

Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

Vol. 11, No.1 January 2015

OPEN HOUSE AT WESTMINSTER CARES' NEW OFFICE

Westminster Cares is hosting an Open House at our new office, located on the ground floor of the Institute, on Thursday, Jan. 22 from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m.

Director Donna Dawson and members of the recently elected Board of Directors will be on hand to welcome you.

Members of the community are invited to stop in to see our new space, and share a hot cup of coffee, cider or cocoa. Cake and cookies will also be served.

From the front entrance of the Institute: Make a left and go down the stairs. Our office is on the ground floor at the bottom of the stairs.

From the back entrance of the Institute: Go straight down the hall to the end, make a right and quick left past the kitchen. This entrance is hand-capped accessible.



At right. Donna Dawson, Director, outside the back entrance to the Westminster Institute. Signage for the new office is in progress.

KH'S CHRISTMAS CHOIR



The Kurn Hattin Homes Choir sings at their annual Christmas Visitors' Day concert.

EXPIRING TERMS FOR TOWN OFFICES



TOWN OF WESTMINSTER
OFFICE OF THE TOWN CLERK/TREASURER
P.O. BOX 147 WESTMINSTER, VT 05158
Tel. 802-722-4091 Fax 802-722-9816
clerk@westminstervt.org

ANNUAL TOWN, SCHOOL & FIRE DISTRICT MEETING – FEBRUARY 28, 2015

VOTING BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT – MARCH 3, 2015

UHSD #27 (BELLOWS FALLS UNION HIGH SCHOOL) ANNUAL MEETING – FEBRUARY 25, 2015

ELECTED OFFICIALS WITH TERMS EXPIRING MARCH 3, 2015

POSITION	LENGTH OF TERM	PRESENTLY HELD BY
MODERATOR (Town, School, Fire)	1 Year	Fletcher Proctor
TOWN AGENT	1 Year	Fletcher Proctor
TOWN CLERK	3 Years	Alison Bigwood
TOWN TREASURER	3 Years	Alison Bigwood
SELECTBOARD	3 Years	Nathan Stoddard
SELECTBOARD	2 Years	Craig Allen
LISTER	3 Years	Michael Fawcett
TOWN GRAND JUROR	1 Year	Robert Lober
TOWN GRAND JUROR	1 Year	Vacant
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND	1 Year	Karen Walter
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND	1 Year	Ila Mitchell
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND	1 Year	Vacant
TRUSTEE, CAMPBELL FUND	3 Years	Michael Fawcett
TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS	3 Years	Michael Fawcett
TOWN SCHOOL DIRECTOR	3 Years	Elise Manning-Sterling
TOWN SCHOOL DIRECTOR	2 Years	Molly Banik
UHS DISTRICT #27 DIRECTOR	3 Years	David Clark
FIRE DISTRICT #3 PRUDENTIAL	3 Years	Christopher Hackett

Nomination Petitions are ready for those who wish to run for town office. They may be picked up at the Town Clerk's Office any weekday between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., and must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by 5:00 p.m. on Monday, January 26, 2015 and contain at least 24 valid signatures. Anyone whose name does not appear on the voter checklist should register at the Town Clerk's Office. The last day to register to vote before Town Meeting is Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at 5:00 p.m. The last day to register before the UHSD #27 (Bellows Falls Union High School) Annual Meeting is Wednesday, February 18, 2015 at 5:00 p.m.

CENTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES ADAPT TO WINTER



Winter Quidditch anyone? How about pressing and coloring tin, a Mexican folk art?

Perhaps you've wondered what it would take to become a professional Master Builder in the Lego Company? Maybe you just want to race around on a bike? Or hop into the Native American story of Rabbit's snow dance?

All these activities and more energized the last day of school before the Westminster School's winter vacation. On its third Enrichment Day, staff designed a variety of activities – creative, active, challenging – engaging multi-age groups of students in new kinds of fun and learning.

An added challenge this December was the weather! Cold rain brought those bikers into the halls for a memorable experience, and the snow angels moved inside to become a craft activity.

LAST MONTH'S

MYSTERY PHOTO

Last month's picture of the addition to the Westminster West school was correctly answered by Barb Greenough, Bob Gay, Wanda West, Ginger Cook and Ellen Zimmerman.

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Underwriting Support is a donation of at least \$300 annually and does not include advertising. Underwriters are listed in the box on page 6 each month.

