

# Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

Vol. 12, No. 11 November 2016

## COMPASS DAY BRINGS COMMUNITY INTO SCHOOL

Over 50 relatives, friends, community members and former students helped make the 4th annual Compass Day a great success in late October. Compass Day provides an opportunity for the school to share some of the elements that make the school special. Without pretense, visitors are invited to participate in regular activities in the school, including lunch, classes, and exploratories.

Director Rick Gordon, in the most recent school newsletter, noted "it was great to have so many in the building and all just joining in our normal schedule. I think it is a wonderful reflection on the school culture that we can incorporate a big group of visitors so comfortably for all."

"It's a special day," said Brian Whitehouse, Director of Admissions at the school, "but what folks see during Compass Day is pretty much what goes on all the time. The students are smiling and engaged. They're connecting with each other and with the adults; they're reading literature and conducting science projects and doing school in all the ways other schools do. But they're also doing things like fencing and cooking and improvisational theater. And they're engaged outside classes in building strong relationships and working as a community."

"One thing that makes Compass effective is the strong relationships between students and adults," said Gordon. "Most importantly, every student has connections to a wide range of adults who provide different perspectives and supports. This network of adults embraces each student to aid in his or her learning and development. It's a lot more like an extended family than a school in that way."

Compass School was established in 1999 and is a fully-accredited independent school that serves students in grades 7-12. Compass welcomes visitors any time. For more information about Compass, call 463-2525 or e-mail [info@compassschool.org](mailto:info@compassschool.org).



Above, Jaret and Jackie Atwood, mother and son, working together on an art project during last year's Compass Day.

## VOLUNTEER SPIRIT BEGINS EARLY IN WESTMINSTER



Local elementary students learned about fire safety and community helpers this month when The Westminster Fire Department, Vermont National Guard, Vermont State Troopers and Windham County Sheriff's Department hosted an exciting open house on October 14th. Children from the Westminster Center and West Schools tried on fire fighting equipment, rode in an ATV wagon, went up in the ladder truck basket, negotiated the smoke room and met Smokey the Bear!



## NOMINATE WESTMINSTER'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

Dear Residents of Westminster:

Last chance to consider Citizen of the Year for town meeting. Many Westminster citizens contribute their time, skills, and effort to make this a great community. The Selectboard would like to recognize one of these outstanding citizens as "Westminster's Citizen of the Year" at our next Town Meeting.

Is there someone you would like to nominate for this award? If you know someone who has worked to make Westminster a better community, please let us know.

Simply send us a letter letting us know who you would like to nominate along with a brief statement as to why you feel they should be Westminster's Citizen of the Year.

Please send your nomination in a sealed envelope to:

Town of Westminster, Select Board  
 P.O. Box 147  
 Westminster, VT 05158  
 Citizen of the Year Nomination

Nominations must be received by December 2, 2016 no later than 4 p.m. All nominations will be held in the strictest confidence. The honoree will be announced during Town Meeting at BFUHS on March 4, 2017.

Thank you.

*Westminster Selectboard*

*Sheldon Beebe, Chair; Craig Allen, Vice Chair; Nancy Dalzell, Clerk;  
 Toby Young and Susan Harlow*

## GUIDED BALD HILL HIKE NOV. 5

A guided hike offered by the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association [WHPA] on Saturday, Nov. 5 from 10 a.m. to noon will introduce participants to a very special regional resource: the combined trail system on the Rockingham/Westminster lands of the 50-acre WHPA Bald Hill Reserve and the 200 acres of the Bellows Falls Union High School, which controls more land than any other public high school in Vermont!

Vanessa Stern, a member of the Bald Hill Committee of the Pinnacle Association and a WHPA Board Member, will lead this moderate jaunt to explore area uplands and the river path of the Bald Hill Reserve, as well as a new trail.

Participants should dress warmly, wear waterproof shoes, and bring water. Hikers should meet at the Bald Hill kiosk on Covered Bridge Road in Westminster. Please contact Vanessa Stern at 463-4948 or davidandvanessa@gmail.com for information and registration. Visit the Trails & Maps pull-down menu on [www.windmillhillpinnacle.org](http://www.windmillhillpinnacle.org) for a map detailing the trailheads.

