

# Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158 Our Community Newspaper @ <http://westminster.govoffice.com>

Vol. 6, No. 1 January 2010

## WESTMINSTER CARES CELEBRATED THE LIVES OF THOSE IN TOWN WHO ARE 90 YEARS OF AGE AND OLDER by Susan Harlow



**Frank Walter, Kathleen Campbell, Millie Ward, Artie Aiken, Evelyln Rhoades and Everett Reed**

Westminster Cares celebrated the lives of those in town who are 90 years of age and older, during its annual meeting Dec. 5. Pete Harrison, Westminster Cares' president, spoke about each guest and gave a brief biography. "The 90-year-old celebration started last year as just a new idea and it was so popular we decided to do it again," Harrison said. Those who were honored this year, with their dates of birth:

- |                                  |                                 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Dick Morse - March 30, 1913      | Artie Aiken - June 10, 1913     |
| Doris Ferguson - June 22, 1913   | Everett Garland - Sept. 5, 1914 |
| Dorritt Merton - April 9, 1915   | Louise Morse - May 20, 1915     |
| Margaret DiFredo - Jan. 12, 1916 | Everett Reed - July 20, 1916    |
| Frank Walter - Jan. 11, 1917     | Helen Aiken - March 22, 1917    |
| Rose Stoodley - May 2, 1918      | Millie Ward - Sept. 3, 1918     |
| Ralph Atkins - Oct. 12, 1918     |                                 |
| Kathleen Campbell                |                                 |
| Evelyln Rhoades                  |                                 |

Westminster Cares also elected Don Dawson, Susan Harlow and Arnie Knowlton to its board of directors. Retiring from the board are Amie Walter and Jeanette Staley. The board of directors recognized, with its appreciation, Ronnie Friedman, the organization's executive director for the last nine years. "You're our brains, our brawn and the wind beneath our wings," Harrison told Friedman, and presented her with a box of Burdick's chocolates. Through its volunteers, Westminster Cares helps the town's seniors and disabled adults stay health and independent. It provides home visits; Meals on Wheels; senior lunches; transportation to medical appointments, the grocery store and other places; visits and help with home heating. Other programs include Secrets of Healthy Aging, Living Strong, yoga classes and localvore lunches. The volunteer organization began in 1988. For more information, go to its website at <http://www.westminstercares.org>. Or call 722-3607.



**Artie Aiken and Millie Ward**



**Frank Walter and Amie Walter**

### Volunteers Wanted for Reception Center

Volunteers are being sought to staff the Reception Center at Bellows Falls Union High School in Westminster which has been operated by area emergency management personnel and local citizens for many years. This Reception Center would be used to provide assistance to individuals during an emergency including registration, reuniting parents with children who have been evacuated from area

schools and child care facilities, as well as placement in congregate care facilities if necessary. Jobs range from Section Chief to Greeter, so all skill sets are welcome. Depending on position, training takes anywhere from a few hours to one day. Volunteers must be available for occasional drills and are paid for their time.

**To volunteer**, contact Doreen Woodward at (802) 722-4091 or by e-mail at [westmnc@comcast.net](mailto:westmnc@comcast.net).

### The Westminster Selectboard is accepting nominations for Westminster Citizen of the Year.

Former recipients were:

- |      |                        |
|------|------------------------|
| 2007 | Malcolm "Sam" Streeter |
| 2008 | Henry "Hank" Anderson  |
| 2009 | Walter Jennison        |

Nominations will be accepted until January 26, 2010. Please mail Town of Westminster c/o Sonia Alexander, P.O. Box 147, Westminster, VT 05158.

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Bellows Falls to Brattleboro											Brattleboro to Bellows Falls													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11			
5:45	6:00	6:02	—	6:07	6:09	6:12	6:25	6:27	6:37	6:44	7:00	7:00	7:02	7:12	7:17	7:26	7:28	7:40	7:44	7:47	7:50	8:00	—	
—	8:00	8:02	—	8:07	8:09	8:12	8:25	8:27	8:37	8:44	9:00	9:00	9:02	9:12	9:17	9:26	9:28	9:40	9:44	9:47	9:50	10:00	10:15	
—	1:55	2:30	2:32	2:35	2:37	2:39	2:42	2:45	2:47	2:49	2:51	2:54	3:10	3:10	—	3:22	3:27	3:36	3:38	3:50	3:54	3:57	4:30	—
—	4:30	4:42	4:45	4:47	4:49	4:52	4:55	4:57	4:59	5:01	5:04	5:10	—	5:10	5:12	5:22	5:27	5:36	5:38	5:50	5:54	5:57	6:05	6:20

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## WESTMINSTER CARES, INC.

by Ronnie Friedman

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors met on December 4, 2009. 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 elder.

Westminster Cares held their Annual Meeting on Saturday, December 5, 2009, in the Westminster Fire Station. The program began with an election of officers and introduction of three new Board Members who were voted in. Ten residents who are at least 90 years old were introduced and honored by those in attendance. Karen Walter provided a brief up-date on the Elder Housing Project. Refreshments were served.

Westminster Cares began their Annual Fundraising Appeal this month. Letters were sent to many Westminster residents and second home owners. If you are able to donate your generosity will be greatly appreciated and will enable us to continue providing many needed services including delivering Meals-On-Wheels, Living Strong classes, providing rides for medical appointments, visiting with homebound residents, various other activities and workshops.

Services Provided Include: Meals on Wheels to 14 people; 10 rides for 5 different people by 4 volunteers for a total of 150 miles; 2 pieces of medical equipment loaned; visiting – volunteers visited three people. Meetings attended in November: Bookkeeper, Gazette, Quilt Show; the Development Director, Windham Co. Cares; the Art Program. Programs in November: 2 Secrets of Healthy Aging sessions, 5 Yoga classes, 4 Artist in Each of Us classes, 24 Living Strong classes were held. Anyone interested in learning more about Westminster Cares, working on a committee, making a contribution or attending a workshop may contact Ronnie Friedman at 722-3607 or by mail at wecares@sover.net.

