

Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org

Vol. 10, No.11 November 2014

Compass School Celebrates Construction Project Completion

What began in 2010 as a tiny vision to build an "art yurt" grew to an impressive end with the celebration of Compass School's \$1.1 million construction project recently.

As school director Rick Gordon explained, "Vermont Council on the Arts had recognized Compass for the impressive way in which the arts were infused throughout our curriculum and asked where we did such great work. The arts council inspired us to develop a dedicated space for the arts, and thus began a 4 year journey to this transformative project for the school."

Gordon estimated over 200 people were involved in the planning of this project, from the initial designs with Compass students and then with Keene State College's Communicorp architecture class, through the approval process from USDA Rural Development and the support of architect Charles Michal and the contractor Wesfield Construction.

Recognizing the strength of the school's learning community, the Keene State students pushed for a bigger vision so the facilities on the outside would reflect the quality in the inside. After surveying students and staff, the Keene students identified several major needs for the school beyond just the arts: a more inviting entry and exterior, better traffic flow and landscaping, field space for outdoor recreation, increased storage space, and improved energy efficiency.

The final project included construction of a 900 sq. ft. art lab, new science lab and administrative offices, numerous small study rooms, a new library, new lighting throughout the building, a covered entryway, sports field, and improved furnishings throughout the school.

Less visible, but probably more significant, according to Admissions Director Brian Whitehouse, are improvements in the educational program and the weekly schedule. The biggest concrete changes are the addition of art, physical education, and life skills classes for grades 7-10, "quest" time for 11-12 graders to pursue personalized learning that meet specific competency requirements for graduation, and expanded health related programming throughout the year.

At the building celebration, Director Gordon expressed lessons he gained from this experience, "1) keeping the perspective that people are more important than things. Be patient with others who face challenges such as illness in one's family or mistakes out of anyone's control. 2) The value of kindness—being friendly and understanding and respectful helps everyone be more effective and smoothes the inevitable bumps along the road, and 3) Most importantly, the value of integrity—to do the job and do it well, even when no one notices.

"The small stuff matters, both in the product of your work and the process. As we ask of students daily, doing your best, with grace and a smile, can make



Compass Director Rick Gordon, left, discusses highlights of the new construction with Keene State professor Peter Temple and student Fritz Lang, architect Jim Williams, and Marcia Steckler.

the world just a little better thanks to your efforts."

Gordon offered special thanks to the craftspeople and laborers who did the hard work with integrity and quality and too often don't get the recognition they deserve.

Wesfield President Andrew Loney thanked the Compass students and staff who "were welcoming to the workers, patient with the process, and, most impressively, willing to join in the work of building preparation and set-up to create such a beautiful learning environment."

The impact of the new construction is visible throughout the building. From the bright, welcoming entry to the spacious art lab to new ceilings and lighting throughout the building, Compass has a fresh and vibrant facility to support its engaging program of learning.

DEC. 2 SPECIAL WESTMINSTER MEETING WARNING

The legal voters of the Town of Westminster, Vermont are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School auditorium in Westminster, Vermont, on Tuesday, December 2, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. to take action on the following Articles:

ARTICLE 1 To see which of the three options described below shall be implemented by the Selectboard for town trash collection and recycling. These are three of five options that were reviewed by the Selectboard at two public hearings and were formulated by Public opinion.

Option # 1 - Remove Town Regulated Trash & Recycling

- Taxpayer will manage their trash & recycling needs independently
- Town will keep association with trash district annual assessment through taxation

Option # 3 - "Pay as You Throw" - Curbside Pickup with an independent contractor chosen through competitive bid which entails the following :

- Curbside pickup of Trash every week
- Curbside pickup of Recycling at predetermined cycles
- Curbside pickup of Leaf/yard disposal at predetermined cycles (FY17)
- Curbside pickup of Food Waste at predetermined cycles (FY18)
- Taxpayer to pay for first bag/week trash through taxation at approximately \$3.50/bag. Additional bags to be purchased through Town at approximately \$3.50/bag.