A link on the website's Home page will reveal progress on the Pinnacle Association's project to renovate the rustic cabin at the Pinnacle overlook, the most popular destination on the 23-mile Pinnacle trail system that runs from Putney Mountain to Grafton.




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On-line at:  
[www.westminstervt.org](http://www.westminstervt.org)

## HOUSE BLEND 10TH ANNIVERSARY CONCERT NOV. 12

House Blend, a Saxtons River-based a cappella chorus, celebrates its 10th anniversary with a concert on Saturday, Nov. 12 at 7:30 p.m. at the Congregational Church of Westminster West.

The self-led chorus, composed of experienced singers from local communities and as far away as Rutland, is committed to sharing the joy of their singing experience, including songs from many cultures and traditions.

Their anniversary concert will include some of the group's favorites from their years of singing together.

Joining House Blend at this concert will be guest artist Peter Blanchette of Northampton, Mass. Blanchette plays an 11-string archguitar, which he invented so that he could play Renaissance lute music on a guitar. Blanchette's repertoire spans medieval to contemporary to ethnic music. Internationally known, he has performed at the Kennedy Center and on Prairie Home Companion.

Afterwards, the audience is invited to join the musicians for cake to honor



House Blend's tenth anniversary. Suggested donation is \$10. Visit [www.houseblend.org](http://www.houseblend.org) for more information.

## WHAT'S UP AT THE TOWN HALL: OPEN TOWN POSITIONS

**Five Year Capital Plan:** The Selectboard have been working extremely hard on the Town owned buildings. The buildings are: the Town Hall, the Post Office, the Town Garage, the Westminster West Town Hall, and the North Westminster Community House.

Each Selectboard member has been given a building to research the capital needs, to keep and in some cases restore, the integrity of the structure. The reasoning behind this is to preserve the buildings at a pace as to not affect our taxes in a large capital need all at once. So far, the Selectboard have budget numbers for the Town Hall renovation and the Westminster West Town Hall upgrade.

The Town Garage and the North Westminster Community House have been investigated and the Board member will introduce an outline of the immediate needs versus the overall capital necessity at the next couple of Board meetings. The Post Office is in pretty good shape as it is a rental unit and has been kept up as needs become apparent.

All of this work is to keep "the public in the know". Please feel free to comment on the progression of these buildings and the needs as you see them. You can call your Selectboard member or call the Town Manager to discuss your concerns, approval, or just make comment(s).

**Town Positions:** Keeping you updated on the progress of filling Town Committee vacancies. We have the following positions still available. Please call the Town Hall if you are interested.

**Activities Committee; Two open seats** – Purpose is to identify the different recreational activities available to residents both in town and in surrounding areas, develop and maintain a list of such activities, conduct a program designed to inform residents of the recreational opportunities available to them, facilitate coordination among various private and public organizations that provide recreational opportunities to residents, develop and present to the Selectboard for approval a three year recreation plan that provides for recreational opportunities to town residents of all ages and allows for funding of such opportunities.

Committee meets on the second Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.

**Conservation Committee; Three open seats** – Acts as an advisory panel, but is empowered to conduct research and investigations, on behalf of the Town, into any matters that are pertinent to the goals and policies in the Town Plan that address Natural Resources, Water Resources, agricultural lands, conservation districts, and energy resources to the extent that energy resources and energy systems impact the natural environment.

**Planning Commission; One open seat** – Has broad authority to plan for the future needs of their community, which may be addressed in drafting and maintaining of the Town Plan, subdivision regulations, zoning bylaws/ordinances which are required to be reviewed and updated every five years, and identifying tools, regulatory and non-regulatory, to implement the Town Plan. Committee meets on the second Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Town Hall.

**Sandwich Board:** I need your help. One of our message boards was removed from the Westminster West lawn at the intersection of Patch Road and Westminster West Road. If anybody has any information about this missing sign, please call me. We would appreciate getting it back. These boards are critical to keeping everyone abreast of the upcoming Town activities.