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 Cares has received the following memorial gifts during December:

From Phyllis and Hank Anderson in honor of their eldest daughter, Sue Lyn  
 From Pauline Kissell in memory of her loved ones  
 Anonymous in memory of Ellen Crowell  
 From Allison and David Deen in memory of Barbara and Carleton Greenwood  
 From Mark and Peggy Porter in memory of Ralph and Kitty Lawrence  
 From Karen and Frank Walter in memory of Fran Streeter  
 From Barbara Greenough in memory of Alice and Harold Shattuck  
 From Jane and Phil Savoy in honor of and in memory of Fran Streeter  
 From Dirk and Peggy Jager in memory of Rhoena Longley  
 From John and Suzanne Stoodley in memory of Donat A. Perrault  
 From Floyd Parkhurst in memory of Jeanne Parkhurst  
 From Kirk Hemelberg in memory of Suzanne Jovin and Raymond Lemme  
 From Ruth Grandy in memory of Jim Grandy  
 From Evelyn Rhoades in memory of the 2 Hollises  
 From Richard Michelman in memory of Charlie Edson  
 From Fred and Mary Robling in memory of Jane Wilcox  
 From Paul and Lillian Chaffee in memory of Harold Chaffee  
 From Katherine Blake in memory of John Blake  
 From Richard and Karen Stratton, Jr. in memory of Caro and Joanne Duval  
 From Don and Janet Broad in memory of Chris Kurkel  
 From Cyndy Fine in memory of her Dad  
 From Pete and Judy Harrison in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Victor Harrison  
 From Robert Barton in memory of Jeff Walsh  
 From Barbara Dyer in memory of Ken Dyer  
 From Kathryn Bowry in honor of Don and Jane Bowry  
 From Helen Aiken in memory of Maynard Aiken  
 From Pat Desai in honor of Peggy and Mark Porter  
 From Joanne Morse in honor of Dick Morse  
 From Edward Hinds in memory of George B. and Gladys M. Hinds  
 From Tonia and Lester White in memory of Joanne Duval, Caro Duval and Ginny Farnsworth  
 From Robert and Marylou Smith in memory of Walter and Barbara Smith  
 From Betty and Hugh Haggerty in honor of Karen Walter on a milestone birthday  
 From the Walsh Family in memory of Jeff Walsh  
 From Dan and Mary Davis in memory of Doris Bowen  
 From Bill and Joan Smidutz in memory of Bill Holton  
 From George and Georgiana Cheney in memory of Kay and Robie Palmer  
 From Gert Golec in memory of Bernard Golec

## School Board Blog

In an effort to increase transparency and communication with the public about the school board, Westminster Board member Rick Gordon has been keeping a blog at <http://www.rickwestboard.blogspot.com/>. Please keep track of this site for information and reflections on the workings of the school board.



## Barbara Ternes, Parks Place Community Resource Center Director, was recently awarded the 2009 Agency of Human Services Secretary's Community Award for the Springfield District.

Recipients embody the Agency's values of respect, integrity and commitment to excellence in their work. Lynn Boyle, Springfield District Field Director, complimented Barbara and the work of Parks Place to "...forge connections among programs and the natural supports in the community. She [Barbara] is a gracious, caring and intelligent leader."

Parks Place is a welcoming resource center located in Bellows Falls. Home to health, education, employment, case management and counseling programs, it provides a convenient and safe location for community members to make lasting, positive changes in their lives. For more information about Parks Place contact Robyn Weisel at 802-463-9927 Ext 104.



## 18 Kurn Hattin Students Selected for District Music Festival by Kim Fine

Eighteen Kurn Hattin students auditioned and were selected to perform in the District VI Music Festival held at Bellows Falls Union High School, Bellows Falls, Vermont last month. This concert, endorsed by Vermont Music Educators Association, involved students selected from schools throughout Southeastern Vermont. The Kurn Hattin students performed as part of the 100 member middle school chorus under the direction of Jessica Allen from Middlebury College. Lisa Bianconi directs the Kurn Hattin music program. Kurn Hattin Homes is a charitable year-round home and school for in-need and at-risk children, ages 6-15, from throughout the Northeast.

## Stone Church Arts invites Submissions for...

### Photography Juried Invitational Show Chapel Gallery, Bellows Falls

Jan 15 (Opening) - Feb 28 Attention all photographers in the mid-river valley of New Hampshire and Vermont!

Stone Church Arts is inviting you to submit photographs to our first ever Juried Invitational Show in the Chapel Gallery at Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St., Bellows Falls, VT.

Please submit image(s) in person at Immanuel Church along with a short description of each piece, a brief biography, and a fee of \$10 per piece submitted. Up to 25 pieces will be chosen for the show.

There are prizes for photographers whose work is chosen in the following categories: the one piece chosen "Best in Show" receives a \$100 gift certificate and "Runner Ups" receive \$25 gift certificates to Monadnock Imaging in Keene, New Hampshire. Please submit your work by January 8, 2010.



## KURN HATTIN HOMES CELEBRATES THE HOLIDAYS

by Kim Fine

Westminster, Vermont – It is the most wonderful time of the year. The holiday season starts with the donation of Christmas trees from Christmas Trees of Vermont in Springfield. The children also write letters to Santa and mail them at a special mailbox for the North Pole. Many of the letters do not have a request for an actual toy or gift. Instead, the children ask questions they're wondering about such as, "Does Rudolph shine his nose or is it really a light?" and "How do I keep my best friend?." The entire campus is lit up with decorations and heightened enthusiasm.

