



COMPASS CELEBRATES 20 YEARS WITH REUNION

Come celebrate 20 years of Compass School on Friday, May 31 from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.

We are inviting all in the Compass family--graduates, former and current students, parents, former and current teachers and staff, and anyone who has been part of this idealistic venture for the past two decades--to join in an evening of shared food, stories, and good will.

We would be honored to have anyone in the community join us in recognizing the incredible efforts all have made to create a school where every student can find success, where we help create good students and good people, and where we continue to offer opportunities for students to find a new venue full of possibilities.

Schedule:

5:00 Welcome

5:30 Making Connections Activities

6:00 BBQ (Free Food!)

7:00 Panel - Reflecting on 20 years of Compass

7:30-onward Bonfire, Music & Conversation

Please RSVP to lyssa.singleton@compass-school.org or call 463-2525.

We look forward to seeing you!

As Compass celebrates its 20th year, the school has grown into an established educational option with consistent and ambitious goals for all students -- they support every child to develop not only as a good student, but also as a good person. The mission encompasses knowledge and academic skills, but to also the development of skills to become community minded, culturally aware, responsible, healthy, and self-directed. It is an environment where every child has the opportunities and support to find success.

From the very start, the driving ideals for the Compass School were to be accessible to all, to value stu-



dent voice and choice, and to build a learning community based on respect. Over the past twenty years, many of the founding teachers continue to teach at Compass and the learning community continues to produce excellent results -- graduates enjoy college acceptances with impressive scholarship offers, and the roster of alumni continues to grow into examples of young adults who have the confidence to pursue their dreams and make a positive difference in the world.

Over the years, Compass educators have continued to adjust their curriculum and activities, always incorporating student feedback and initiative along the way. Today, the curriculum through middle and high school incorporates a range of purpose-driven experiences intended to stretch and build new capabilities.

In addition to academic requirements, all Compass students are required to participate in a balance of activities that includes experiential, hands-on projects, traditional lecture formats, outdoor adventures, community service, and artistic representations of learning through film, photography, and studio arts. The breadth and depth of learning experiences in a typical year brings both challenges and authentic success to every student, no matter where they began.

Serving students from over a dozen towns in New Hampshire and Vermont, Compass School invites all in the community to come celebrate its 20th anniversary.

Above, Compass School's first graduating class in 2003.

LISTERS GRIEVANCE MEETING

The Town of Westminster Listers Grievance Meeting will be conducted on May 28, 2019 as follows:

Title 32, Vermont Statutes Annotated, Section 4111 (g) reads as follows: A person who feels aggrieved by the action of the Listers and desires to be heard by them, shall, on or before the day of the grievance meeting, file with them his objections in writing and may appear at such grievance meeting in person or by his agents or attorneys. Upon the hearing of such grievance the parties thereto may submit such documentary or sworn evidence as shall be pertinent there to.

Also note that Section 64 of Act 71 requires notification of value on Homestead, for appeal purposes.

Grievances will be held by appointment only:

WESTMINSTER TOWN HALL on Tuesday, May 28, 2019

10:00am – 12:00pm & 1:00pm – 6:00pm

Contact the Listers Office at 802-722-9516 or by email listeners@westminstervt.org

Written appeals received after 12:00 noon on 5/27/19, even if postmarked by 05/27/19, are considered untimely and cannot be heard. There are no walk-in hearings.

WESTMINSTER BOARD OF LISTERS:

Jackie Atwood, Rachael Cohen, and Doug Oftedahl

GREEN UP DAY IS MAY 4 – WE NEED YOU!

Green Up Day is coming up soon—Saturday, May 4. Westminster residents, please clean up a Westminster road or street near you. A group effort is always fun!

You may pick up bags at the Westminster Center School on Green Up Day, Saturday, May 4, from 7 to 10 a.m.

Please take just one Green Up bag, if possible, and use some trash bags of your own. The town will pick up any bags on Monday morning, as long as they are left beside a Green Up bag on the side of a town road. Please do not leave them on private roads.

Here's a safety reminder: Do not remove dead animals or suspected toxic/hazardous waste. Don't disturb needles or questionable debris. If you have a safety concern, please inform the proper local authorities, or contact Vermont State Road maintenance personnel at www.vtrans.vermont.gov, or the State Police at www.vsp.vermont.gov/.