SEEKING NOMINATIONS FOR WESTMINSTER CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

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:

- Net Cost to Taxpayer = additional \$280 +/- per year based on 62 bags
- Option # 5 - Join Rockingham's Transfer Station and Create Satellite Station in Westminster West which entails the following :

- Bringing your Trash to either transfer station with coupons from Town
- Pay according to weight or size of bag disposed of (Trash)
- Bring your Recycling to either transfer station
- Bring your Leaf/yard disposal to Rockingham transfer station (FY17)
- Bring your Food Waste to Rockingham transfer station (FY18)
- Taxpayers to pay for first bag/week trash through taxation at approximately \$2.50/bag. Additional bags to be purchased through Town at approximately \$2.50/bag.

- Net Cost to taxpayer = additional \$195 +/- per year based on 62 bags
- ARTICLE 2 To transact any other business which may be properly brought before said meeting.

*Westminster Select Board
Alison Bigwood, Town Clerk,
Nate Stoddard – Chair
Toby Young – Clerk
Craig Allen
Peter Barrett
Paul Banik*

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

Nominations must be received by Dec. 9, 2014 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 February 28, 2015.

Thank you.

*Westminster Selectboard:
Nathan Stoddard, Chair; Toby Young, Craig Allen,
Peter Barrett, and Paul Banik*

TEACHER AND VOLUNTEER CELEBRATES 103RD

Retired teacher Vivian Prindl, an annual volunteer at Kurn Hattin Homes for 19 years, recently celebrated her 103rd birthday with the children. As the students cheered for her, she told them that the children and staff at Kurn Hattin were "the kindest people she had met in all of her travels."



LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PHOTO

Last month's picture was the Riverside Gift Shop owned by Bill and Izzy Parda on Route 5 south of the Westminster Village, and across the street was the Riverside Restaurant where we enjoyed Izzy's German-style cooking.

Correct answers were from Bernie Lawrence, Christian Blake, Bob Bennett, Bill and Marlene O'Connor, Richard Taylor, Norm Wright, Barb Greenough, Bob Gay, Bob Goodell, Dick Brown (who now lives in Florida!), Wanda West and Audrey Gokey.

HOLIDAY LUNCHEON POTLUCK

The Senior Congregate Holiday Luncheon Potluck will be held on Thursday, Nov. 13 at noon at the First Congregational Church of Westminster. Please call Donna at Westminster Cares 722-3607 to let her know you'll be attending and what you'd like to bring.

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EVENTS AT THE WESTMINSTER SCHOOLS

It's been a busy beginning of the school year in Westminster, but these are a few of the top activities and stories.

Teacher of the Year

October 22 was Outstanding Teacher Day at UVM's College of Education. For 33 years, UVM and Vermont School Districts have joined to appreciate Outstanding Teachers. Jennie (Nowers) Perry was honored at the celebration, representing Westminster and WNESU. She was born to be a teacher! She sets high standards for herself and her students and creates a safe environment for learning. Jennie holds her students accountable; she consistently models clear academic and social expectations. Students in Jennie's room form a strong community. They know the importance of celebrating each other's accomplishments and encourage peers to do their very best. Every student feels important and has a sense of belonging in her class. Jennie is a teacher leader and serves on the School Leadership Team. She often takes on organizing celebrations for the successes we experience throughout the year. She serves on the parent-teacher group and has strong connections to our community.

Fun Run!

This year's fall Fun Run on October 17, was a beautiful, sunny afternoon. Participants - 95 students, an abundance of parents, and 8 teachers - walked, ran or strolled around the school's soccer field and on the Evans Woods Trails. Thanks to Kurn Hattin staff and students for an excellent job on trail prep! Each runner received a medallion created by event organizer, Stacie Illingworth.

Community Building

During our first weeks, every classroom spends time building a positive school environment - including agreeing on classroom and school wide rules. Students have a voice in this process and take this responsibility seriously. At all ages, Westminster children have a great deal of ownership of their schools and are engaged in making school a good place. For example, at the West School, 2nd & 3rd graders read about and discussed the qualities of good citizenship. They developed a list of adjectives describing a good citizen: respectful, kind, nice, caring, helpful, inspirational, truthful, honest, cooperative and responsible! The 6th graders worked together to develop their class community, stressing communication and cooperation. They talked about the responsibilities and freedoms that come with being the oldest students in the school.



At top, WNESU's Teacher of the Year, Jennie Perry, and below it, Westminster Center School's Fun Run.

