan Smidutz, Vt. Country Store, Josh Perry

Donations Given: To Bellows Falls Senior Center in memory of Dr. Ralph Buck; To Westminster Cares in memory of Walt Jennison

We are always looking for new members: Anyone interested in volunteering their time to help the community in a time of need, please contact Chief Cole Streeter at 722-3178 or stop by the Firehouse any Sunday morning and pick up an application. We would like to have additional volunteers from the Westminster West area. There is a Fire House, an engine and a rescue vehicle located in Westminster West and more help is always welcome to utilize that equipment during calls.

Check us out on our web-site www.westminsterfireandrescue.org.

Plant a Butterfly Garden

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Now that the holidays are over and the flower catalogs are arriving, I start to dream about a butterfly garden. Each spring I plant flowers with the pollinators in mind. They are butterflies, moths and hummingbirds but also beetles, flies, bees and bats in some areas.

The first step in creating such a garden is to choose the correct plants for our location. We also need to think about plants that flower at different times providing nectar and pollen sources throughout the growing season. I am apt to scatter my flowers when I should be planting them in clumps to attract the pollinators.

Pollinators are nearly as important as sunlight, soil and water because two thirds of the food crops we rely on require insect pollination. We can help the pollinators by planting native flowering plants that will attract a variety of pollinators.

A newer class of insecticides known as neonicotinoids is hitting pollinating insects pretty hard.

These toxic chemicals appear to be killing the pollinators that are essential to the plants grown on farms and gardens. The herbicide glyphosate, usually called roundup, is used to eradicate plants near corn fields where milkweed grows which is the only food source for monarch butterflies. Currently, glyphosate is the most used herbicide in our country and is the first choice of farmers and second most applied herbicide in gardens. If a pesticide doesn't kill directly, there could be long term chronic effects.

When I think of butterflies, I think of monarchs. Monarchs that are so familiar to us have been dwindling the last few years. Other reasons in addition to insecticides are bad weather on their migrations and habitat loss in overwintering sites in Mexico.

There are two populations of monarchs in North America. The western population overwinters along the California coast while our monarchs, the eastern population, overwinters in Mexico. In the spring, the migration starts in March. They breed as they fly north. In May and June, they arrive in the northern United States and Canada. Two and three additional generations are produced before heading south again. Beginning in mid-August and continuing into the fall, millions of monarchs migrate south to spend the winter in high elevation oyamel fir forests in central Mexico. Like bird migrations, I find the monarch migration fascinating. How do they do it? How do they know where to go?

Many of us, especially school kids, are into watching caterpillars transform into butterflies with the monarch being the one we recognize. In the early fall, we turn over the milkweed leaves, looking for eggs or



caterpillars on the underside. The female monarch lays an average of 700 eggs over a two to five week period after mating.

The eggs are laid on a milkweed because the caterpillar (larva) only eats milkweed. The eggs are very small, oval, light yellow and ridged and hard to see. After about four days, the eggs hatch into tiny translucent black-headed larvae (caterpillars) which then eat their shells. The caterpillars start feeding on the milkweed.

The caterpillars (larvae) grow and grow, shedding their skins five times over a period of nine to 15 days. Then the caterpillars crawl away from the milkweed and find a stable, sheltered spot to attach and hang upside down, like a J. As the skin splits, a green chrysalis (pupa) with a row of gold near the top is revealed. Changes take place in the chrysalis for 10 to 15 days. When the chrysalis starts turning black, the butterfly is about to hatch. After hatching, it can take up to 20 minutes for the wings to expand but several hours before the wings are dry enough for flight.

Can you tell the difference between male and female? The male has a black spot on each hind wing vein and the female doesn't. The male has thin wing veins while the female has thick wing veins. The males have "claspers" on the end of the abdomen and the females do not. I did not know about the claspers so I need to check this out.

There have been many articles this past fall about milkweed with over 100 species of milkweed that are native to North America. To start a milkweed bed, plant the seeds from the pods. Happy gardening and may the monarchs find your garden a welcoming location filled with food and egg laying sites.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

AVOIDING MEDICATION ERRORS AT HOME

By Isabelle Abramson RN

As our population ages and life expectancy grows, more seniors (and sometimes younger people) are finding themselves with lists of medications so long that they are not able to recall which medications they are taking or what each pill does. Frequently, when going over a patient's medication regimen, we will find drugs prescribed for an acute problem that are still being taken after the problem has resolved. Likewise, we can find medications that are either not helping a certain problem or causing side effects that are worse than the original problem and should be stopped.