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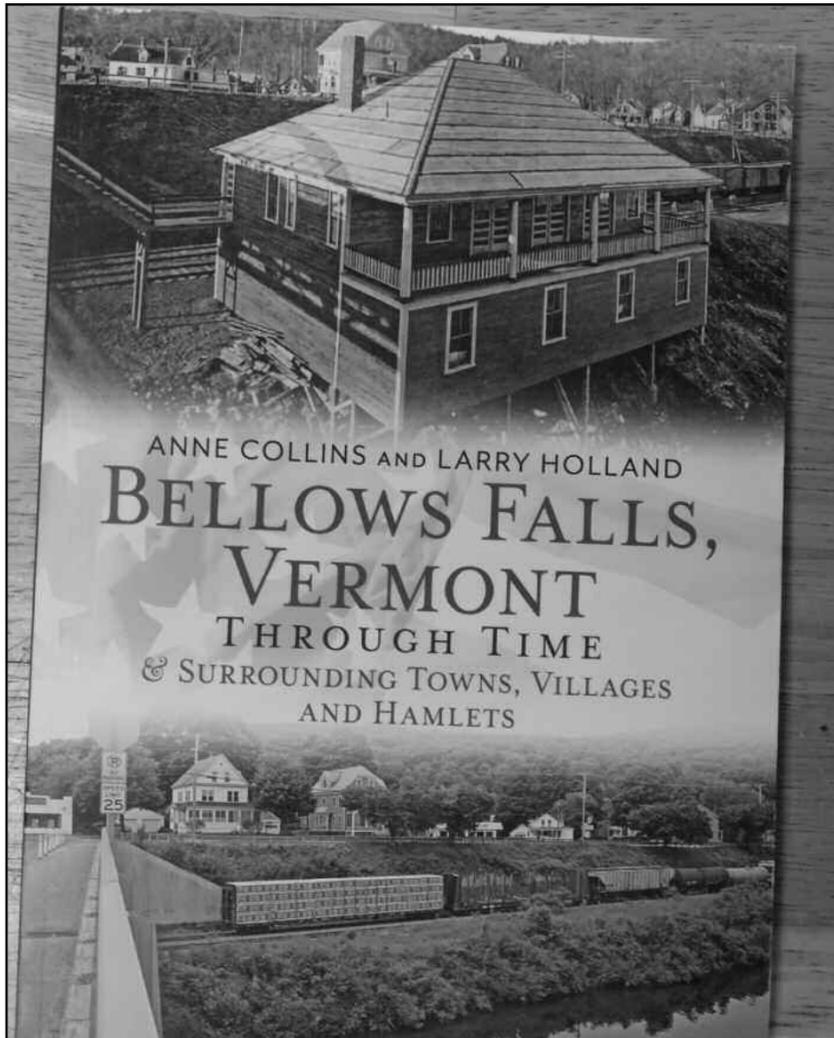
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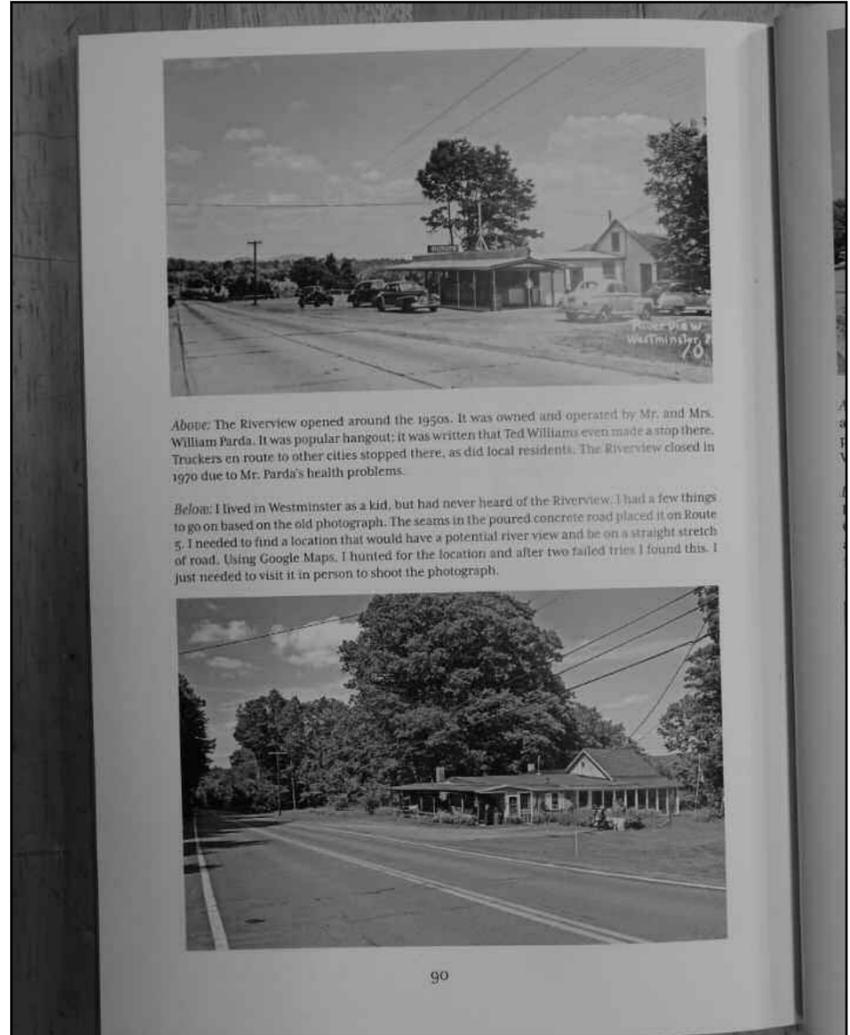
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BELLOWS FALLS