Also remember that you can donate to Green Up Vermont on Line 29 of your Vermont tax return.

Questions? Call Susan Harlow, Green Up Day coordinator, at 722-3373.

Thank you for helping to make your town green!



NINE KURN HATTIN HOMES' STAFF HONORED WITH YEARS OF SERVICE AWARDS



It takes a village to transform the lives the children and this year nine staff members were recognized for their dedication, hard work, and many years of service. Steve Harrison, Executive Director of Kurn Hattin Homes honored these individuals with Service Awards during the April 24th, All Staff Meeting.

Staff members receiving five-year awards were: Kathleen Gurney, Senior Accountant, Virginia (Ginger) Cook, Houseparent, and Doug Brackett, Maintenance.

Fifteen-year awards were given to Leah Gordon, Counselor, Melanie Atkin, Cook, Robert Anderson, Houseparent, and Eileen Brown, Director of Health Services.

The twenty-year award was given to Leonard Farrar, Director of Maintenance and a thirty-year award went to Kirk Hemelberg, Computer Resource Manager.

Kathleen Gurney also received the "Above and Beyond" Award for her continued commitment to helping others.

Steve Harrison praised all the Kurn Hattin staff for their dedication and commitment, and in particular acknowledged the Houseparents and entire Residential Services community for "the caring and secure environment" they provide the children in their care.

Since 1894, Kurn Hattin Homes for Children has helped thousands of children and their families by offering a safe home and quality education in a nurturing environment. Its mission: Kurn Hattin transforms the lives of children and their families forever. Follow their journey: kurnhattin.org

Above, Kurn Hattin Homes Service Award Recipients from left: Eileen Brown, Kirk Hemelberg, Kathleen Gurney, Robert Anderson, Melanie Atkin, Leonard Farrar, Ginger Cook, Leah Gordon, and Doug Brackett.

Want to Help Your Community Paper?

The Westminster Gazette operates on a minimal budget. A handful more of community underwriters, donations or advertisers would make a big difference in keeping this paper in print.

Any individuals, organizations, or businesses interested in helping us out in any of these ways should contact the Westminster Gazette at: westminsternews@gmail.com. Thank You!

Our Monthly Community Newspaper May 2019 Vol. 15 No. 5

Westminster Gazette

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A LABOR OF LOVE - KURN HATTIN STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS RESTORE MODEL H

An abandoned 1942 Farmall Model H tractor, originally used at Kurn Hattin Homes and repurchased, has been lovingly restored.

A ten-year project led by Real Bazin, Kurn Hattin Director of Farm & Fleet, and assisted by the KHH maintenance department and local resident Gary Cobb, sits proudly on the front lawn of Kurn Hattin's Mathey Center.

Real reflected, "It was great that we were able to find it and bring it home." Look for the tractor in the 4th of July Saxtons River parade.

Since 1894, Kurn Hattin Homes for Children has helped thousands of children and their families by offering a safe home and quality education in a nurturing environment. Its mission: Kurn Hattin transforms the lives of children and their families forever. Follow their journey: kurnhattin.org



RIVER SINGERS HOST GOSPEL LEGEND IN CONCERT

The 90-member River Singers Community Chorus will perform two dynamic, eclectic concerts of world music on Saturday, May 4, at both 3pm and 7:30 p.m. at Next Stage in Putney. The River Singers, a multi-generational community choir led by Mary Cay Brass, sings a thrilling variety of community-based music from many diverse cultural and musical traditions.



Brass will be joined by guest conductor, singer and dynamic gospel piano player, Dr. Kathy Bullock of Berea, KY, (photo).

Dr. Bullock has been a Professor of Music at Berea College for 27 years where she directs the Black Music Ensemble, a 70 voice choir that specializes in performance of African-American sacred music.

She performs, lectures and leads workshops in the US, and internationally on music and culture of the African diaspora.

Having just returned from a European tour, this will be her eighth residency with the River Singers, where she will teach the choir a wide range of thrilling gospel songs that will then be performed with the rest of the repertoire that the choir has studied this session.