STUDENT INSPIRED BY LOCAL CHILDREN TO DO GOOD IN THE WORLD

In March of 2014, 14 year old Madison (Maddy) Schumacher participated in an annual project that changed her life. The Project Week, called "Kids Helping Kids" was coordinated with her classmates from New Hampton School in New Hampshire, a boarding and day school for grades 9 - 12.

The purpose is to provide their high school students time for an extended investigation of key issues through educational opportunities not possible in the standard classroom setting.

The school has a partnership with Kurn Hattin Homes in Westminster to be used as a learning site. Kurn Hattin is a residential school and home for at-risk children.

The New Hampton kids cheerfully participated in a number of maintenance and community service projects, assisting the teachers by tutoring young readers and mentoring the younger children at the campus. Working with children in need had a profound impact on Maddy.

"She came home filled with purpose," remembers her father. "She said she wished she was rich so that she could give a lot of money to the school."

She decided to start The M.A.D.D.Y. Fund (Making a Difference for Disadvantaged Youth). The idea was to coordinate a number of fundraising projects with the help of friends, family, classmates, and other members of the community.

They held yard sales with donated items to raise funds, and also had collection cans on-site at events. Maddy collaborated with all of her dorms on campus to have two clothing drives, providing incentives for her fellow students.

"We had boxes in every dorm to encourage their families to donate. The dorm that collected the most (Galletly Dorm) won a pizza party," she explained.

In the end, Maddy raised over \$3,400 for the children at Kurn Hattin Homes, and delivered 25 boxes of clothing. As she presented the check to the school she



thanked the young children for inspiring her to "do good in the world".

She announced that The M.A.D.D.Y. Fund will give to a new organization each year, and continue on after she graduates.

Her father Doug Schumacher smiled and shook his head, "It's really great when your own kids inspire you to be better..."

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares, Inc. Board of Directors met Oct. 1 at the Westminster Fire House with President Pete Harrison presiding.

The following board members were present: Don Dawson, Reggie Borden, Kathy Elliott, Heidi Anderson, Miriam Lanata, Sally Ryea, Connie Sanderson and Director Donna Dawson. Susan Harlow and Barbara Carey were excused. 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. Check us out at www.westminstercares.org and like us on Facebook.

Services Provided in September:

Meals on Wheels - In September, 22 different WC volunteers delivered meals one day a month to 18 different people who are now on meals. In addition, two frozen entrees were delivered to nine people on Fridays for weekend meals. (18 total)

Transportation - During the month of September, five rides were provided by 5 different volunteers who drove seven different Westminster residents to medical

appointments, shopping or programs for a total of 106 miles.

Nursing Program: During September, our community nurse made 12 visits to 17 seniors for medication management, blood pressure checks and foot care. She also attended Senior Lunch for a blood pressure clinic.

Meetings attended by staff in September included: Treasurer, Windham Cares Group, Mtg. with Evaluation Consultant; Funding & Development, Programs & Services, Executive Comm, PR Comm.

Programs Held: four Gentle Yoga classes, four Wednesday Walkers, 12 Strength Training classes, four Artist in Each of Us classes.

Assistance and Referrals: Assistance provided to several Westminster residents and their families, and several motel residents, collaborating with social service agencies, Bellows Falls Senior Center, Senior

Solutions, the VA, Friends of Veterans, SEVCA, Red Cross, VCH, Adult Protective Services and the Visiting Nurses.

Friendly Visiting: Three volunteers making friendly visits to three seniors.

Medical Equipment: In September we received several donations of equipment and several pieces of equipment were returned. OCTOBER 2014 memorial donations in memory of Malcolm, "Mac", Guild from Sharon Boccelli and Ingrid Sell. Next meeting: Dec. 3.

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 Nov. 4 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.

Next Prudential meetings: 10th and 24th

Number of calls in September: 38

Number of calls through October 29th: 26

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 318

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 142

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting October 14th with President Paul Millman presiding. There were 21 members present and 4 members excused. Currently there are 41 members of the volunteer fire department. The meeting was pushed up a week due to a conflict with Vt. Yankee training.