A 70-year tradition, the youngest boys and girls celebrate Christmas with the students at Vermont Academy. Vermont Academy students raise money for gifts for their 'little brothers and sisters and celebrate over a festive meal on their campus. Landmark College also came caroling and stayed for dinner.

While singing carols, Santa, Mrs. Claus and their helpers go from cottage to cottage with a present for each child. The Grinch often accompanies them too to the children's delight. Members of the Chester Rotary have carried out this tradition for years.

Always an anticipated event, Kurn Hattin's Annual Christmas Visitors' Day starts with a special holiday luncheon followed by a magnificent concert. The jazz band, comprised of children and dedicated adult volunteers, swing with toe-tapping, holiday rhythm. And then there is nothing more heartwarming than hearing children sing. The children sing in various choirs and also as soloists and in duets. No one can deny, children make the holiday season great.

With all the generous donations during the holidays and throughout the year, the children focus on giving. Night of Giving is a Kurn Hattin tradition in which a representative from each cottage presents his/her Christmas giving project. The children raise funds to donate as a way to give back for all their good fortune. This year their support helped those in need in various ways. With deep concern for the many homeless families in the area, one cottage bought toys and food for the children of these families and brought them to Our Place in Bellows Falls for distribution. They used their Caught Being Good (CBG) coupons, which they earn with good behavior, to buy the items at the campus store. Another cottage raised money to help replenish a teacher's items which he lost in a fire and another for a care package for a serviceman stationed overseas in the Coast Guard. Others raised money for the Brattleboro Reformer's Christmas Stocking, St. Jude's Hospital, an African school or sang Christmas carols for the residents of a nursing home. The children gave generously to many.

The finale to the holiday celebrations is Family Day. Parents and other family members enjoy a special lunch with the children. Before they go home for the holidays break, the children perform a holiday concert especially for their families.

Santa is always good to the children. They are very deserving. Kurn Hattin wishes everyone a happy and peaceful holiday season. Thank you for your generosity throughout the year. Kurn Hattin Homes is a year-round, charitable home and school for in-need and at-risk boys and girls, ages 6-15, from throughout the Northeast.

## SEVCA Distributing Warm Socks for Children in Need

by Lisa Clarke

With the goal to get warm socks out to children who need them most, the Vermont Caring Foundation has coordinated an effort called The Blue Sock Project in partnership with Cabot Mills in Northfield and regional Community Action Programs to help keep some of Vermont's most vulnerable children a little warmer this winter.

The Vermont Caring Foundation is a charitable, non-profit foundation formed by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont. The Foundation's mission is to work to promote and improve the health of Vermonters, particularly children and teenagers. The Foundation purchased approximately 11,000 pairs of new children's socks from Cabot Mills, Vermont's only sock manufacturer. The company has been making socks in Vermont since 1978, and currently employs about 100 Vermonters.

Families who have a need for socks for their children can contact SEVCA Family Services Outreach Worker Donna Curtis at the Brattleboro office at (802) 254-2795 or Susan Howes in Westminster at (802) 722-4575.

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization designated by state and federal officials to address the full range of needs of low-income residents of Windham and Windsor Counties. In addition to providing the "safety net" for households in financial crisis, their services help them stabilize their lives, make their homes safe and energy-efficient, take strides toward becoming self-reliant, and enable their children to escape the generational poverty cycle. These goals are achieved through such programs as Emergency Fuel Assistance, Housing Stabilization, Food Stamp Outreach, Budget Counseling, Weatherization, Individual Development (Matched Savings) Accounts, Micro Business Development, Tax Preparation Assistance, "Good Buy" Thrift Stores, Parenting Education, and Head Start.



**Kevin Goddard delivers giant 12 boxes of the Blue Socks for kids in need to SEVCA**

## SEVCA OPENS CRISIS FUEL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The cold winter season is upon us, and Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is announcing the beginning of the Crisis Fuel Assistance program, which runs from November 30 – April 15. Crisis Fuel helps residents of Windham and Windsor counties who experience a heating fuel emergency during the winter months. For example, they may be out of, or very close to running out of fuel and have no money to buy more; they may have an electric disconnect notice; and/or they may be over-income for seasonal fuel assistance. For eligible residents, Crisis Fuel can help purchase the primary source of their heat (oil, propane, wood, natural gas, kerosene or electricity); pay an electric bill if it is needed to run their heating system; or have their "red-tagged" furnace repaired or replaced.

The eligibility income level for Crisis Fuel is higher than that of the Seasonal Fuel Assistance Program, but applicants must meet the emergency criteria (such as have less than ¼ tank of oil left). However, SEVCA officials urge people not to wait until the last minute to apply for help. Crisis Fuel cannot help if the fuel has already been delivered or if the work on the furnace has been completed.

Applications are taken in person at SEVCA's offices, but applicants are advised to call first to make an appointment and to find out what documents and information to bring.

Windsor County residents in the Springfield/Windsor areas should call SEVCA at 885-6153, or (800) 464-9951 in the rest of the county or Windham county areas. After hours, on weekends and holidays, call 1-800-287-0589 for emergency assistance.

SEVCA also is in the midst of its 3rd annual "Share the Warmth" Emergency Fund campaign to raise funds to assist local residents not eligible for state and federally-funded programs. Started in 2007 to respond to soaring fuel prices, the fund helps people who often slip through the cracks, such as the working poor, many seniors, and those whose lives have been impacted suddenly by personal crises such as illness, divorce, or a death in the family. The money is used for such assistance as emergency fuel deliveries, and to secure housing for the homeless or prevent homelessness.