One of the most important acts you can do as a wise steward of your health-care is to find a doctor who respects your right to understand the care you are receiving. Together you can make sure that the medications you are prescribed are necessary and helpful, and that the benefits of taking that medication outweigh the side effects.

Once you and your doctor feel confident that the medications you are being prescribed are right for you, there is the matter of taking the medicine. According to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI), approximately 30 percent of hospitalizations for older adults are related to medication problems. By going through your medications with your doctor and getting rid of any medications that are unnecessary you reduce your chance of unforeseen problems related to taking medications in general.

The next task is to find a way to ensure that you are taking the ones you do need correctly. One simple solution that is becoming more widely available is pill packs. Pill packs are small, disposable containers that are packaged by the pharmacy with all of the meds that you need in individual doses for the month. As with any human endeavor it is important to double check that the pill pack is loaded correctly when you pick it up and be sure that the pharmacist is aware of any medication changes.

The Putney Pharmacy at the Putney General Store, (387-4692), has recently begun to offer pill packs. The service is currently free, but as it becomes more popular it will cost not more than \$10 per month, according to Jim Heal, Putney's pharmacist. Greater Falls Pharmacy in Bellows Falls, (460-2634), also offers a variety of pill packaging options. If you use a different pharmacy it is likely that they offer this service as well. It's worth looking into if you are taking more than two or three medications or have trouble remembering to take medications as prescribed.

Isabelle Abramson is Westminster's community nurse.

BARRETT THANKS TOWN, RESIGNING

To the Westminster Selectboard and the Voters of Westminster;

I have gotten to a time in my life that I have some other priorities I would like to address. I will resign from the Selectboard on December 22nd, 2015.

I want to thank all the people who have supported me over these nearly 16 years. I hope my conservative values have had a positive affect.

*Sincerely,
Peter E. Barrett*

HEALTHY AGING: INTERESTED IN CHI GONG?

Come try a free, three-session introduction to the gentle Chinese exercises of chi gong with Westminster Cares. The sessions will be offered this spring and are especially designed for adults 55 and older.

Chi gong is a family of gentle, fluid exercises that the Chinese have practiced for more than 2,000 years. Tai chi is a sub-set of chi gong. Dozens of studies have shown that practicing chi gong can improve relaxation, physical strength, mobility, flexibility, bone density, and sense of balance.

In one study, seniors who practiced a form of chi gong regularly were able to reduce their risk of falling by 47%. Chi gong can be practiced successfully by virtually everyone, even those with limited mobility and for whom yoga and other forms of exercise are too demanding.

The class will be led by Bennett Daviss, a certified chi gong instructor and a student in the Long River Tai Chi School in Brattleboro.

If you're interested, contact Donna Dawson @Westminster Cares at 722-3601 or wecares@sover.net. We need a minimum number to hold the sessions.

ARTISTS & CRAFTSPEOPLE NEEDED!

On Sunday, May 15, an event celebrating creativity in Westminster will take place at the Westminster Institute from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Colleen Grout and Kim Grall are organizing the event and are inviting all artists and craftspeople living in Westminster to participate.

The purpose of the event is to showcase the diversity and range of creativity in our town with the intent to sell and spread awareness of the artists who live here.

There will be a Café and music as well as individual displays of work.

All levels of creativity are welcome. There is no fee to participate, but we are asking that 10% of sales be donated to Westminster Cares. If you are interested you can e-mail Kim at: kimcon@sover.net or Colleen at: groutave@gmail.com by April 15.

WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



What and where was this building?

E-mail your answer to westminsternews@gmail.com.

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

INSTITUTE BOARD MEETING FEB. 9

The Westminster Institute Board Meeting will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 9 at 6:30 p.m. at the Institute.

PROPERTY TAXES, DOG LICENSES DUE

Final payment of property taxes due by Wednesday, Feb. 10. Also Dog Licenses are now available. All dogs must be registered by April 1.

GAZETTE SEEKS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Westminster Gazette Board is seeking a few new members, and in particular a board secretary would be greatly appreciated. Board membership requires attending a one hour meeting each month, and some time spent on Gazette issues at home.