**Appointments:** It has been brought to our attention that the public may have the need to make an appointment for either the Town Manager, Zoning Administer, or the Town Clerk after normal business hours. Both Alison Bigwood and Russell Hodgkins are willing to make these arrangements with you if needed. Please feel free to call us and we will set up your meeting.

**Citizen of the Year:** I will keep reminding you (the Public) to nominate your candidate for "Citizen of the Year". Please get your candidates name and a brief narrative about them to us no later than December 2nd.

As always, please feel free to call the Town Manager's Office regarding concerns, issues or comments.

## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors met October 5th at the Westminster Institute at 4:30 PM with Treasurer Miriam Lanata presiding. The following board members attended: Reggie Borden, Don Dawson, Barbara Sherrod, Robin Lawrence, Heidi Anderson, Lori Larue, Kathy Elliott and Director Donna Dawson. Pete Harrison, Connie Sanderson and Sally Ryea were unable to attend. Westminster Cares creates opportunities for seniors and disabled adults to live with independence and dignity in the community. Your support to this care-giving organization is a way for all of us to take care of our friends.

Anyone interested in learning more about Westminster Cares, volunteering to deliver meals on wheels or driving neighbors to doctor appointments, working on a committee, making a contribution or attending a workshop may contact Donna Dawson at 722-3607 or by e-mail at [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net). Check us out on the web@ [www.westminstercares.org](http://www.westminstercares.org) and like us on Facebook.

Programs & Services Provided in September:

**Meals On Wheels:** In September, 1 client was added to MOW. WC volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 15 different people. In addition, two frozen entrees were delivered each Friday to eight people on Fridays for weekend meals (16 total weekend meals).

**Transportation** – During the month of September, 17 rides were provided by nine volunteers who drove seniors to medical appointments; the pharmacy, and our Healthy Aging group.

**Nursing Program** – During September, our community nurse made six home visits on behalf of five seniors for medication and pain management, blood pressure checks, foot care and diabetes education. Isabelle saw an additional seven seniors at the monthly Blood Pressure Clinic at Senior Lunch.

**Meetings Attended by Staff** in September – Meetings held with our nurse, treasurer, board president. Met with the Gazette Board and the Cares Group of Windham and Windsor County. Also attended a Disabilities Rights and Etiquette Training.

**Programs in September** – Two Secrets of Healthy Aging session, four

Gentle Yoga classes, 24 Strength Training classes, four Artist in Each of Us classes; five Chair Yoga classes and one Senior Lunch.

**Assistance and Referrals** in September: Assisted clients with transportation requests and information regarding Medicare application. Made one home visit to do one Meals on Wheels intake.

**Friendly Visiting** – Volunteers made eight friendly visits in September.

**Medical Equipment** – In September we loaned out 13 pieces of equipment. One piece of equipment was returned to us and four new pieces were donated to us.

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 6 from 1 to 3 p.m. when we celebrate our 90+ year olds in town, Everyone is welcome.

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

MEMORIAL DONATIONS IN OCTOBER 2016

In memory of our beautiful cousin, Joan Smidutz from Joy and David Chartier

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Clarence & Audrey Gochey

Linda Rood & Roger Turner

Betty & Hugh Haggerty

Joan Larkin

Sue & Chris Cota

Lori Larue

## 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 Nov. 1 at 7 p.m.

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

Number of calls in September: 40

Number of calls through Oct. 26th: 31

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 317

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 134

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting October 4th with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 23 members present and 7 members excused. Currently there are 41 members of the volunteer fire department. Don Dawson has volunteered to manage our web site, Check it out. [westminsterfireandrescue.org](http://westminsterfireandrescue.org).

Mike Fawcett read the minutes from previous meeting. They were accepted with no changes. Flu shots were available to all members. A big thank you goes out to Mary Warzecha (RN) for taking the time to administer these shots.

Betsy and Sheldon Beebe were here as guests this evening. They presented a short video of the fire fighting life of Justin Beebe, their son. Justin died on the line of duty as a LOLO fire fighter and smoke jumper. Sheldon and Betsy thanked us for our participation in the Memorial Service for Justin at BFUHS.