SEVCA has seen the number of people requesting assistance escalate rapidly over the last few winters. "We have seen the requests for help with fuel and housing skyrocket," noted Family Services Director Pat Burke. "Since 2007, the number of requests for emergency fuel help has increased by 73% and the amount we spend on homelessness and its prevention has jumped by 74% in just the last year. Many elderly are finding that their savings have dried up, and the tightening job market has made it very difficult to find work or even jobs with a reasonable wage. So often we see folks reduced to those "heat or eat" decisions, which is really scary when you have little kids. People are really frightened."

To donate to the campaign, go to [www.sharethewarmth.info](http://www.sharethewarmth.info) and click on the PayPal "Donate" button; send your check to SEVCA, 91 Buck Drive, Westminster, VT 05158, or drop your donation off at any of SEVCA's Family Service offices (28 Vernon St.-Suite 404, in Brattleboro) or "Good Buy" stores (Bellows Falls and Springfield).

The organization has also received and has been giving out its annual assortment of blankets for free distribution to local residents in need. Donated to SEVCA each year by the thoughtful and compassionate members of The Church of St. Joseph in Mendham, N.J., the blankets are a welcome comfort to families who are keeping their thermostats low to stretch their budgets, or to those with no home at all.

SEVCA is a non-profit organization designated by state and federal officials to address the full range of needs of low-income residents of Windham and Windsor Counties. In addition to providing the "safety net" for households in financial crisis, SEVCA's services help them stabilize their lives, make their homes safe and energy-efficient, take strides toward becoming self-reliant, and enable their children to escape the generational poverty cycle. These goals are achieved through such programs as Family Services, Crisis Fuel, Housing Stabilization, Food Stamp Outreach, Budget Counseling, Weatherization, Home Repair, Individual Development Accounts, Micro Business and Workforce Development, Tax Preparation Assistance, Parent Education, and Head Start.

## The Westminster Board of Directors approved the following changes to bus routes for the Westminster Center School. Beginning on January 4th, the afternoon bus route for your child(ren) will change in the following way:

### Bus 4- Archie Gleason's Bus

**Bus # 4 leaves the Center School with all students living on Westminster Heights Road, Back Westminster Road, Davidson Hill Road (off Route # 121), Route # 121 between the Back Westminster Rd. and Bellows Falls Village, to include students living on Church Ave. in North Westminster.**

**This change will mean students, other than those on Heights Road, will arrive home approximately twenty minutes earlier than they have been.**

### Bus 8 - Jennifer Coburn's Bus

**Bus # 8 leaves the Westminster Center School with students who live on the Kurn Hattin Rd. as far as the intersection with Piggery Rd., students living on Piggery Rd., Pine Banks Rd., and Route # 5 - north to the Interstate Access Road.**

**This change means the children on Route 5 north of School Street will arrive home approximately twenty minutes later than they have been.**

**These changes do not impact the morning routes - they will continue to run as they have all year.**

## GARDENING TIPS FOR JANUARY

by Babs Lynde, a Vermont Master Gardener

Although there's not always a lot to do in the garden during the month of January, (and when temperatures are near to sub-zero, who would want to?) there's still plenty that we can do that will make life a little easier for us in the spring. Here is a list of mid-winter ideas to keep you busy!

- If you use salt or de-icer to help melt the ice and snow from your driveway or walkway, remember that these products do not mix well with plants, shrubs and even your grass. These chemicals are often too strong for small or young roots which can lead to damage or even death to all plant life. Even if you are not throwing the de-icer directly on the plants, it will melt and mix with the water that eventually has to drain in one direction or another. Consider using sand or sawdust wherever possible to help minimize plant damage.
- After a heavy snowfall, use an old broom and lightly sweep off the accumulation from shrubs or young trees. The extra snow can sometimes damage or break off branches that can later invite disease or springtime insects. Resist the urge to snap or knock off built up or increased ice and icicles. More often than not, you can create more damage to the plant than allowing the sun or warming temperatures to melt it away gently.
- Save your fireplace and woodstove ashes outdoors in a large metal container a safe distance from your house or other buildings. These ashes can be used on your gardens as a fertilizer, especially the irises and other plants that prefer alkaline soils. It can also be a great way of melting snow in your driveway on sunny days, but you should remove your footwear before walking on carpeted floors as melted ash can leave some dark staining behind.

- Don't forget your feathered and furry friends. They love suet, seeds, nuts, and pieces of old dried fruit along with a daily supply of fresh water. Bread, donuts and other yeast products are not recommended for birds and other critters because the food tends to swell in their tiny tummies, plus it has little or no real nutrition for them. If you don't like the mess left behind from the bird feeder, place an old rug or carpet or a piece of plywood underneath it. The food and shells won't sink into the snow, plus the squirrels and mourning doves will help to keep down the waste. Excess shells can be used as mulch, but try to remove any uneaten seeds or you'll have a lot of spindly little sunflowers growing amongst your other plants.
- During January thaw, check places around your home where bulbs are apt to try poking up through the ground before spring. Throw some compost, dried leaves or shredded newspaper around any signs of tender new growth to keep it from freezing. You can also use the branches from your Christmas tree for mulch.
- You can use this time to clean your garden tools. Garden tools should always be cleaned whenever possible to keep from contaminating other plants, but when you are through with them for the year, blades on shovels and hand tools should be lightly oiled to keep away the winter rust. Keep a bucket of rough sand near your tools with a quart of old or used motor oil mixed in and dip your tools in the bucket each time you use them to help keep them in pristine shape. Paint any wooden handles to protect the wood, but if you would rather keep the look of the wood, use oil soap or water sealant.

Would you like more gardening information or ideas about keeping busy in the mid-winter months? 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.



### Small School, Big opportunities

One of the common misperceptions about Compass is the assumption that because the school is small, educational opportunities must be limited. In fact, as I proudly tell anyone who asks, I would put the breadth of experiences for every Compass student up against almost any school in the country.