Also, if anyone would like to donate toward Gazette expenses, all contributions are greatly appreciated. They can be sent in care of the Town Offices.

BF ROTARY SPAGHETTI DINNER

On Saturday, Feb. 13, the Bellows Falls Rotary Club's Annual Spaghetti Dinner is back. Dinner will be served from 5:30 to 7 p.m. at the Bellows Falls Moose Club at 59 Westminster Street. As always, the food is freshly prepared and served by members.

On the menu is homemade spaghetti sauce and homemade meatballs, freshly made crisp salad with a balsamic maple dressing, bread, dessert and beverage. There is vegetarian sauce also available.

All proceeds support Rotary sponsored community projects, scholarships for graduating students, sponsorship of foreign exchange students and specific local programs such as Our Place, Parks Place and numerous other organizations.

Adults are \$8, Children \$5 and kids under 5 are free. Takeout is also available. Tickets will be sold at the door or you may ask a Rotarian.

3SQUARESVT

A PROGRAM FOR ALL SEASONS

Winter is a time when many households living with lower incomes are particularly hard-pressed to meet their food expenses, given the added burden of heating costs. Some cut down on the food they consume, or buy cheaper, less nutritious food as a means to cope with these added expenses. But good nutrition is essential for good health in all seasons. Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) wants Windham and Windsor county residents to know that many struggling households can get help with their food costs through 3SquaresVT.

3SquaresVT is Vermont's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, designed to help households without sufficient resources meet their need for healthy, nutritious food. The program helps eligible households stretch their food budgets and put three square meals a day on the table, at the same time freeing up money for other basic living expenses.

Whether they are experiencing a short-term financial crisis or longer-term challenges, 3SquaresVT helps seniors, families, and individuals with lower incomes make ends meet. Monthly benefits come on a debit card accepted at many grocery stores and farmers' markets, making it easy for households to use them.

SEVCA's Family Services staff are available to assist households to apply for 3SquaresVT. Many Vermonters are eligible for the program and don't know it, so SEVCA encourages any family having trouble meeting their food expenses to contact them. Eligibility and the amount of assistance provided is based primarily on household income, expenses, and household size. The program is open to individuals, families with or without children, seniors, and people with disabilities. There are special rules that make it easier for households that include a senior or a person with a disability to receive benefits.

3SquaresVT also helps the local economy by bringing federal dollars to the state and encouraging local spending, helping to support businesses and farmers in our communities. Call SEVCA at (800) 464-9951 for an appointment to get help filling out an application.

WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

Activities

Scottish Country Dance Classes

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

Putney Contra Dance

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

Senior Potluck Lunch

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

Bellows Falls Gallery Walk

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

Secrets of Healthy Aging

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

Contra Dance

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

Gentle Yoga

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

Living Strong Classes

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

Knitting Together

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

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

Westminster West Public Library Trustees

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

Bellows Falls Farmers' Market

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

Faith Community

The First Congregational Church of Westminster

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

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

The Congregational Church of Westminster West

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

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

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

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/.

Walpole Unitarian Church

Services are presented by Rev. Lisa Mobayed M.Div. Worship services are at 10 a.m. Children's Religious Education begins at 10 a.m. with the adults and moves to Hastings House at 10:15. Refreshments and conversation are held after the service with the children included. www.walpoleunitarian.org.

Meetings

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

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

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

Westminster School Board

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

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

3rd Thursday at 7 p.m. at the Westminster West Congregational Church.

Westminster West Public Library Board

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

Development Review Board

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

Community Improvement Program Committee

meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6 p.m.

Westminster Cares Board - No Summer Meetings

1st Wednesday of every month, at the Westminster Institute at 4:30 p.m.

911 Committee as needed.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Dept.

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

Westminster Historical Society

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

Westminster Gazette Meeting

Monday, February 22 at 4:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute



**THE GAZETTE
GRATEFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES
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Westminster School District
Town of Westminster
Westminster Activities Commission
Sojourns Community Health Clinic
Westminster Cares
Westminster Fire & Rescue
Association
Burtco Inc.
The Dascomb Trust

WESTMINSTER CARES – HELP US HIT OUR GOAL

Westminster Cares is so grateful to all of you who've already sent in contributions to our Annual Appeal. We're nearly there, but still need \$2,500 to hit our Community Challenge Goal. We have until the end of February to reach it.