NEW BOOK OF PHOTOS SHOWS REGION FROM A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE



A new book recently published by Anne Collins and Larry Holland offers a unique look at our region. Titled, *Bellows Falls, Vermont and Surrounding Towns, Villages and Hamlets Through Time*, the book provides nearly 100 pages of historic photos juxtaposed next to current photos of the same exact spots today.

The book grew out of the Then & Now feature of *The Vulture* newsletter.



Collins provided the historic photos and wrote about them. Holland replicated them as best he could in the current photos. The results are interesting, to say the least. One example is in the above right photo of the Riverview on Route 5 in Westminster. The top photo is from the 1950s, Holland's modern picture is below it. The book provides a fascinating look at how our region has transformed over the last century or more, and what has been lost to time and fires.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES AND THE ANNUAL APPEAL

Westminster Cares would like to thank the friends, neighbors, businesses and community members who have already made contributions to the 2014-2015 Annual Appeal. Your donations support the healthy aging programs and services of Westminster Cares. Donations that were made to honor or memorialize individuals will be listed in the Gazette each month. (see below) It's never too late to make a donation! The Annual Appeal will continue throughout the winter.

Your gifts are deeply appreciated and we are grateful for having such a caring community.

DECEMBER 2014

In memory of Paul C. Chaffee from:

Connie Newkirk
Artie (Charles) Aiken
Myra Ashcroft
Lee and Byron Stookey
Wendy Bardet
Deborah and Ritchard Kelly
Gus and Mary Seamans
Debi and Stephen Seamans
Michael and Susan Colby

In Memory Of:

In memory of Pat Jennison from Walter Jennison
In memory of Cliff and Marguerite Dawson; and Helen Cordano from Don Dawson

In memory of Ralph and Shirley Harlow from Corinne and Susan Harlow
In memory of Charles Edson from Richard Michelman
In memory of John and Jennie Forrest from Craig and Valerie Forrest
In memory and honor of all past and present volunteers from Clarence and Audrey Gochey

In memory of Joanne Duval, Caro Duval, Staci Jones-Maly and Genieve Farnsworth from Tonia and Lester White

In memory of Brad Ryea from Susan Roman
In memory of Bryden H. Stagner from Brandon and Rebecca Pedigo
In memory of Pat Jennison from Isaac and Rose Shaoul
In memory of Gordon Fontaine from Shirley Fontaine
In memory of Patricia Shea from Karl Behnke
In memory of Theresa and Reg Hodgkins from William and Sandra Burton
In memory of N.E. Green from Doreen Branford
In memory of Mary Hadley from Ann Hadley
In memory of Harold and Alice Shattuck from Barb Greenough
In memory of Arlan Flagg from Ken Flagg
In memory of William B. Holton from Betty J. Holton

In memory of Mel DeLonge from Bonnie Anderson
In memory of loved ones so missed from Frank and Mary Mitchell
In memory of Rose Stoodley from John T and Suzanne Stoodley
In memory of Hank Anderson and Melanie DeLonge from Don Anderson
In memory of Howard Bissell from Charles and Ruth Friedman
In memory of Frank Walter from Marcia and Tom Wessels
In memory of Brad Ryea from Allison and David Deen
In memory of Nora Payne from Laurie Alberts and Tom O'Neill
In memory of Giles Friedman, Fran Streeter and Anthony Spaulding from Edward and Patricia Walsh