Fire Prevention Open House: Friday, October 7th was a fun filled day and a huge success. Around 150 kids were present, including all of Westminster West, K-4 from the Center School, 20 from Squeaky Sneakers pre K pre-school and 10 home schooled, plus the sheriff's department, Vermont Forestry and Smokey the Bear. Several events took place. There were rides on the Tower, off road vehicles and an Engine. Representatives from Golden Cross Ambulance and the State Police were there. Thank you from Chief Cole Streeter to the many volunteers who gave so much of their time and energy to make the Fire Prevention Open House such a huge success.

Walking outside in the dark: Now that we have reverted back to standard time and it is getting dark much earlier, we want everyone to be more alert, walkers

and drivers alike. There have been several fatal pedestrian accidents in the area lately and we want to remind those who walk to be extra cautious. We are not trying to say that the walker is at fault, but there are precautionary measures that can be taken. And just because you have the right-of-way in a cross walk, don't assume the vehicle will respect that. Keep your eye on those vehicles when crossing. They may not see you or, guess what, someone could be texting. Also, 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. This is very dangerous and has often resulted in fatal injuries to the pedestrian. And don't have a headset on. You need to be able to hear the traffic to be safe.

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

At the October meeting, the members voted to have all memorial donations go to the scholarship fund to be given to a Bellows Falls High School graduating senior.

Donations in October: Mike Fawcett, Durand Toyota/Ford, Peter Stamm.

The following donations were received in memory of Albie Lober: Gary and Tracy Smith, Donald Maguire, Romano Trucking, Inc., Peter Root, Artie Aiken, Susan [Mrs. Albie] Lober, Cathy and Walter Kurkul, Jane Lawrence, Margaret Aldrich, Bob and Susan Lober, Richard Colby, GW Plastics, Joanne Hurlburt, Floyd and Sue Lawrence, Brian and Phyllis Parker, Virginia Coursen.

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

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

Check us out on our Web site [www.westminsterfireandrescue.org](http://www.westminsterfireandrescue.org)

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

## Changing of the Seasons

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

This month's article is on changing of the seasons and how birds and animals adapt to the coming colder weather. Most of our songbirds have flown south but a few like the Slate-colored Juncos and the American Tree Sparrows have moved down from Alaska and Canada to spend the winter with us.

The Juncos prefer eating on the ground rather than at the feeders. They are gray with white bellies and white outer tail feathers that are easily seen as they fly. The males and females look alike except the males have darker heads and the overall color of the females is duller gray.

The Tree Sparrows also feed on the ground. To identify them, look for a dark brown spot on the white chest which the birders call a "stickpin" and they also have a red-brown cap. In my yard, the Juncos and Tree Sparrows feed together, with the Tree Sparrows dashing back and forth between the forsythia bush and the feeders.

We see blackbirds flocking together which are made up of European Starlings, Common Grackles and Red-winged Blackbirds. The thinking behind flocking is that flocking provides group protection against predators and a better chance to find food. I'm always amazed to watch a flock twist and turn in formation.

Fall is hawk watching time on Putney Mountain. We are hoping to break our record of the most migrating hawks this year. A Sand-Hill Crane flew over recently. Very few of them are seen in Vermont. He or she was low and circled several times so we could get a good look. They are large with long necks and long legs. What a thrill!

During the warm days we had in mid-October, many of us saw lady bugs on the south side of our houses. These are the Asian lady bugs that were imported about 20 years ago and they spread. They are looking for a warm place to spend the winter. They come into your home through cracks near doors and windows and congregate at your windows because light attracts them. They won't eat aphids on your houseplants or cause any harm unless you bash them with a broom. Then they emit a smell and will stain your walls. The best advice is to vacuum them up with a hand-vacuum and dump them outside.

I constantly hear acorns "pinging" off my metal roof. Acorns are an important form of mast because of their large amount of protein. Bears, deer, turkeys, squirrels and other animals depend on them. I read an interesting article of a Bluejay caching acorns. He was given credit for burying 4500 acorns up to a mile away. I have to wonder who has time to watch a Bluejay cache that many. Squirrels will only carry acorns up to 100 feet. When we spot a small oak tree growing in the woods, we can guess that a Bluejay or squirrel didn't find all that was buried.

We know that birds molt but how about animals like weasels?