While we certainly don't have as many course offerings as a large high school, it should be noted that students can only take so many classes no matter where they are. There may be 5 foreign languages taught at NMH, but most kids only take one. While there is some value in having a wing for music and art teachers, another for vocational education, and another for technology, these "special" programs usually only serve a select group. Maybe most significantly, no matter how much choice students have in selecting courses, the rigidity of scheduling and requirements at most schools results in most students' school experiences being confined to period after period of class time, 180 days in row, year after year.

The Compass schedule is balanced to maximize learning opportunities. For about 140 days of the year, students follow a more traditional schedule, but within this structure, there is room for community based learning such as the middle school's mapping at Bald Hill or a science class study of the town forest. There are core requirements in Science and Humanities, but also electives such as Forensics or Ornithology in Science or Utopias or Religions in Humanities. For the 11th and 12th grade, there are cross-disciplinary electives every Spring, such as Filmmaking or The Science of the Mind being offered this year. Even within a "regular" class, the teachers employ a huge array of methods and provide a wide range of choices for students that tap into kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and artistic intelligences. Looking at Compass contributions to Gallery Walk monthly last year, it was striking to see the quality of art and how much it was tied to course content and important ideas beyond just aesthetics.

With the scheduling of Math and Science this year, we also are able to place students in the right level for every child, even easily opening up the chance for middle schoolers to move up in Math or Spanish to high school levels if ready.

To me, what truly sets Compass apart is the other 35 or 40 days of the year—when all students are engaged in other valuable learning experiences. As I often observe, not everything worth learning occurs in 90 minute blocks. Mountain Day, College Visit Day, Health and Culture Week, Giving Day, Winter Sports, Community Service Winter Term, All School Spring Trips, and Project Week all address important learning goals related to developing independent learners, responsible community members, healthy lifestyles, and openness to learning in the real world.

One other unique aspect at Compass is the expectation for each student to engage in all these valued experiences. In most large schools, despite all the opportunities, only a small percentage participate in sports, a different group is involved in leadership, and a small number may avail themselves of independent learning options. At Compass, every student completes a portfolio, pursues independent work in project week, engages in service on Wednesdays and in Winter, extends themselves through Junior and Senior Project, is immersed in international travel through the Junior Global Connections program, and is involved in democratic leadership through the varied structures in the school community.

As a parent, I am thrilled to see my children engaged in such diverse and valuable learning experiences. And as a school, we are pleased to see the power of this learning acknowledged by our seniors and outside evaluators in their graduation roundtables, and by colleges who have granted many of our graduates awards and scholarships for academic achievement and leadership that note the students' impressive accomplishments. Not bad for a "small school."

—Rick Gordon, Founding Director

### Westminster Center School News bits:

by Elizabeth Bourne, Librarian

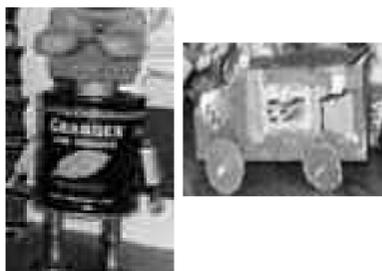
Skating!! Thanks to the Westminster Fire Department, kids are once again skating during PE classes, recess and during the after school Program. When school is not in session, families are invited to use the rink, which is located just to the east of the Center School building.

Thinking of Others: Kids, families and staff at the Westminster School donated materials and time in two projects assisting those who may need food or other help during the cold winter months. The North Wing Parent Group spearheaded the first effort. Children and staff throughout the school are collecting canned goods and nonperishables for the Our Place Food Shelf. Food collections at school and deliveries to Our Place will continue over the next few months. Also, thanks again to retired educator, Cheryl Rounds, and her husband, Harley, the North Wing organized another Hall Mall. Students and staff brought in donations from home that were turned into a flea market shopping bazaar in the Center School gym. Children voted to donate the proceeds of \$324 to Westminster Cares.

East Wing students created Treasures from Trash, transforming recycling into toys! Their challenge was to use at least three items and design something entirely different. They made robots, playhouses, a windmill, and cars among other treasures. (see School Celebrates Winter: On December 21st, the shortest day of the year, students at the West School spent the afternoon enjoying the outdoors. They hiked, made simoes, heard a story about a winter bear ñ and then raced through a treasure hunt, searching out bears hidden by teachers and volunteers.



### Treasures from Trash



## WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



### What was the purpose of this scrap pile and where was it located?

Picture donated by: Shirley Scofield

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 winner/s will be announced in the Next Issue.

December Answer: It's referred to "The Cannery" and it's located next to the RR tracks by the Community Feed Store and Westminster Station Market.

December Winners: Hugh Perkins, Charlotte Kurkul, Howie Rice, Bob Haas, Pat Haas, Aubrey Gochey and David Wright. and Dan Axtell wrote: I'm pretty sure the Mystery Photo for December is the Baxter Canning Factory. If I'm right, be sure to mention that people can visit [www.westminsterhistory.net](http://www.westminsterhistory.net) and read the 1931 article about the fire that destroyed the factory almost 80 years ago. I checked it out and it's a great site with great information.- Peggy Porter/editor

If you have picture's you think would make a great mystery photo please stop by the town office and see Bab Lyndes. **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 January 5th, 2010

The Prudential Committee meets twice a month on the first and third Monday after the first Tuesday at 7:00 PM  
January meetings: 11th & 25th

Number of calls in November: 23  
Number of man hours spent: 5,520 hours

Number of calls through December 28th: 28

Number of man hours spent: 5,120 hours  
Number of calls calendar year to Date: 295

**Woodstove hook-up:** refer to the diagram for proper installation and be careful not to pile your wood too close to the stove. The Fire Department is always available for advice and inspection of woodstove and wood furnace installation.