In memory of Melanie DeLonge from Phyllis Anderson
In memory of Marilyn Crawford from Ronald and Effie Chase
In memory of Isolde Parda from Mark Steinhardt and Barbara Sherrod
In memory of Bernice Cook from Lester Cook
In memory of Don Berg from Chris Harlow and Bettina Berg
In memory of Charlie Edson from Cyndy Fine
In memory of Fran Streeter from Donna Pilkington
In memory of Phyllis Morrill from James Saunders Masonry
In memory of Melanie DeLonge from Dirk and Peggy Jager
In memory of Giles Friedman from Ronnie and Richard Friedman
In memory of Henry Holland Anderson from Jennifer Anderson
In memory of Anne Fairchild from Carolyn Fairchild
In memory of Ryan Jacob Williams from Tresa and Roy Williams
In memory of Marie L. Wright from Norman Wright
In memory of Margret Palmer from Carleton Palmer

In Honor Of:

In honor of Shirley Kelton from Westminster Auto Service, Inc.
In honor of Donna Dawson from Karen Walter
In honor of the volunteers at Westminster Cares from Frank and Shirley Aiken
In honor of Phyllis Anderson from Robert Rhodes
In honor of Westminster Cares from Lorraine and Fred Yates
In honor of Karen Walter from Barbara Dyer
In honor of Arnice Long from Joel Long
In honor of Phyllis Anderson from Wendy and Robert Schoenemann
In honor of Sally Ryea from Virginia Wyoming and Steve Belczak
In honor of Karen Walter from the Sojourns Community Clinic Staff
In honor of Donna Dawson from Heidi Anderson
In honor of Bill and Harriet Connor from Rebecca McKenny
In honor of Donna, Connie, Kathy, Susan, Reggie, Miriam, Don, Sally, Heidi, Barbara, Karen and Phyllis from Pete 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 Jan 6 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 November: 26

Number of calls through December 30th: 26

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 371

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 195

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting December 2nd with President Paul Millman presiding. There were 20 members present and 6 members excused. Currently there are 44 members of the volunteer fire department.

The Utility has received a new mechanics body which will be equipped with medical supplies in hopes that it will be used for some of the smaller calls. The Rescue 1 is getting old and will need to be replaced sometime in the near future. This move should extend its useful life.

Also the replacement tower is nearing completion and will soon be in service. Planning for the Christmas Toast and the luminaries was part of the agenda.

Skating rink: As soon as there is a good stretch of cold weather, the skating rink at the Center School will flooded by some of the fire department volunteers. With cooperation from the weather and some help in keeping it plowed off, there should be some good ice skating conditions once it stays cold.

Fire Extinguishers: Check dates and gauges on a regular basis to be sure they are ready to use. The gauge needs to be in the green. Once a year, tip the extinguisher upside down to be sure the contents haven't dried up and it still

moves. Remember that the extinguisher can only do its job for the first 30 seconds of the fire and will operate for only 10 seconds. Be prepared to call 911. Know how to operate the extinguisher.

Learn the word PASS. P means pull the pin, A means aim the nozzle, S means squeeze the trigger, and the second S means sweep as in moving over the fire. Fire department personnel are always available for advice.

CO detectors: Because houses are closed up more tightly in the winter, CO detectors need to be checked more frequently. Smoke Alarms: It's always a good idea to put new batteries in the smoke alarms January 1st and double check to be sure they are operating properly.

Vents: Check vents for heating appliances regularly to be sure they are free from ice and snow. A plugged vent can cause a fire.

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

Donations for December:

1. Christmas tree from Kelley Green in memory of Jeff Miller 2. Jim Massey 3. Russell Allen bought sandwiches for people who helped extinguish the chimney fire at the Harlow Farm 4. Peter Lefcort 5. Jeff Shumlin and Evelyn Lovett

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

We would like to have additional volunteers from Westminster West.

There is a Fire House, an engine and a rescue vehicle located in Westminster West and more help is always welcome to utilize that equipment during calls.

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

Check us out at www.westminsterfireandrescue.org.

WESTMINSTER'S FABULOUS FEATHERED VISITORS



Photographer Kate Adams offered the Gazette these two recent photos of some of the many birds that pass through the Westminster region this time of year, the lovely Cedar Waxwing at left and a flock of Canada Geese at right.

Help The Hemlocks

by Babs Lynde, a Vermont Master Gardener

Hemlocks are one of our more attractive conifers, or evergreen tree, found widely throughout our forests. They are easily identified by their pyramid shape and drooping branches and grow from 40 to 70 feet in height.