If we do, the Thomas Thompson Trust will donate an additional \$12,000 over the next three years to support our Community Nursing Program. Please consider making a donation if you haven't yet done so. Every gift counts and moves us one step closer to our goal.

PLAN AHEAD TO HOST A CHILD THIS SUMMER

The Fresh Air Fund, an independent, not-for-profit agency, has provided free summer experiences to more than 1.8 million New York City children from low-income communities since 1877. Fresh Air children are boys and girls, from seven to 18 years old, who live in New York City. Children who are reinvited by host families may continue with The Fresh Air Fund through age 18 and can enjoy extended trips.

For more information on hosting a Fresh Air child this summer, contact Tom Kosiba at 802-282-9933 or visit The Fresh Air Fund online at www.freshair.org.

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE
Editor: Robert Smith
Board of Directors:
Charmion Handy - Chairwoman
Donna Dawson
Alma Beals
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Tuesday, March 1**
**To Contact the
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WARNING FOR THE TOWN OF WESTMINSTER ANNUAL MEETING

WARNING FOR THE 2016 ANNUAL MEETING: TOWN OF WESTMINSTER, TOWN FIRE DISTRICT NUMBER 3 AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT

The legal voters of the Town of Westminster, the Town Fire District Number 3, and the Westminster Town School District, are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium in Westminster, Vermont on Saturday February 27, 2016 at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00A.M.) to take action on the Articles following Article 1.

The meeting will be recessed to the Westminster Institute, East Parish, Westminster, Vermont to meet at eight o'clock in the forenoon (8:00 A.M.) on Tuesday, March 1, 2016 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, 2016 to consider any remaining articles, if necessary.

Article 1: To choose all Town Officers, Town Fire District Number 3 Officers and Town School District Officers by Australian ballot, Tuesday, March 1, 2016 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 Officers and to take action thereupon.

Article 3: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$130,000 for the Town Highway Equipment Reserve Fund.

Article 4: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will authorize the Selectboard to purchase a 2016 grader for the sum of \$360,000 reduced by trade-in of existing grader, with balance to be financed through a 5 year promissory note in an amount not to exceed \$175,000.

Article 5: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$15,000 for the Bridge Rehabilitation Reserve Fund.

Article 6: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$5,000 for the monthly publication of the Westminster Gazette.

Article 7: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate the sum of \$9,534 for the support of Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies to provide workforce and economic coordination services to residents of the Town.

Article 8: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will vote to purchase a parcel of land (1.7 +/- acres) and dwelling located adjacent to the Town Hall on the south side off US Route 5 in Westminster for the purpose of providing additional parking, storage and office space for the sum of \$224,200, to be financed through a 5 year promissory note.

Article 9: Article 9 shall not be considered unless Article 8 (above) is approved.

To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will authorize the Selectboard to sell the parcel of land and Post Office building located on Route 5 in the Westminster Village for a price to be determined in the discretion of the Selectboard.

Article 10: To see if the voters of the Town of Westminster will raise and appropriate money to pay the indebtedness of the Town, repair highways and pay general expenses of the Town for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017, and if so, how much?

Article 11: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town of Westminster meeting.

Article 12: To hear the reports of the Town Fire District Number 3 and to take action thereupon.

Article 13: To see whether 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 the receipt of any State or Federal Funds.

Article 14: To see whether 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, 2016 and ending June 30, 2017, and if so, how much?

Article 15: To transact any other business proper to be brought before the Town Fire District Number 3 meeting.

Article 16: To hear the reports of the Westminster Town School District Officers for the last year and to take action thereon.

Article 17: Shall the Westminster Town School District 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 18: Shall the Westminster Town School District vote to pay its District Officers compensation in the amounts of: Board Chair\$1,100.00; Board Members- \$800.00; Clerk-\$125.00 and; Treasurer\$1,000.00.

Article 19: Shall the Westminster Town School District apply the sum of twenty thousand (\$20,000.00) from the fiscal year 2015 fund balance to create a reserve fund to be used for capital improvements at the Westminster Schools and authorize the board to expend said funds.