Fire Prevention Open House: Friday October 10th was a fun filled day and a huge success. Around 150 kids were present, including all of Westminster West, K through 4 from the Center School, 20 from Squeaky Sneakers pre K pre-school and 10 home schooled. 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: There have been several fatal pedestrian acci-

dents 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 away in a cross walk, don't just 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.

Donations for October: Karen Guggisberg, Penny and Scott Muzzey, Brandon and Rebecca Pedigo, Russell and Grace Ellis.

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.

BALD HILL HIKE NOV. 8

Get to know another interesting trail system on a guided hike offered by the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association on Saturday, Nov. 8 from 2 to 4 p.m.

This free activity will introduce nature lovers to a marvelous 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 has more land than any other public high school in Vermont!

Randy Major, a member of both the Bald Hill Committee of the Pinnacle Association and the WHPA Board, will lead this moderate jaunt to familiarize hikers with the combined trail system and to give them a close-up view of Twin Falls from the infrequently visited south side of the Saxtons River.

Hikers will also walk up one side of Bald Hill and down the other, taking in views of the nearby Village and distant Mount Ascutney forty miles north.

Participants should dress warmly and bring water.

Hikers should meet at 232 Covered Bridge Road in North Westminster, and contact Randy Major at 387-5737 for information and registration.

A visit to www.windmillhillpinnacle.org will yield a map indicating the trail-heads and information about other upcoming Pinnacle programs.

CHICKEN PIE SUPPER

The Westminster First Congregational will hold a Chicken Pie Supper on Saturday, Nov. 15 with two seatings, at 5 and 6 p.m.

The meal includes chicken, biscuits, mashed potatoes, gravy, rolls, winter squash, green beans, cranberry sauce and apple pie.

The cost is adults \$10, children \$5 and under age 5 eat free.

HOUSE BLEND TO PERFORM IN WESTMINSTER WEST NOV. 15

House Blend will perform in concert on Nov. 15 at 7:30 p.m. at the Westminster West Church.

House Blend is a self-led a cappella chorus of experienced singers dedicated to the music of many cultures and traditions.

Based in Saxtons River, the group is committed to sharing the joy of their music with the audience and to excellence in their performances, which include local concerts, benefits, and international exchanges.

House Blend was invited to perform last March at a tribute concert for Pete Seeger in Burlington with the Vermont Symphony Concert Choir and the well-known Counterpoint Chorus.

The Westminster West concert will include an arrangement of "Viva La Quince Brigada", a favorite of Seeger's. Other new music to be heard in this concert include pieces from Brazil, South Africa, and New Zealand.

Suggested donation: \$10. More information on the group is available at www.HouseBlend.org.

BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY FINAL BOOK SALE

Butterfield Library will host a final book sale on Saturday, Nov. 15 from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m.

Books are \$3 a bag, with children's books free.

On Sunday, Nov. 16 from 11 a.m. until 2 p.m. all books are free, everything must go. Thanks for your help in the past. We will no longer be accepting large donations as there is no place to store them.

Uninvited Winter Guests

by Babs Lynde, a Vermont Master Gardener

When the colder month of November begins to unfold, and the temperatures are fluctuating in the thirties to forties, we are throwing the outside stacked firewood into the basement, or calling our oil companies to top off the tanks and turning up the heat indoors. But did you know that you're also throwing up the "Vacancy" sign for various types of insects that don't like the cold either? Even passive solar heat is like a motel beacon for anything that doesn't like the cold!

Ladybugs are one of the most common insects in our area that need to find a warmer spot to survive the winter. These insects range from an almost yellow to a bright red on their shells with variations of black dots. They do not lay eggs in the winter and are just looking for a warm place to sleep. They often arrive by the dozens and can be found hanging around southern windowsills or within attic spaces.

Ladybugs are harmless to us, although not all of them make it through the winter and their empty shells can create more of a mess to clean up in the spring. Gardeners often like to leave them alone, however, because ladybugs eat a lot of plant-harmful insects such as aphids, scales, mites and the eggs of many moths.

Box elder bugs are about a half inch long, and the adults are a charcoal color with orange or red stripes on the ends of their wings that are folded like a hard shell on their very flat backs. They often arrive by the hundreds and sometimes hang out on the south side of light colored surfaces like the vinyl siding of a house for days until the air turns chilly, and then they find whatever tiny crack is available to take up winter residency until the springtime. These bugs will not harm you or your home, but in the warmer months, the adults suck the sap from the leaves and tender bark of box elder trees as well as various types of maples and oaks and are not considered beneficial like ladybugs.