In addition to gospel, the choir will sing a cornucopia of achingly gorgeous songs from Eastern Europe, the Republic of Georgia, South Africa, a Cajun love song from Louisiana, early and contemporary shape note songs and much more!

Every River Singers concert is a benefit for some global or local project. This spring's concert will benefit the Conflict Transformation Across Cultures Program at the School for International Training in Brattleboro.

Tickets are \$15, children 10 and under free. Tickets available at the door only. For more information about the concert contact mcbrass@vermontel.net and see www.marycaybrass.com

PHOTOS NEEDED: FIDDLERS ON VERMONT GREENS

Vermonters are being asked to celebrate the state's rich tradition of fiddling by documenting fiddlers playing in each of Vermont's 251 towns in the year 2019.

"We want to gather at least one photo from every town, whether it's an individual or a group, playing on the town green, the meeting house, at a dance, the farmers market, fire station Grange hall or just in someone's kitchen or backyard," said Jill Newton, a member of the Northeast Fiddlers Association, which, along with the Champlain Valley Fiddlers Club and Young Tradition Vermont, is sponsoring the effort.

"So far, we have posted fiddlers from just five towns on our website, www.fiddlersonthegreenvt.com, but we hope that number will grow to 251 before snow flies next fall."

Photos may be of a planned event such as a concert series or family reunion or just a random happening.

The idea of the festival is to not only bring attention

to and celebrate Vermont's great fiddling tradition and the organizations that keep it alive, but to also encourage younger Vermonters to carry on the traditions.

Photos can include musicians in addition to the fiddlers, and the musicians do not have to be residents of the town or even of Vermont. The photos will be made public on the website where progress in meeting the festival goal will be monitored.

Folks can submit their photos at fiddler@fiddlersonthegreenvt.com or by mail to Fiddlers on the Green, P.O. Box 644, Townshend, VT 05353.

Those submitting are asked to include the town, date, venue, fiddlers' names, tune titles and any other details they can supply. Fiddlers can also submit listings of upcoming events to the website's calendar.

Information about the sponsoring organizations can be found at the festival's website, www.fiddlersonthegreenvt.com.



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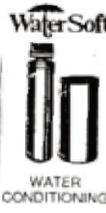
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Pages 2-3 approx. 2.5"x3" \$275 a year
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\$80 for one month

Page 8 approx. 1.5"x2.5" \$175 a year

New Sections Introductory Rates:

A&E Events Section \$50 a month

New & Seasonal Businesses Section \$200 for 3 months

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.

We also welcome article submissions that would be of interest to the community. We ask for a maximum size limit of 500 words, and reserve the right to edit for content and length. Thank you!

On-line at:
www.westminstervt.org

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ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & REGIONAL EVENTS

GAZETTE OFFERING NEW OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVERTISE

by Robert F. Smith, Editor

As a small, non-profit community paper run mainly by volunteers and frequently operating on the edge, or slightly over the edge, of covering our expenses, the Gazette is always looking for ways to create a little extra income. Just a few thousand dollars more a year would give us a little breathing space and help us avoid being always too close to the edge of our financial limits.

In recent brainstorming sessions, the Gazette board concluded that perhaps the best way we could help ourselves was to help more of our readers. In particular we were looking at local groups, organizations and businesses putting on one-time arts events - concerts, plays, dances, art shows, movies - and seasonal and start-up businesses with very limited advertising budgets who

would still like to get the word out about their services.

What we are proposing is in part what you see here - a new Arts & Entertainment section, with an initial rate of \$50 for the month. Compass School's 20th Anniversary event as seen at left is the first group to take advantage of this new section.

Secondly, we're creating a new section offering businesses the opportunity to run an ad for three months in the Gazette for \$200. Are you starting up a business cutting lawns, plowing driveways, fixing computers, selling firewood, cleaning houses, building furniture or whatever, and just want to try a little advertising as you try to get your business going? We want to help. Our new size has opened up more space for us to help the community, and that's what we want to do.

Contact us at westminsternews@gmail.com if you have any interest in either of these new sections.

Join us for our . . .

Compass Reunion and 20th Anniversary Celebration

All Compass graduates, former students, staff, parents, and friends are invited to return to connect with current students and teachers and contribute to our vibrant learning community.