Each year, new growth appears at the tips of its branches that is a light green color and soft to the touch, a stark difference from the rest of the needles which are dark green and stiff. They produce many cones which are very small in size and paper-thin compared to the spruce or pine with its more pitchy, larger and thick leafed cones.

Unfortunately, these beautiful trees are under attack from some very small but powerful insects that are literally sucking the life from them.

I'm sure you've heard mention of the hemlock wooly adelgid, which is an aphid type insect that can be found on the underside of hemlock needles in small little pockets of white wooly-like secretion, but there's also another danger to this particular tree from the elongated hemlock scale.

The scale is an insect that is extremely flat and only about 1/250 inches long (0.1 mm.) It crawls along the lower needles of the tree until it finds a place to feed. The female EHS sheds its 6 tiny legs and excretes an amber colored covering for protection for it and its translucent eggs. The male produces a long white, waxy coating which is more readily visible to the naked eye.

After mating, the male dies and the female remains under its protective covering with about a dozen to 20 eggs. Sometime in May, the eggs have hatched

and new immature crawlers begin to move off to unoccupied needles and eventually to grow wings and fly to a new host tree.

Although the EHS prefers hemlocks, it has also been found on fir and occasionally spruce trees. These insects may be tiny, but their numbers are so massive that they can weaken a mature tree and make it susceptible to many other diseases, harmful fungi and other sucking insects. Both the hemlock wooly adelgid and the elongated hemlock scale are creating terrible health problems for one of our most beloved evergreens.

The USDA Forest Services and Vermont Master Gardeners are asking you to "look up" the next time you take a stroll or ride through the woods and carefully check the bottom branches of our hemlocks.

If you find signs of white chalk-like streaks or tiny little globs of white fuzz on the underside of the hemlock's needles, please contact one of these agencies immediately. The USDA Forest Services can be reached at Durham NH's office 603-868-7600 or contact the Vermont Extension Services' Master Gardener on their helpline.

Would you like more information about helping our hemlocks? The Master Gardeners of Vermont are trained to help you with all your gardening needs. Call their Helpline toll-free at 1-800-639-2230, send questions by e-mail to master.gardener@uvm.edu or visit their Web site at www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/ for extensive information.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

STAY WARM AND SAFE THIS WINTER

By Wanda West

Winter is well underway, along with the wondrous Vermont bounty that comes with living here: beautiful scenery and quiet peaceful snowfalls. Of course this also means slippery walkways, icy steps and frosty, cold weather. It can also mean power outages.

All of this is part of our New England weather, which some may find difficult. But being prepared will make it a much more manageable season. Now is the time to check to make sure that you have all the items you will need to be ready for whatever weather comes.

Always dress warmly and wear gloves outside, no matter what. If you get stuck for even a short period of time, or fall, it will be cold. It's important to have a warm coat, hat, and mittens or gloves. A scarf is good to cover your mouth and nose, protecting them from the wind.

Warm, sturdy boots are a must. Lace-up ones are best, as they provide support for your feet and ankles and keep them from sliding around inside the boot. They also provide better stability when you are walking. Always bring a phone and/or lifeline.

Cleats or traction devices are a great idea. Some of the most common are Yaktrax, Stabilicers, and microspikes. They go over your boots, much like old-fashion galoshes that slipped over your shoes. These devices have small metal spikes or cleats on them to make walking more secure on ice and slippery surfaces.

A walking stick can also help your balance, as well as having a cane fitted with a removable ice pick or old ski poles; perfect additions when tackling walking in the wintry weather.

Keeping a supply of sand and/or salt by the door will go a long way towards minimizing slippery walkways. Stand at your door and throw some on the path, then give it a chance to work before you head out. Then you can go out and safely cover the rest of your path or walkway.

Use caution when going in and out of driveways and parking lots. Snowbanks block your vision. Carry a bag for mail or errands. Try to be hands-free whenever you can, and use the handrails. Take your time!

It's also a good idea to put together an emergency kit should you lose power over the winter months. There are numerous things that you can put in your winter kit but a few essentials are: a flashlight with extra batteries, flameless candles, and extra blankets.

You should have several days' supply of food that don't require refrigeration and don't need to be heated to be eaten. Having several gallons of water for drinking on-hand, is a great idea, regardless of the time of year.

Although cell phones have become ubiquitous, during a power outage a land-line can outshine a cell. Corded telephones don't need power to function nor do they need charging. When the power goes out, this type of phone will usually work. You'll be able to contact someone to let them know if you need anything or more importantly, just let someone know that you are safe.