The ermine, formerly called the short-tailed weasel and the long-tailed weasel go through two complete molts a year in New England. The fall molt that replaces brown hair with white occurs from October to



An ermine in its winter coat.

December. The spring molt that replaces white with brown occurs from March to May. The reason for being white in the winter is to blend in and not be seen by predators and the white hair is warmer. Even being all white otherwise, they have a black-tipped tail. I wonder if, in a winter like last year with no snow, would they still change color. I think they would because the molts are triggered by the length of daylight. It would seem to me a white weasel in a brown background would have to do a lot of hiding.

All of us are familiar with the woolly bear caterpillars and how they curl up when we touch them. They go through 6 molts before they finish shedding their old skin. They over winter under leaf litter, rocks or logs. They emerge in the spring as Isabella tiger moths. We try to forecast the winter by the amount of brown or black. The longer the black bands, the more severe the winter will be. The longer the middle brown band, the milder the winter will be. This is a Yankee legend, while not scientific, it is fun to think a woolly bear caterpillar could forecast the length and severity of winter.

Animals that aren't active during the winter are entering hibernation or dormancy. Many of us are waiting for the black bears to den up so we can put out our bird feeders.

These are just a few ways that creatures adapt to New England's changing seasons. For us, it's time to rake the leaves and put the gardens away for another year.

# Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

## REDEFINING HEALTH & WELL-BEING IN THE AGING POPULATION

Chronological age itself plays almost no role in accounting for differences in older people's health and well-being, according to a new, large-scale study by a multidisciplinary team of researchers at the University of Chicago.

The work, part of the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project (NSHAP), supported by the National Institute on Aging of the National Institutes of Health, is a major longitudinal survey of a representative sample of 3,000 people aged 57 to 85 done by the independent research organization NORC at U Chicago. The study yielded comprehensive new data about the experience of aging in America that formed the underpinning of the research and its conclusions.

The research presents a sharp departure from the traditional biomedical model's reliance on a checklist of infirmities centered on heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.

Using what they call a "comprehensive model" of health and aging, the team has shown how other factors such as psychological well-being, sensory function, mobility and health behaviors are essential parts of an overall health profile that better predicts mortality.

"The new comprehensive model of health identifies constellations of health completely hidden by the medical model and reclassifies about half of the people seen as healthy as having significant vulnerabilities that affect the chances that they may die or become incapacitated within five years," said University of Chicago biopsychologist Martha McClintock, lead author of "An Empirical Redefinition of Comprehensive Health and Well-being in the Older Adults of the U.S.," in the current issue of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

"At the same time, some people with chronic disease are revealed as having many strengths that lead to their reclassification as quite healthy, with low risks of death and incapacity," co-author and demographer Linda Waite added.

The paper is based on the results of a major longitudinal study of aging Americans, funded by the National Institute on Aging, that is the first of its kind to collect this sort of information from a scientifically selected group of people.

The comprehensive model reflects a definition of health long advanced, but little studied, by the World Health Organization that considers health to include psychological, social, and physical factors in addition to the diseases that are the basis for the current medical model of health.

In addition to finding that chronological age itself plays little or no role in determining differences in health, the research also found that:

Cancer by itself is not related to other conditions that undermine health.

Poor mental health, which afflicts one in eight older adults, undermines health in ways not previously recognized.

Obesity seems to pose little risk to older adults with excellent physical and mental health.

Sensory function and social participation play critical roles in sustaining or undermining health.

Having broken a bone since age 45 is a major marker for future health issues in people's lives.

Older men and women have different patterns of health and well-being during aging.

Mobility is one of the best markers of well-being.

"From a health system perspective, a shift of attention is needed from disease-focused management, such as medications for hypertension or high cholesterol, to overall well-being across many areas. Instead of policies focused on reducing obesity as a much lamented health condition, greater support for reducing loneliness among isolated older adults or restoring sensory functions would be more effective in enhancing health and well-being in the older population," the report concluded.

### COMPUTER CLASSES FOR SENIORS

Westminster Cares will be hosting a series of Computer Classes for seniors in November and an Advanced Directives workshop in early December. If you are interested in attending either of these, please call the office to reserve a space; 722-3607.