Friday, May 31st
5 pm



Visit our new website
compass-school.org
for the schedule

18TH ANNUAL WESTMINSTER GARDEN TOUR JULY 20-21

The 18th Annual Westminster Garden Tour will be held the weekend of July 20th & 21st from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

It will feature the gardens of landscape designers Gordon and Mary Hayward; Cyndy Fine of Genius Loci and garden blogger Alice Laughlin.

Also featured will be a talk by landscape designer Julie Moir Messervy and a private walking tour of their

gardens with the Haywards. Miles Chapin's outdoor sculptures, (mileschapin.com), will be on display in the Hayward gardens, and an "Art of the Garden" show will be held at the Westminster Institute. Lunch and refreshments will be served in the Hayward gardens.

For more information or to purchase online discounted tickets, (after May 31st), visit www.westminstercare.org

NEWS FROM THE TOWN GARAGE



As the month of April winds down, we can look back and see what has been accomplished:

We hauled in 2500 yards of road sand, Jason and Carson (*in photo, from left*) got certified to adjust air brakes, Ben and Jason went to a class on the basics of a good road, Ben and I went to a class on bridge inspection, Dave has gotten most of the plows cleaned and painted and we have managed to deal with mud and start grading the roads, as a daily routine.

We also worked with Vermont Recreation to install 500 feet of band on Back Westminster Road, so as to start phasing out the old cable style guard rails. As we get into May we will be performing Act 64 work on Bemis Hill as well as culvert repairs, ditching, road grading and brush removal throughout the town.

See ya on the road!

Chuck Lawrence
Road Foreman

ANIMAL CAREGIVERS FOR THE DYING AND BEREAVED

On Wed. May 1, from noon to 3 p.m., Brattleboro Area Hospice will host "But... What About the Other Caregivers? ~Animal Caregivers for the Dying and Bereaved," at the River Garden located at 157 Main Street in downtown Brattleboro.

"Lots of people talk to animals... Not very many listen, though. That's the problem." wrote Benjamin Hoff in *The Tao of Pooh*. Companion animals are unsung and unacknowledged heroes as they quietly go about their work of providing loving support for their dying and grieving human family members.

As they do this, they are often grieving themselves.

Join Cheryl Richards of Loving Transitions for Critters and Their People, as we explore the care given by animals, how they grieve, and how we, as their human family, can serve them in return.

Brattleboro Area Hospice is an independent, non-profit organization that provides non-medical support to dying and grieving community members, and volunteer-staffed assistance with advance care planning, and is located at 191 Canal Street in Brattleboro.

For more information contact Patty Dunn at 2570775 ext. 102, e-mail patty.dunn@brattleborohospice.org or visit www.brattleborohospice.org.

GRAFTON CORNET BAND WELCOMES PLAYERS

The Grafton Cornet Band welcomes all band players with any experience to come to rehearsals this spring to try out the band. The band is proud of its 152-year tradition and keeps its original name, even though all band instruments are included now.

There are no auditions, dues, or minimum commitment. Rehearsals are Sundays May 5 and 19 at 2 p.m. in the Old Fire Station on Main Street in Grafton. Re-

hearsals have a refreshment break for resting tired lips and socializing.

The new director this year is Glen D'Eon, Director of Bands at Fall Mountain Regional High School. Glen has been recognized as an outstanding teacher and brings out the best in amateur ensembles.

For more information, visit GraftonBand.org or call Dan Axtell at 387-4145.

WHAT'S UP AT TOWN HALL? - GREEN UP DAY

TOWN HALL: The renovations continue at the Town Hall and with that comes a week without a front door. The steps and the rails out front are going to be re-done to modern safety specifications and the front doors are going to be finally replaced with new ones. The Town Hall will be open through this process but access will only be achieved by the new lift on the south side of the building or the back door. We are sorry for this inconvenience but this will be the last step in this phase and then it's on to the reconfiguration of the office spaces as the last phase.

GREEN UP DAY: Green Up Day is Saturday, May 4. The Green Up Bags will be delivered to the Town Hall and you will be able to pick them up there. Grab your friends and neighbors and get involved in Vermont's state-wide Green Up Day. Thank you in advance for helping to keep our beautiful town clean.