Some additional ideas for your emergency kit are: a battery-operated radio or one that runs by hand crank so that you'll be able to stay informed. Include a good book, some crossword puzzles, or a deck of cards to pass the time, making a hazardous winter day as enjoyable as you possibly can. And of course, it is a good idea to have a neighbor or friend who can check in on you, even if it is just by phone. Stay warm!!

CHECK THE PINNACLE ASSOCIATION'S WEBSITE FOR 2015 EVENTS AND OTHER NEW INFORMATION

Nasty weather caused the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association to cancel its December guided hike to Vermont's Champion White Ash. The program will be rescheduled to a snowless, yet-to-be-determined date in 2015, but in the meantime botanists and tree enthusiasts may want to visit www.windmillhillpinnacle.org to read forester Arthur Westing's report on the big tree.

Hikers may also enjoy reading Bob Sartini's journal entries about his adventures hiking the whole through trail from Putney Mountain to Grafton.

As a result of his comments, some additional signage will be added and an information kiosk will be repositioned in the spring when the ground can be worked. The Pinnacle Association encourages all hikers to tell about their trail experiences so our Trail Stewards can know where improvements may be necessary. Photos and a write-up of hiking experiences should be emailed to whpa@sover.net.

More detailed information will also be posted on the website in January about the Pinnacle's Art Show and Annual Meeting scheduled for April 26 at the newly renovated Main Street Arts facility in Saxtons River.

Artists are encouraged to submit their works, which must be associated with Pinnacle properties, and leave them up for the month's exhibit. Interested artists may contact Camilla Roberts at camil@vermontel.net or 802-869-1388.

Best wishes to all from the Pinnacle Association for a wonderful 2015 that includes many walks and programs featuring WHPA's trails and properties!

WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



WHERE IS THIS BUILDING AND WHAT IS IT USED FOR TODAY?

E-mail your answer to westminsternews@gmail.com or blynde@westminstervt.org, or phone Babs Lynde at 722-9516.

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

Last Month's Answer: On Page 3.

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

CAMPBELL FUND SEEKS VALENTINE'S DAY RAFFLE DONATIONS

Happy New Year from the Campbell Fund, Commissioners and Trustees.

We have been focusing on ways to increase the Fund, which in turn, will allow us to provide emergency help to our community.

Last year, we decided to do a Valentine's Day Raffle. We had so much fun pulling it together that we are planning to do it again this year.

If you would like to help us fill our basket this year, leave your donation item at the Town Hall or you can call us for further information, Pete Harrison (722-3080) or Barbara Taylor (722-4726).

WRITER SEEKS OLD PHOTOS AND FIRST HAND INFORMATION

Do you have old photographs of the Sojourns Community Clinic building (the Seth Arnold House) on Route 5 in Westminster? Or photographs of the farming operations and farm stands of the Nelson and Skrocki families when they lived there?

Did you work at the farm stand or shop there? If so, I would like to hear from you. I am writing a history of the place. Please contact me at 802-869-2711 or richgaelen2@gmail.com.

Thank you! - Richard Ewald, Westminster West.

THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THE WESTMINSTER GAZETTE RAFFLE

The Westminster Gazette raffle was a nice success, and the raffle winners were as follows:

Gift Certificate for Oil, Lube & Filter: Westminster Auto – Myra Ashcraft

Scott Morgan limited edition Fine Art Print – Diane Potter

Hand Crafted Baby Quilt: Anonymous Donor – Sue Gay

Elizabeth Harlow 1 Hour Massage – Gayle Handy

Elizabeth Harlow 1 Hour Massage – Christina Mancini

Shane Harris Painting – Thea Schlieben

\$20 Lisai's Gift Certificate: Myra Ashcraft – Patty Stickeny

Apple Maple Wine – Jordan Saunders

Brown Family Gift Basket: Brown Family Farms – Kalen Saunders

Open Tears w/ Bronze Bead Earrings & Necklace: Silver Forest – Yvette Durell

Cardinal on Snowy Leaf & Cardinal @ Birdhouse Necklace: Silver Forest – Phil DemuLio

Thank you all so much for participating in this event, whether by buying tickets or providing some of our excellent prizes!

WESTMINSTER CENTER SCHOOL WINTER CONCERT

There will be a Winter Concert, at the Westminster Center School gym, on Wednesday, Jan. 21 at 6:30 p.m. It will feature all students of Westminster Schools and both the 5th grade band and the 6th grade band, with songs celebrating the strength and courage of the human spirit.

WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

Activities

Scottish Country Dance Classes

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

Putney Contra Dance

Last Saturday of every month at Pierce Hall on East Putney Falls Road, off Rt. 5 in East Putney. A beginner's workshop is taught at 8 p.m., and the regular dance goes from 8:30 p.m. 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.

Zumba Class - Basic Level 1 (B1)

Every Sunday from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute. Suggested minimum donation.

Please call 376-5397 or e-mail paulinebob@hotmail.com to register or for more information.

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.gbf4hisglory.com/.

Meetings

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

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

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

Westminster School Board

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

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association

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

Westminster West Public Library Board

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

Development Review Board

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

Community Improvement Program Committee

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

Westminster Cares Board - No Summer Meetings

1st Wednesday of every month, at the Westminster 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, Jan. 26 at 4:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute

Westminster Recycling Committee

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

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Westminster Activities Commission
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GRAFTON BRICK MEETING HOUSE SPIRE RESTORED

The cap went back on the Grafton Brick Meeting House last week when the Grafton Historical Society completed the repairs of the building's spire.

Last repaired in 1922, the spire needed a new vertical beam and some boards repaired to keep it sturdy for the next 100 years. While off the building, the iron weather vane was also repaired after noting that a bullet hole was found in it.

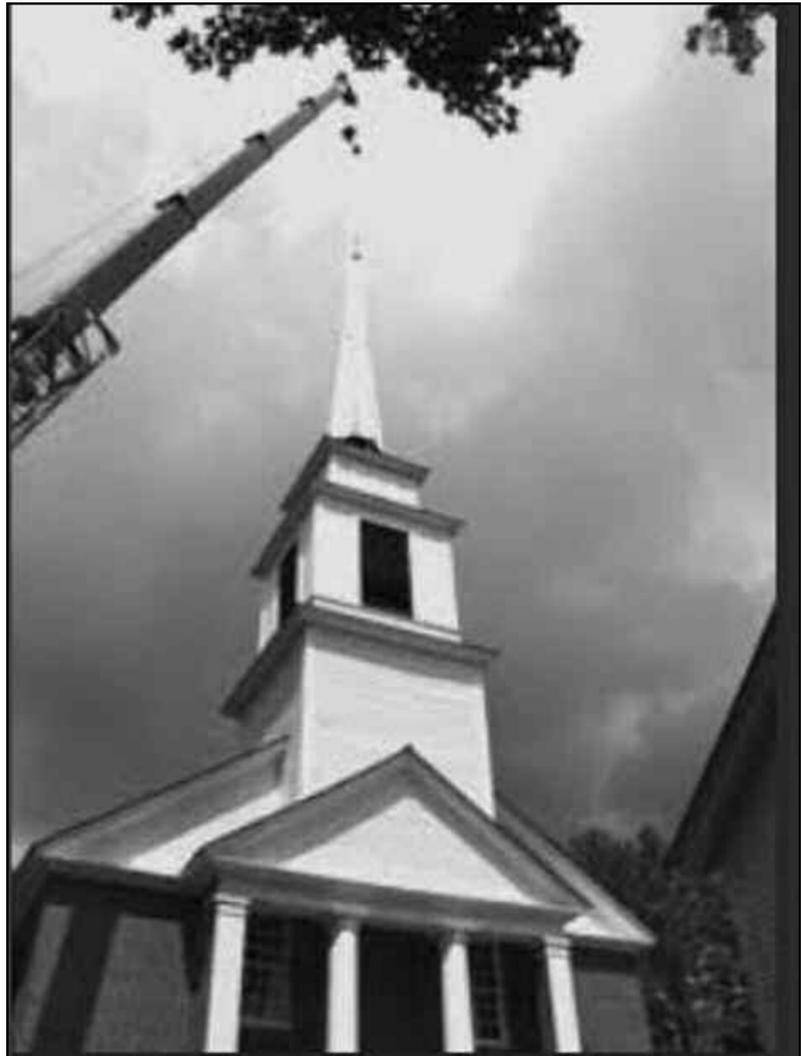
The restoration of the spire of the brick meeting house, former home of the South Congregational Society, was a project this past year for the Grafton Historical Society, the current owners. The meeting house built in 1833-34 is a landmark for the town of Grafton for almost 180 years. The sturdy brick building is on the National Register of Historic Places and included in the Library of Congress Historical American Buildings Survey. It is also considered one of the last examples of classic New England architecture of the period.

Upon taking over ownership of the building a few years ago, the historical society has provided a new furnace and floor structural repairs in addition to the spire repairs. It will next turn its attention to repairing and preserving the inside décor.