**Snow Removal:** With the snow season upon us we all need to keep our driveways and walkways plowed and sanded to accommodate emergency vehicles. Keep in mind that fire trucks are wider than ordinary vehicles and need wider pathways. Ambulances are usually not 4-wheel drive nor do they carry chains. Extra effort should be used when removing snow and ice. Roofs, porches and decks should be shoveled off as early as possible after the snow stops falling. Excess weight from the snow can cause costly damage. Falling snow and icicles can be very dangerous and have been known to cause serious injury.

**Walking outside in the dark:** Reflective vests work very well when walking at night. Always walk facing traffic, which means on the left side of the road. We still see many people walking on the right side of the street or road with the flow of traffic. That is very dangerous and has often resulted in fatal injuries to the pedestrian.

**Association Meeting:** The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting December 1st with 25 members present and 6 members excused. The association members voted to help some families in the area by making up food baskets and providing items of clothing and toys and games for the kids. A list of 14 families was provided to the association. A group of volunteers was formed to purchase, wrap and distribute the items. The families received the items December 12th. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped with the project. Everyone had a good time putting it together.

**Luminaries:** The Fire House was made available again this year for the annual Christmas Eve luminary display preparations. Many local volunteers gathered at the Fire House to put the sand and candles in bags and set them out on Rt 5, Grout Ave. and School St Thursday the 24th. The weather cooperated this year and the event attracted the attention of many people both locally and out of town. A huge thanks to those who were involved with the set up and clean up. This is a very special occasion for Westminster and it is looked forward to by many.

#### Shelter:

The Fire Station will be open for shelter in case an event occurs where shelter is needed. Contact the Chief or any member of the department in case of any emergency needs.

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.

# WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

## Activities

### ScottishCountryDance

#### Classes

Every Wednesday @ 7:30 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. All Westminster seniors are invited to attend. Join us at the First Congregational Church on Route 5

#### Bellows Falls Gallery

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

**Secrets of Health Aging** – a facilitated discussion group and pot-

luck. The 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month at the Westminster Fire Station. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information

#### Contra Dance

Every 3rd Saturday of month at 7:30 @ 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 9:00am to 10:00am

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

Call Westminster Cares

for more Information:

722-3607

#### Yoga Class with Lisa Nigro-15

**weejs**

begins September 9 and ends

December 23.

Wednesdays 7 - 8:30 p.m. at the

Westminster Institute. All levels

welcomed. Drop ins welcomed.

## Faith Community

### The First Congregational Church of Westminster United Church of Christ

The Rev. Sami Jones McRae, Pastor Main Street, Route 5, Westminster, Vermont 05158, 802-722-4148

Sunday Worship at 10:00AM

Communion is the first Sunday of each month. Sunday School is held at 10:00am from September to May. The church has a ramp and lift for wheelchair access. Westminster First Congregational is an Open and Affirming church, all are welcome.

### 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 7PM in the Town Hall.

**Planning and Development Commission** meets the 2nd Monday at 7:00 in the Town Hall.

**Westminster Activities Commission** Second Monday of the Month at 6:00pm at the Westminster Institute.

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

**Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association** 3rd Thursday at 7:00 at the Westminster West Congregational Church

**Westminster West Public Library Board** 2nd Mondays at 7:00 at the Westminster West Public Library

**Development Review Board** meets the 1st Monday of each month at 7:00PM. at the Town Hall

**Community Improvement Program Committee** meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6:00PM.

**Westminster Cares Board** meets the 1st Wednesday of every month at the Westminster Fire Station.

**Westminster Institute Board** meets on the first Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. at the Institute.

**911 Committee** meets as needed.

**The Westminster Fire & Rescue Dept** holds their monthly meetings on the first Tuesday of every month and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of every month.

**Westminster Historical Society** meets the third Tuesday, monthly, at 7:00 pm at the Westminster Institute.

**Westminster Gazette Meeting,** Friday, January 22nd at 7:30am Westminster Cares Office.

Watch for up coming events from the Westminster Activities Commission!

February - Dance

Volunteer/s Needed to Distribute the Westminster Gazette to Local Establishments.

Usually, the 1st Tuesday of the Month

The Deadline for The February 2010 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is. Thursday, January 28th by 5:00pm



THANK YOU !!!!

**Westminster Fire Department.** We moved here about a year ago and must say what a caring kind community Westminster is. We have 3 young children and last week-end was surprised by a knock on my door. It was 2 gentlemen from the Fire Department. They had bags of gifts and a food box. I do not know who may have put us on a list for this but I must say I was deeply touched by their kindness and generosity. This time of year can be so stressful and difficult for moms and dads who want to get their children the things they want for Christmas. I feel blessed to have received this kind gift. Bless You all- Tonia Marie Sowa

## WHAT AN AMAZING LUMINARY YEAR, NO WIND, NO RAIN AND WARMER

We had an amazing turn out this year (32) helping assemble luminary bags to set out on Christmas Eve, it took only an hour and we were finished. Also on Christmas Eve morning we had a great turn out as well and it also only took an hour to set out 1,296 luminaries. Our goal next year will be 1,500

MANY MANY THANKS TO ALL! For your generous contributions in helping with costs, giving up an evening to help assemble and early morning to set them out.

### A BIG THANKS FOR ALL WHO HELPED PICK THE BAGS UP ON CHRISTMAS MORNING

Thank you Westminster Fire Department for giving up space so that we could let the trailers dry and have a warm space to gather and put the luminary's together.