Some spiders are still active in your home by evidence of the webs you find near the ceilings or on the sunny side of your curtains, and of course, there's the hordes of ants that may be quiet during the coldest months, but when spring rolls around, they are on our counters and every place else. And unless you carefully cleaned off the pots and leaves, any houseplant you bring back in may be infested with mites, scales or other plant-harmful insects.

If you don't like sharing your home during the winter, there are a couple of safe ways to get rid of them. Using insect repellents don't always work unless you know exactly where the offenders are and you don't have pets to worry about. And squashing many kinds of bugs simply leaves behind horrendous smells or stubborn stains.

Many insects don't care for the smell of garlic, coffee or strong soap. Leftover pieces and shells of garlic and coffee grounds can be mixed together and either sprayed (be sure to strain this mixture so the pieces don't get stuck in the spray nozzle) or dabbed thickly on outside basement walls or underneath the home where rain cannot wash it away and where crawling insects would have the most contact from the ground to your house. This can also be sprayed on your household plants, and use a clean damp paper towel to keep all sugar and sweet residues off the countertops. Flying insects are best vacuumed up into a bag that can be immediately sealed and thrown away. Don't leave the bag inside the vacuum cleaner as these persistent pests will find a way out!

Would you like more information concerning wintering insects? 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 or visit their website at <http://www.uvm.edu/mastergardener/> for extensive information.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

DON'T FALL VICTIM TO SCAMS!

By Don Dawson

Many community members, including myself, have received phone calls from companies over the last six to eight weeks, indicating that our computers have been sending out viruses and that the caller on the phone could help fix the problem. They ask you to go to your computer and log onto a specific website, then they'll help you remove the virus.

Please know that NO computer company is going to call you with such an alert. (That is why software companies created virus protection, and those software companies aren't going to call you either.) These "companies" that call you are trying to trick you into going online, giving them access to your computer, and placing a virus on your computer.

The virus that they place on your computer allows them to view what you type. If you do banking or other personal chores online, they'll have access to that information including passwords, bank account information, and the like.

This article isn't designed to frighten you; it's intended to educate you. Knowledge is power. If someone calls and asks you about your computer, unless it's someone that you know, tell them "no, thank you" and hang up. They'll be persistent. They called our home phone no less than 10 times before I finally asked them for THEIR phone number and that I would call them back. Of course, they provided me with a phony phone number and haven't called back since.

There's another scam that comes specifically from the area code (876). The caller tells you that you've won a certain amount of money, a car, or a vacation. Their objective is to get access to your credit card information.

If you don't know anyone living in the (876) area code and your caller ID shows up with this area code, be aware of this detail. If you think you've been taken advantage by someone in this manner, you should visit www.bewareof876.com for more information.

Scams aren't limited to the telephone however. If you have an e-mail address, you can get scammed there just as well. Fake e-mails are designed to look exactly like what you would expect from your bank, eBay, PayPal, or any one of a number of companies that deal with your credit card or banking information. Be very careful when it comes to unsolicited e-mail.

If you have fallen for some type of scam, it is important that you contact your bank as well as a family member to help you with the many details you'll need to address. It can be embarrassing, but it's important to put your pride aside before these companies take any further advantage. They're good at what they do or they wouldn't be targeting you and other senior citizens all across the globe.

SOLARIZE WESTMINSTER UPDATE: COMMUNITY SOLAR

As of November 1st 44 households in Westminster have signed up for free solar site assessment through the Solarize Westminster campaign. They include Select Board member Toby Young and Town manager Russ Hodgkins. This is an outstanding start to the Solarize program and we are all very excited about getting to the lowest discounted rate by the time the program ends on Dec. 31.

But what if you own a house that does not have a good roof for solar? Maybe it is made of slate, or faces east-west, or a majestic maple that your grandmother planted 50 years ago shades it. And maybe your yard is not big enough for a ground-mounted solar array, and/or your neighbors or the Route 5 Historical District would object. For households like this, as well as non-profit organizations and businesses, there is still a way to go solar -- buying panels in a Community Solar array.