Yet, its spire has had special meaning to its identity throughout the years. The Aug. 30, 1933 issue of *Bellows Falls Times*, reported that Congressman Samuel B. Pettengill (Ind) whose family had lived in Grafton for 5 generations, spoke at the centennial of the church. He poetically noted, "To me a church without a spire is not a church. In derivation the word "spire" has nothing to do with "aspire," but to me they mean the same thing. To me a spire represents a church's hands upraised to God.

O gracious spire, a message pure
To Heaven you have expressed;
And, little church, be calm, be sure,
There will not fail that Guest!"

At right, the spire is put gently back on the top of the historic Grafton Brick Meeting House. Repairs were completed recently as a phase of a major renovation project by the Grafton Historical Society. The last time that the spire was repaired on the church built in 1834 was in 1922.



FAMILIES ELIGIBLE FOR THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT ALSO QUALIFY FOR 3SQUARESVT

Tax season is right around the corner, and families with children that qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) are eligible for an additional benefit they might not even be aware of—help with food expenses through 3SquaresVT.

3SquaresVT is Vermont's 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 families with lower incomes make ends meet.

The EITC is a refundable tax credit for lower income working families and individuals. Allowing households with children that claim the EITC to automatically be eligible for 3SquaresVT essentially extends the program to many more households than would otherwise receive benefits.

Generally, households must have incomes at or below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level, or \$3,678 per month for a family of four, to be eligible for 3SquaresVT. But the income limits for claiming the EITC are higher—up to \$52,427 annually, or \$4,369 per month. Many families who qualify for EITC don't receive other benefits, but still struggle to pay their bills due to the high cost of living; this exception is meant to ensure these families are still able to afford healthy food for their children.

SEVCA's Family Services staff are available to assist households to apply for 3SquaresVT. Many Vermont residents are eligible for the program and don't know it, so we encourage any family having trouble meeting their food expenses to contact us.

Nine out of ten 3SquaresVT participating households get at least \$50 each month. The program is open to individuals, families with or without children, seniors, and people with disabilities. In addition to special rules for EITC recip-

ients, there are also rules that make it easier for households that include a senior or a person with disability to receive benefits. Monthly benefits come on a debit card accepted at many grocery stores and farmers' markets, making it easy for households to use them.

3SquaresVT also helps Vermont by bringing federal dollars to the state and encouraging local spending, helping to support businesses and farmers in our communities.

Those interested in applying for 3SquaresVT can call SEVCA at (800) 464-9951 for an appointment to get help with their application. SEVCA also offers free tax assistance to qualified lower income households to help them understand and claim all tax credits available to them, including the Earned Income Tax Credit.

We will begin scheduling appointments for the 2015 tax season starting on January 12. For tax assistance at our Westminster location, call 800-464-9951, and for our Windsor or White River Junction locations, call 866-444-4211.

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) was established in 1965 as part of the national War on Poverty and is in its 50th year of addressing the needs of low-income residents of Windham & Windsor County. In addition to providing the "safety net" for households in financial crisis, its 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 Services, 3SquaresVT (Food Stamp) Outreach, Weatherization, Home Repair, Small Business Assistance, Financial Fitness Education, Matched Savings Accounts, Job Readiness, Tax Preparation Assistance, Thrift Stores, VT Health Connect Navigator, and Head Start.

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**January Business of the Month:
 Allen Brothers Oil**

Allen Brothers' Oil Company was established in 2001 by Tim and Craig Allen. It began primarily to supply the Allen Brothers' greenhouses and a few area farmers with off-road diesel and bio-fuel. As word spread, our Allen Brothers' Stand customers began asking for fuel deliveries.

In 2004, the company purchased another truck, and with a rapidly growing customer base Tim turned the company into a full-service heating company offering pre-buy and budget plans, as well as a 24 hour service division.

With over 3,000 customers in Cheshire and Windham counties, Allen Brothers' Oil continues to grow in both clients and staff. The office includes Karen Thomson, Debbie Collier, Karen Thalín and Bill Smith. On the road delivering fuel and servicing your needs are Jeff Mounsey, Ken Bingham, Warren O'Dette and Andre Lambert.

Tim and Stacey would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our loyal customers for their business and the success of our company. We will do our best to insure that you are all kept warm this winter, and offer you the lowest cash price, as well as small minimum deliveries.

For more information you can visit us on the web at www.allenbrosoil.com or call us directly at 722-3331.

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SUNSET SILHOUETTES

Area photographer Kate Adams recently captured this image of winter trees against the sunset sky.



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