Article 20: Shall the Westminster

Town School District apply the sum of eighty thousand dollars (\$80,000.00) from the fiscal year 2015 fund balance to create a reserve fund to offset expenditures in fiscal year 2018 in order to reduce taxes.

Article 21: Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District approve the school board to expend five million, thirty three thousand, five hundred three dollars (\$5,033,503.00), which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of sixteen thousand, ninety nine dollars and eight cents (\$16,099.08) per equalized pupil. This projected spending per equalized pupil is 1.33% higher than spending for the current year.

Article 22: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town School District Meeting.

WESTMINSTER SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elise Manning-Sterling, Chair; Rick Gordon, Clerk; David Ramos; Ian Sbardellati and David Major

TOWN OF WESTMINSTER SELECTBOARD

Sheldon Beebe, Chair; Paul Banik, Vice Chair; Craig Allen, Clerk; Nancy Dalzell and Toby Young

WESTMINSTER FIRE DISTRICT N# 3 PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE

Christopher J. Hackett; Robert J. Haas; Daniel Green

Note: Approved Articles of Warning will appear on the Town Website and in the Town Report. As authorized by 24 VSA § 1682, copies of the July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016 Financial Audits are now available at the Westminster Town Hall, Westminster West Library, Butterfield Library, and on the Westminster website at www.westminstervt.org

Copies of the Town Report will be available on or before February 12, 2016 at the Westminster Town Hall, Westminster West and/or Westminster Center Schools, Butterfield and/or Westminster West Libraries and the Health Center in Bellows Falls.

The Town will 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.

BELLOWS FALLS ROTARY CLUB



For more information about Rotary, contact Alma Beals at almabeals@gmail.com or 722-3355

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February Business of the Month: The Chimney Doctor

We are pleased to be in our 30th year of service to southern Vermont and New Hampshire.

My son Luke and I are both CSIA certified and members of The National and New England Chimney Sweeps Associations. We all see too many news reports of wood heat related fires. Many folks service their own wood heating systems and do a great job of it!

However, for those of you that need help, we're here to provide chimney cleaning services and to check the integrity of your system and its code compliance. We wish you a safe and warm heating season.

Ian and Luke Conway

February Business of the Month: Lawrence & Lober Electric

Lawrence & 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 & Lober Electric, Inc. would not be in business now for over 15 years. We pride ourselves on our quality of work, our competitive rates and our qualified electricians. There are no substitutes when it comes to quality!

Small job, large job, odd job, residential, commercial, industrial, give us a call and we will be there.

Thank you from everyone at Lawrence & Lober Electric, Inc.

Rick Hamm and James Lober, Co-owners

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COMPASS SCHOOL PILOTS LOCAL SOFTWARE LEARNING TOOL

SchoolHack Solutions of Bristol is pleased to partner with Compass School and a number of other schools in Vermont in the launch of its LiFT education technology.

"We are excited to work with Compass School in offering the LiFT platform to their students and teachers," said David Lipkin, CEO of SchoolHack Solutions. "LiFT helps schools not only develop personalized learning plans that truly empower and engage students but also offer a way for teachers to assess the learning proficiencies students are able to demonstrate".

"We've been doing proficiency based 'paper and folder' portfolios for years", said Rick Gordon, Director of Compass School. "This is the perfect tech tool to help students take ownership for their proficiency tracking and reflecting on their learning. We were able to customize the program for our school needs so that it is easy for students to organize thinking about their learning and growth. Our students seem to love using LiFT. As one said, 'I finally get why proficiencies matter.'"

SchoolHack Solutions is working together with Green River of Brattleboro in

the development of the LiFT platform. "This is a perfect match for SchoolHack" said Lipkin. "Green River understands the value of the personalized learning experience, and sees their technology as the way to create diverse, personalized educational opportunities. We couldn't be more excited about working with Green River as we build and add features to our LiFT platform."

Compass is one of a number of schools and organizations around the state who are using LiFT to inform students and teachers about student engagement and interests, while helping the school develop relevant and student-centered curriculum options.

LiFT is an easy to use, mobile software platform where students track their progress on their own goals while rating their interest in activities both inside and outside the classroom.

LiFT's unique proficiency assessment tool allows teachers to track and assess skills related to this learning and to help students develop their own learning plans, goals, and career possibilities.

Our Monthly Community Newspaper February 2016 Vol. 12, No. 2

Westminster Gazette

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