The Community Solar program that Solarize Westminster has partnered with is Clean Energy Collective (CEC). This is a national company that has put roots down in Vermont because of our highly favorable net metering laws that foster Community Solar development. CEC has already built a Community Solar array in Vermont, and over 20 nationwide, with at least two more in Vermont scheduled to be online within the next six months.

The closest is in the photo in Putney, just off of Route 5 across from Harlow's Sugar House. It is on the horse farm of Dave and Tracey Brewer whose nephew Nick Ziter developed it. Roughly two acres in size, it is fenced, monitored and engineered to produce solar energy for 50 years for those who own panels in it. In its first year the panels outperformed expectations and produced enough electricity to recoup 11 percent of the total cost to owners. With Community Solar, the solar electricity that is generated shows up as a credit on your Green Mountain Power electric bill.

The cost of buying panels in this Community Solar array is \$1,143.75 for each 305 Watt panel or \$3.75 per Watt. The average number of panels bought per household is 10.

With financing available through the Vermont State Employee's Credit Union (www.VSECU.com), GMP ratepayers can own solar for about the same cost as their average utility bill. CEC put over three years into developing the legal and accounting structure that enables Community Solar arrays because the process is so complex and burdensome. Project investors receive the federal incentives and depreciation. This allows CEC to offer a reduced price on the actual cost of the panels and take care of the maintenance and operating costs for the life of the array.

Other costs that are avoided, as compared to solar installed on a roof, include

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blynde@westminstervt.org, or phone
Babs Lynde at 722-9516.**



the trouble of re-shingling your roof in the future with a PV array on top of it, the additional insurance and the cost of replacing the inverter equipment that converts the solar DC electricity into AC electricity before it goes into the grid. Inverters are generally not guaranteed for more than 10 years, so the cost of as many as five inverter replacements is avoided.

If anything should happen to CEC, or the array is damaged, a CEC purchase includes a comprehensive Operation & Maintenance program helping to ensure optimum performance over the life of the array. Buying Community Solar panels is a commitment to sustainability that can be passed on from generation to generation, offsetting much of a household's carbon footprint for the foreseeable future.

This is possible as each Community Solar array has its own independent, incorporated LLC. Five percent of each array's production is sold back to the electric utility with all proceeds going to the LLC to fund the ongoing operations and maintenance of the specific array.

CEC is presently in negotiations with an organic farm in Newfane to build the next local Community Solar array. The vision is to have free-range chickens grazing under the panels, protected from coyotes and foxes by a six-foot deer fence. CEC is also in the beginning stages of negotiating with a landowner in Westminster to construct a Community Solar array here. Stay tuned for more information.

To get a proposal for buying panels in a Community Solar array, go to the 'Sign Up' page on the SolarizeWindham.com website and check the 'Community Solar' option as your Primary Interest.

Please note that due to the special nature of Community Solar projects, the Solarize Westminster tiered discount structure does not pertain to solar panels bought this way. For more information contact Tad Montgomery of Solarize Windham County: (802) 251-0502 or Solar@TadMontgomery.com.

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.

Walking: Meet at the Westminster Heights Park and Ride on Wednesday mornings at 9am and carpool to walking site. Most times the walk takes one hour and we are back by 10:30. Bring water, hat, walking stick, (if desired), sun screen and wear good sturdy shoes. We can walk at different speeds depending on the group. Call the Westminster Cares Office to find out more: 722-3607 or email wecares@sover.net."

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 Fire Station 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. 24 at 4:30 p.m. at the Town Hall

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

Westminster Institute Board Meeting The Westminster Institute board will meet on Nov.10 at 7:00 pm at the institute.