Thank you Luke Bazin for the use of your trailers. Thank you LaValley Buildings Supply for the sand given at your cost

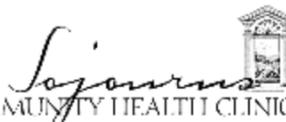
Thank you Station Market (Betty) for the white Bags donated Thank you Sam Streeter for graciously disposing of all the bags Thank you Ginger Cook for doing up the posters Thanks to the police department for directing traffic and keeping us all safe

Thank you Chris Hackett for all your help and support **Thank you Cindy Stoddard for taking pictures**

Each year I remember how gratifying it is putting this all together

WISHING ALL PEACE AND JOY IN THE NEW YEAR

Diane Bazin



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- Sauna
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- Apothecary



**It is a pleasure to announce that Marion Major has been named the October Elks Student of the Month for Bellows Falls Union High School.**

Marion, the daughter of Adrienne and Stephen Major of Westminster West, is a senior.

Marion is an exceptional student in terms of academics. She is currently challenging herself in her senior year by taking three Advanced Placement courses and turning in

high quality work. Marion epitomizes a dedicated college-bound student.

Not only dedicated to her studies, Marion always has a smile on her face. She has a great attitude in the classroom and throughout the school. She simply loves learning and truly enjoys classes and the high school experience. Her attitude is infectious, too, and positively impacts a classroom or an after school activity. Marion is a bright, mature young woman who is a pleasure to work with.

Marion is a member of student council, the girl's soccer team, the Environmental Club and the Drama Club. She even attends school board meetings as a student council representative.

In addition to serving her school, Marion serves the community. She spent her junior year studying abroad in Brazil and has repeatedly taken foreign-exchange students into her home and befriended them at school. She also takes dance classes in the community and acts in local plays in the community.

Clearly a motivated student who participates actively in the high school experience, Marion is a positive role model for others and is well deserving of this award.



Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) has expanded our textile collection program to include new sheds at the local recycling centers in Cavendish, Plymouth, Westminster, Ludlow, and six other Vermont towns. There is no charge to bring the bagged textiles to the collection points at the transfer stations and landfills. The textile recycling program provides another opportunity for local residents to reduce waste by recycling clothing, linens, and shoes that would otherwise be disposed of in the landfill. In addition the textile recycling program helps reduce the consumption of raw materials and energy required for new textile manufacturing.

Items that we recycle include clean and dry clothing, shoes, (please bag separately from clothing), blankets, sheets, towels, curtains, mittens, gloves, purses, coats, socks, stuffed animals and belts. If possible place the textiles in clear plastic bags. Please be sure that all the material being recycled is clean and dry. Clothing that is not reusable through the Good Buy stores, family services "crisis clothing", or sent to developing countries will be recycled as

cleaning rags or raw material for textile manufacturing.

The proceeds from the recycled textiles and sales in the Good Buy thrift stores help support SEVCA's programs that assist local residents who are in crisis or struggling with the hardships of poverty to meet their basic needs of housing, heat, utilities, food, clothing, and furniture. Donating your unwanted clothing, shoes, and furniture or household goods benefits your neighbors and the local environment.

SEVCA is the Community Action Agency created in 1965 to address the needs of low-income residents of Windham and Windsor Counties. SEVCA provides assistance to families and individuals through programs including Emergency Crisis Fuel Assistance, Budget Counseling, Weatherization, Individual Development (Matched Savings) Accounts, Micro Business Development, Tax Preparation Assistance, "Good Buy" Thrift Stores, Parenting Education, and Head Start. Additional information about SEVCA may be obtained from its web site ([www.sevca.org](http://www.sevca.org))

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**Possible 2009 Tax Refund Surprises**

We are writing this article to ensure taxpayers are aware of potential withholding problems with the "Making Work Pay Credit" which was part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, signed by the President on February 17, 2009.

This credit increased the take home pay of eligible individuals. The credit was the lesser of \$400 (\$800 for joint filers) or 6.2% of the taxpayer's earned income (from one or both spouses).

The IRS then issued new tax withholding tables to all employers in February of 2009. As an employee, you may have noticed an increase in your take home pay as it permitted you to receive the credit in advance in the form of lower tax withholding. The tables however were designed to generate a maximum increase of take home pay by \$400 for individuals and \$600 for joint filers even though the maximum credit for joint filers is \$800.

There are several situations where there could be too little or too much withholding. This difference will be reconciled on your 2009 tax return resulting in decreased refunds or increased refunds in some cases. The following are examples of these surprises.

The most common situation will be an employee with multiple jobs. He could have reduced withholding from each job which could then exceed the maximum credit allowed (\$400). He would then owe the IRS the difference and his tax refund will be lowered.

Another example is when a person receiving Social Security or a government pension received a \$250 Economic Recovery Payment, as well as a non government pension with the reduced withholding and works part time, again with reduced withholding. This taxpayer could potentially have received too much and would then have a reduced tax refund or even a balance due.

In a situation where a married couple files jointly, and one spouse has a high income and the other spouse not working; the employed spouse could have the maximum withholding reduced from his/her salary (6.2 %) but which does not amount to the maximum \$800 credit. In this instance, the taxpayers would receive additional refund on their tax return.

On another positive note, self employed individuals will receive the credit on their 2009 tax return all at once because they did not have any withholding.

The bottom line is that you may receive a reduced refund or have a balance due on your tax return, if your tax withholding was reduced too much, or a lucky few may receive more of a refund.

Spaulding & Madden Tax Services is a member of the National Association of Tax Professionals (NATP), the National Society of Tax Professionals (NSTP), and the Vermont Tax Practitioners Association (VTPA). Ms. Spaulding recently served a three year term as President of the VTPA and as well on its education board. She has also been an instructor for the University of Vermont Extension System Income Tax School.