### NEED HELP GETTING TO THE POLLS?

Westminster Cares is offering rides to the polls on Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 8. If you are a senior resident of Westminster or an adult unable to drive, we may be able to help.

Please call Donna in the office before Election Day to schedule a ride with one of our volunteers; 722-3607.

### WC CELEBRATION OF AGING

Please join us as we celebrate the lives of residents of our town who are 90 years of age and older at our 9th Celebration of Aging and Annual Meeting. The event will take place on Sunday, Nov. 6 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Westminster Fire Station. There will be a short business meeting followed by a slide show and celebration. Light fare and refreshments will be served.

If you are 90 or older or know someone who is 90 or older, please give us a call at 722-3607. This event is open to community - we would love you to be a part of the celebration!

Please call Donna Dawson in the office for more information.

## WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO



**What was this factory, where was it located and what was made there?**

**Thanks for several new Westminster mystery pictures that were donated recently, including the one above. But, we still need more Mystery Photos and especially commentary!**

**Please contact the Gazette if you have photos that we might use for this regular feature of our community paper. E-mail [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com). Thank you!**

### ELECTION DAY NEWS & INFORMATION

News from the Town Clerks Office

We are back at the Westminster Institute for Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 8 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Absentee ballots are available now at the town office. We look forward to seeing you at the polls on what will be a very busy day!

We also want to thank the Westminster Center School for having us there for the August Primary.

### NEWS FROM THE CAMPBELL FUND

The days are getting colder and the leaves, although still gorgeous to look at, will soon be on the ground. Winter is about to make an appearance.

The Campbell Fund is once again sponsoring a Mitten Tree in town. Thanks to those knitters who have been busy all summer we've already had several deliveries of hats, mittens and slipper socks for the Tree. You still have lots of time to get those needles busy.

We are planning to have drop-off spots at the Butterfield and Westminster West Libraries and the Town Hall. Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please email us at [brwoodtaylor@comcast.net](mailto:brwoodtaylor@comcast.net), or call Karen (460-0498), Barbara (722-4726) or Pete (722-3080).

### SENIOR THANKSGIVING LUNCH

Please join us for the Monthly Senior Thanksgiving Lunch, a potluck for side dishes and desserts, on Thursday, Nov. 10 at noon at the Congregational Church of Westminster.

Please call Donna at Westminster Cares to let her know if you're coming and what you'd like to bring; 722-3607.

### FREE TAX PREP HELP FROM SEVCA

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) will provide free tax preparation for lower income taxpayers for the 2017 tax filing season through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. In order to help as many families as possible claim the tax credits and refunds available to them, SEVCA is now recruiting volunteers to work at our Westminster site during tax season. A volunteer orientation meeting will be held Tuesday, November 15 at 4:00 pm at SEVCA's main office, 91 Buck Drive, Westminster, VT.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers free tax help to people who have low to moderate income, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and those who speak limited English and who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns. IRS-certified volunteers provide free federal and state income tax return preparation with electronic filing.

Don't know that much about taxes? Don't worry — you'll receive specialized training from a certified VITA instructor plus IRS online courses. We are looking for individuals who are willing and able to commit 3 to 4 hours per week from January 31 – April 11, 2017. Although prior tax preparation experience is not necessary, a commitment to training and certification is required. Training sessions will be held in Westminster during December and January and at your convenience using online IRS self-study training materials. Continuing on-site training and supervision is provided during the tax preparation season.

To learn how you can make a difference in your community by becoming a VITA volunteer, please contact Susan Brace at [sbrace@sevca.org](mailto:sbrace@sevca.org) or 722-4575, ext. 199.

# WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

## Activities

### Scottish Country Dance Classes

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

### Putney Contra Dance

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

### Senior Potluck Lunch

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

### Bellows Falls Gallery Walk

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

### Secrets of Healthy Aging

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

### Contra Dance

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

### Gentle Yoga

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

### Chair Yoga

Every Friday from 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the First Congregational Church in Westminster. Call Westminster Cares at 722-3607 for more information.