**THE GAZETTE
GRATEFULLY
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THE SUPPORT
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Kurn Hattin Homes
Westminster School District
Town of Westminster
Westminster Activities Commission
Sojourns Community Health Clinic
Westminster Cares
Westminster Fire & Rescue
Association

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Provided by the Community**
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SOLID WASTE HOLIDAY PICK UP SCHEDULE

With the Holiday Season upon us the Solid Waste (SW) Schedule has shifted as follows:

Thanksgiving Week, 11/28/2014; Friday SW Pickup will be Saturday, 11/29/2014

Christmas Week 12/26/2014; Friday SW Pickup will be Saturday, 12/27/2014

2015 New Year Week 1/2/2015; Friday SW Pickup will be Saturday, 1/3/2015

**The Deadline for
the December 2014
Issue of the
Westminster
Gazette is
Wednesday,
November 26
Publish Date is
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To Contact the
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Gazette E-mail:
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SUBSTANCE USE RECOVERY IN FAMILIES FOCUS OF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Kurn Hattin Homes for Children held its 23rd Annual Conference on October 24. Each year the organization has held an educational conference to offer new opportunities for training and skills development to staff, educators, human service organizations, and community partners from all over the eastern region.

This year's topic was What About the Kids? Substance Use Treatment and Recovery in Families. The featured speakers were Dianna Christmas, MPH, and Beth Marron, M.Ed., MSW, LICSW, of the Institute of Healing and Recovery in Cambridge, MA.

The speakers shared their expertise on the effects of substance use and addiction on families, as well as strategies and resources for effectively helping to



From left, Kurn Hattin Annual Conference speakers Dianna Christmas and Beth Marron with Kurn Hattin Admissions Director Sue Kessle

guide families toward recovery. Christmas kicked off the conference with some shocking figures.

She noted that treatment for opiate addiction in Vermont had increased 770 percent since 2000.

The audience learned to identify the effects of alcohol, cocaine, and heroin on parenting behaviors; as well as the behaviors of children exposed to traumatic stress at various stages of development. Providers were shown how they can support both children and families impacted by the trauma of parental substance use.

Vermont AHS Field Director, Sadie Fischesser, an attendee of the conference, noted, "It is so easy to lose sight of what being a child of an addictive parent means. Too often there is only a focus on one or the other, the child or the parent."

The pair also spent time addressing the vicarious or secondary trauma of counselors and educators working with children facing these issues. Participants were able to explore strategies for effective self-care.

Conference attendees voiced their overwhelming approval. When local educators were asked what the most common addiction among their students' parents appeared to be, surprisingly, it was not alcohol, but heroin.

Counselor Brian Sheahan of Plymouth, NH said that he had worked with families in recovery for methamphetamine use, as well.

Margaret Perry of Hill House Pre-School described the workshops as, "Excellent. I had been searching for more information about this. I work with children who are affected by their parent's addictions; and I have wanted to know more about how to support them, and support their families."

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November Business of the Month: Ruggiero Trash removal

Ruggiero Trash Removal would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays. Once again we have had a great year here at Ruggiero Trash Removal thanks to our fantastic customers. We are excited about our new expansion with our processing facility in Walpole, N.H., Which enables us to continue our great service we have been providing for years.

Ruggiero Trash Removal is a local family owned and operated company with over 20+ years of experience in the trash hauling and recycling business. With our processing facility we are able to take care of all recycling and trash needs in the Southern Vermont and New Hampshire area for residential and commercial needs.

We provide containers ranging from two to 40 yards, which are available for recycling of paper, plastic, cardboard, masonry, wood and metal. We also have the same size containers for one time clean up and monthly trash services that we can service daily, weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. We offer curbside service as well.

In the past we have seen savings from 10 percent to 40 percent over national haulers pricing. Our rates are reasonable and very straight forward with no diesel sur-charge, rental fees, or hidden cost. The community has always been loyal and straight forward with us, so we like to return the courtesy.

There is no job to big and no job to small for Ruggiero Trash Removal. So remember if you need to chuck it, we truck it.

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WESTMINSTER GAZETTE RAFFLE JUST BEFORE THE HOLIDAYS

While many folks enjoy the Westminster Gazette, not many realize that we operate on a very tight budget - too tight it seems. While we have several advertisers and underwriters, that income still doesn't bring in quite enough money to cover our operating costs.

In brainstorming ways that we might raise some money to meet our expenses and perhaps give us a bit of an operating cushion, we thought one of the best ways would be to have a Gazette Raffle, with a drawing in early December, just before the holidays, with several prizes that could be re-gifted to friends and relatives.

At this point we've received a number of donations of goods and services valued at \$25 and a long way up from there. Raffle tickets will be on sale through to the drawing, \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Watch for the tickets at various holiday events.

Thanks for supporting your community newspaper!

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