Annette M. Spaulding  
Spaulding & Madden Tax Serv (802)722-4500

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**WESTMINSTER WEST FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT 1/15/10**

The first Family Movie Night of the new year will be Friday, January 15 at the Westminster West Public Library. The program starts at 6:30 PM with a return visit from Wallace & Gromit, up to their usual hilarious antics. At 7:00 PM we'll answer the question you've always wanted to ask after a visit to the Natural History Museum: what happens when the visitors leave and the lights go out? According to NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM, more than you could ever imagine! This live-action comedy (rated PG) features Ben Stiller and a cast of two-, four- and more-legged critters who just wanna have fun. Get together with friends and neighbors for an evening of laugh-out-loud entertainment. Admission is free, everyone's invited, and our popular popcorn will be abundant. For info, email [westwestflicks@gmail.com](mailto:westwestflicks@gmail.com), or call David at 802-869-2697. **See you there!**

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Russ Hodgkins, Pres.

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**Community Forums on School Re-structuring and Budget Process**

I am writing today to include you in budget conversations that are ongoing within the school system - during staff meetings, parent meetings, administration team meetings, and school board meetings. There are two upcoming opportunities to engage in the ongoing dialogue. First, we will gather on Wednesday, January 6th at 7PM at the West School to talk specifically about the West School within the larger context of the Westminster Town School District and the WNESU. Second, on Thursday evening January 21st at 7PM at the Center School the conversation will continue with more emphasis on the Center School structure for the future. The discussion is centered on budgeting and school restructuring.

During the past month, I visited with parents at various parent meetings- North Wing, East Wing, and West School. I shared with parents that there are several factors making this year's process a little different - and worth highlighting. The first of these is the decrease in student enrollment due to the small numbers of students entering kindergarten, as well as the tuition students who are not returning next year. In addition to this, we know that we will be receiving less revenue from the state and federal government. We are mindful of the economic situation and the impact on local taxpayers as we move forward.

The budget committee has a preliminary budget proposing to reduce staffing and expenditures in the budget for 2010-11. The major reductions include retiring teachers, reducing the number of classrooms, reducing the number of para-professionals, and reducing the percentage of staff positions where applicable. The chart below shows the enrollment projections for the next three years.

Enrollment History and Projections

Grade/Year	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13
Kindergarten	36	23	18	34	32
First Grade	28	37	22	18	34
Second Grade	35	21	37	22	18
Third Grade	28	38	20	37	22
Fourth Grade	34	25	37	20	37
Fifth Grade	29	30	24	37	20
Sixth Grade	26	28	31	24	37
Total	216	202	189	192	200

The Westminster Community has always supported their children and school system by passing the school budget - knowing elected officials and administration consider the impact of proposed programs on the taxpayer and finding a balance. Care is taken to look at the educational benefit to children at the expense of the taxpayer. When we look at the history of the community schools we have consistently hired the best teachers available, constructed small class sizes and supported professional development to maximize the educational dollar. The 2009-10 school year class size average is 14.5 students per classroom teacher, with a range of 11 students to 18 students per class.

The proposed budget reduces the number of classroom teachers by three (one fewer at the West School and two fewer at the Center School) and still we would keep class size average at just over 17 students, with a range of 15 students to 24 students. The largest class would be in the fifth grade, where we would offer additional support through Special Education and Consolidated Federal Grant (Reading and Mathematics Teacher). In order to maintain small class size and still propose a reduction in the budget, we need to restructure the configuration of teach

ers and classrooms within the schools.

The proposal under discussion will reconfigure the West School to have one fewer teacher - while retaining the multi-grade community school structure. We are projecting enrollment of 25 students in grades one through four at the West School next year (with a similar number for 2011-12, while increasing in 2012-13). The program would have two professionals and one paraprofessional. One of the professional teachers would have multiple responsibilities to allow for supporting students through special education, consolidated federal program reading and mathematics, and regular education. Based on the numbers at the West School, this configuration would require teachers to structure the program in various ways to meet the needs of all learners.

The proposal also changes the structure of the Center School. First, fewer students than usual will be entering kindergarten, resulting in one instead of two classrooms. While the current estimated number of students is low, we will monitor the enrollment to ensure our youngest students will receive personalized instruction in an appropriate setting. Second, the number of students entering fifth grade is estimated to be twenty-four. While this number is larger than ideal for one classroom, we know that students at this age are more independent, can follow directions more readily, and can self-regulate in such a way as to still function at a high level academically in fifth and sixth grades.

The real difference at the Center School will be the combining of the North and East Wing classrooms to build a schoolwide program to meet the needs of all children. This change will unite the best of both programs and staff. It will build equity among classrooms, balance classrooms in academics and behavioral needs, while sharing supports and resources. Next year's program will have six classrooms to serve first through fourth grades (one first, two seconds, one third, and two fourth grade classrooms). Currently, we have six classrooms, but two are multiage rooms. The change will allow us a more consistent class size. Certainly, as we strive for consistency we will work to balance the needs of individual students.

Students do best when instruction matches their readiness to learn, connects with prior experiences and knowledge, and engages them in their own learning. We know that consistency school wide allows students to develop without gaps and holes in their learning. For example, several years ago we successfully implemented Responsive Classroom strategies schoolwide. Teachers find that each year the benefit to the teaching/learning environment is compounded. Students know what is expected and take responsibility for their learning and behavior. This year we began using Four Blocks® Framework for literacy instruction. Teachers are finding that this approach meets the needs of students in specific grade levels very well. The difficulty is in the multi-grade configurations where we often need to split students in grade level groups to supply them with appropriate instruction. The proposed restructuring allows flexibility in meeting student needs - grade level or multiage groupings as appropriate. The proposed structures provide equity, educational benefit to children, opportunity, small class size, and at the same time, the proposed budget is \$50,000 less than the current year budget.

Please plan on attending one of the upcoming forums. I welcome your questions - and thank you for the support you provide our children.

Steven Tullar, Principal  
 Westminster Schools

# Westminster Gazette

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