### Living Strong Classes

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

### Knitting Together

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

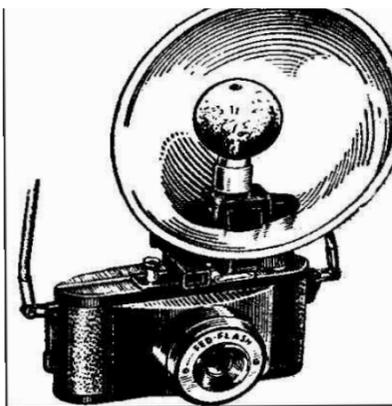
All our yarn is from community donation and we distribute our completed work to all area schools and Parks Place. More knitters at all skill levels are wanted and we can promise you an enjoyable experience. For details or to donate yarn contact Caroline at 463-4653.

### Westminster West Public Library Trustees

The Westminster West Public Library Trustees meet on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. at the library. They welcome visits from the public. Contact Lisa Cavanaugh at 387-4682.

### Bellows Falls Farmers' Market

Stop by Hetty Green Park in Bellows Falls every Friday from 4 to 7 p.m., for our Farmers Market. For details visit [www.bffarmersmarket.com](http://www.bffarmersmarket.com).



## BUSY SEASON AT 1ST CONGREGATIONAL

November and December have lots of activities at the First Congregational Church (3470 Route 5 in Westminster). On voting day, Tuesday, Nov. 8, from noon to 2 p.m. there will be a special Souper Tuesday. This is a time for everyone and anyone to come and visit with a warm meal. Regular Souper Wednesday will start on Jan 3.

On Saturday, Nov. 12, the Chicken and Biscuit Supper offers chicken, biscuits, mashed potatoes, gravy, winter squash, green beans, rolls, cranberry sauce, and homemade apple pie for dessert.

On Saturday, Nov. 26, the Christmas Bazaar and Christmas Café will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.. Come see the crafts, candles, gifts, handmade items, collectibles and homemade baked goods. At 11 am, Santa will visit and children can have their picture taken and do a craft project. The Café will have coffee, tea and treats available in the morning and soup, chili, sandwiches, chips and beverages for lunch.

During November, the community birthday calendar is being distributed. If you did not order a copy, you can still purchase one for \$10 by calling Lucy Matteau at 722-9040 or asking about it at one of the activities listed in this article.

## Faith Community

### The First Congregational Church of Westminster

The Rev. Sami Jones McRae, Pastor. 3470 Route 5, PO Box 122, Westminster, 802-722-4148. Sunday worship is at 10 a.m. Communion is the first Sunday of each month.

The church has a ramp and lift for wheelchair access as well as a handicapped bathroom. Sunday School is available; call the church to register your children. The First Congregational Church of Westminster, Inc., 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 Fred Gray and Malcolm Toleno.

Rev. Webster-Toleno currently holds office hours on Monday and Thursday afternoons, and people are welcome to drop by. However, since "office hours" sometimes means she's out visiting people in their homes, it's a good idea to make an appointment if you really want to catch her.

She can be reached at the church on those days at 387-2334, via cell phone at 579-8356 or e-mail [susiewt@gmail.com](mailto:susiewt@gmail.com).

### Walpole Bible Church

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.walpolebiblechurch.org](http://www.walpolebiblechurch.org).

### Walpole Unitarian Church

Services are at 10 a.m. Children's Religious Education begins at 10 a.m. with the adults and moves to Hastings House at 10:15. Refreshments and conversation are held after the service with the children included. [www.walpoleunitarian.org](http://www.walpoleunitarian.org).

## Meetings

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

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

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

### Westminster School Board

1st and 3rd Tuesday at 6:30 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

1st 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, Nov. 28 at 4:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute

### Westminster Institute Board

will meet on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. in the Institute.

### The Westminster East Parish Board

will meet on Nov. 8 at 7 p.m. at the Institute.

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

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## QUILT RAFFLE FUNDRAISER FOR WESTMINSTER CARES



Several weeks ago, Westminster Cares received a surprise. A hand-appliqued summer bed quilt with coordinating bed skirt were made and donated by Linda Wilson, of Westminster.

The beautiful quilt has a hearts and stars pattern and should fit most twin size beds. Donna Dawson, director said she was "surprised and thrilled to receive this beautiful treasure. We're incredibly grateful to Linda for all the time, care and skill that went into making this and her generosity in choosing to donate it to Westminster Cares."

Linda, who says she's been embroidering since before she even started school, intended for the quilt to be used to raise funds for Westminster Cares. "I wanted to be supportive of their efforts. Westminster Cares does a lot for people and I think it's important to give back to the community in some way. This was one way I could give back."

Raffle tickets for the quilt will be on sale on Election Day at the Institute, and also at the Celebration of Aging at the Fire Station on Sunday, Nov. 6. Tickets are \$2 each or 3 for \$5. The quilt will be on display during these events. You can also stop by the office to purchase tickets.

Above, Donna Dawson and Linda Wilson display the summer quilt that Linda recently donated to Westminster Cares.

## NEW LEADERS HEAD UP PINNACLE ASSOC.

Two new leaders were chosen to head up the Board of Trustees of the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association. Rick Cowan of Cambridgeport and Sarah Waldo of Westminster West were elected as Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

Cowan replaces Susan Roman of Westminster West, who led the organization for the past three years. Westminster West resident Alison Latham and Molly Wilson of Westminster are continuing as Treasurer and Secretary.

Known for its 23-mile trail system that runs from Putney Mountain to Grafton, the Pinnacle Association is a tax-exempt organization that has protected almost 2000 acres for non-motorized recreation, hunting, and habitat preservation since its founding 25 years ago.

The organization's properties are located in Westminster, Brookline, Athens, Grafton, and Rockingham. Interestingly, because WHPA recognizes the importance of tax revenue to those five towns, the Pinnacle Association voluntarily pays property taxes on every acre of land that it stewards. That factor, as well as the responsible care of its lands and trails, which are maintained by volunteer Trail Stewards, make many property owners loyal supporters of WHPA and its land-conservation efforts.

Goals for the 2016-2017 year include continuing WHPA's mission to conserve land, preserve habitat and watersheds, and connect people of all ages to the natural world. Both Cowan and Waldo are looking forward to moving ahead with plans for new programs and land acquisition. They recognize the increasing importance of land conservation in the face of rapid environmental changes and specifically want to expand WHPA's unfragmented habitat that supports healthy plants, animals, humans, ecosystems, and watersheds. Rick Cowan additionally aims "to foster a new generation of conservationists by luring them away from their screens and onto our trails to experience nature's beauty and power first hand."

## CELEBRATING THE SEASON



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We meet most Thursdays, 7:30 a.m. at Kurn Hattin School in the Mayo Center, Westminster, Vermont.  
 New members welcome.



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## November Businesses of the Month: Ruggiero Trash Removal



Ruggiero Trash Removal would like to wish everyone Happy, Healthy Holidays. We extend our best wishes to you and yours as the New Year approaches.

Ruggiero Trash Removal is a locally owned and operated family business, with more than 20 years in the trash hauling and recycling services. Three generations of Ruggiero's work together to meet the recycling and trash needs of Southern Vermont and New Hampshire for both commercial and residential customers.

As long-term members of the community, the Ruggiero's are invested in providing quality services. Our processing facility allows for safe and proper handling of an extensive variety of trash and recycling.

We offer curbside services as well as containers ranging from 2 to 40 yards. These containers can be used for trash or for the recycling of paper, plastic, cardboard, masonry, wood, and metal. Pick up services can be offered weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or as a onetime service. Our rates at Ruggiero Trash Removal are reasonable and straightforward.

We do NOT burden our customers with diesel sur-charges, rental fees, or hidden costs. Ruggiero's is dedicated to keeping costs low, while providing the highest quality services to keep our community clean. There is no job too big or too small for Ruggiero Trash Removal. Remember if you chuck it, we truck it.

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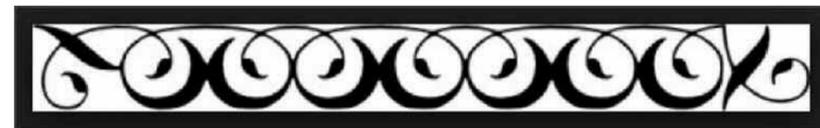
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