LAND FOR SALE: The Town has 19.1 acres of land for sale off of Pine Banks Road. If you are interested, please contact the Town Hall or Buffum Realty. This is a great opportunity at a great price.

ZONING IN OUR TOWN: Please remember that any exterior home improvements in the Historic Village needs a permit such as window replacement, removing trees, sheds, etc.

The other Zoning Districts require a permit for any out building or addition equal to or greater than 150 sq. ft. If you have questions please feel free to call us. We are here to help not hinder your home improvement requests.

TRASH & RECYCLING: Just a quick reminder that your trash and recycling need to be covered in

order for it to be picked up. The program hasn't changed for a few years now but we are forgetting what makes this program work.

Trash tags for next year will be sent out in June. If you need additional tags before this date, please come to the Town Hall and get them. They are \$2.50 each. If you have extra tags that you are willing to give to a needy family, please drop those off at the Town Hall also. Please remember that selling your tags is not acceptable.

TRANSFER STATION: The Rockingham/Westminster Transfer Station on Route 5 in Westminster will continue the "access sticker" program this coming year. After July 1, 2019, a new sticker will be needed to get into the facility and Westminster residents will be charged \$35 for each sticker issued.

The sticker will need to be affixed to the windshield as it was last year. The stickers can be purchased at the Transfer Station upon your arrival. Please note that proof of residency could be needed to obtain your access permit.

After Hour Appointments: Please feel free, if you have the need to make an appointment for either the Town Manager, Zoning Administer, or the Town Clerk after or before 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.

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 April 3rd at the Westminster Institute with Vice President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: Heidi Anderson, Regina Borden (Secretary), Doug Oftedahl, Don Dawson, Pat Goodell, Pete Harrison (President) and Director Donna Dawson. Sally Ryea and Miriam Lanata (Treasurer) 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, or making a contribution can contact Donna Dawson at 722-3607 or by e-mail at wecares@sover.net. Check us out on the web at www.westminstercare.org and like us on Face book.

Programs & Services Provided in March 2019

Meals-on-Wheels: WC volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 13 different people. In addition, two frozen entrees were delivered each Friday to eight people for weekend meals (16 total weekend meals). One new recipient started in March.

Transportation: During the month, 12 rides were provided by four volunteers who drove seniors to/from doctors, pharmacies, grocery shopping, the bank and our Healthy Aging Group.

Programs: Two Secrets of Healthy Aging group, four Gentle Yoga classes, 22 Strength Training classes, four Artist in Each of Us classes; five Chair Yoga classes; four Intermediate Tai Chi classes and four Beginner Tai Chi classes.

Assistance and Referrals: One Meals-on-Wheels intake/home visit was completed by Donna.

Medical Equipment – In March we loaned out five pieces of equipment and three pieces of equipment were donated to us.

Community Nurse Program – In March our Nurse made five home visits; followed up with another six clients by phone and saw seven additional clients at the Senior Lunch Blood Pressure Clinic.

Memorial Donations for April 2019:

In memory of Veronica Simonds from Jane French.
In memory of Joan Smidutz from David and Mary Jo Robbin.

In memory of Mitch Allen from Russell and Peggy Allen.

In memory of David Kissell from Bill Smidutz.

DANCE AWAY CANCER THANKS FROM TEAM SUPERHERO

Team Superhero would like to thank everyone who supported the 9th Annual Dance Away Cancer Benefit Dance and Auction that was held Saturday, April 6th at the Chester Legion.

The support received in the form of donation of auction items, monetary donations, food, and purchasing tickets for the event are all so greatly appreciated. The community helped to raise well over \$14,000 for the American Cancer Society.

Please consider coming out and supporting the Southern Vermont Relay for Life that will be held at the Bellows Falls Union High School track on June 22nd starting at 6 p.m.

We get to remember those we have lost, celebrate the survivors and fight back against this horrible disease.

If you are a cancer survivor and would like to take part in this event, please contact Debra Austin at 463-9982 or debjoe67@comcast.net.

SOUPER WEDNESDAY POTLUCK, PLANT SALE

Souper Wednesday's annual potluck meal with grilled hot dogs and rolls will be held on Wednesday, May 1 from noon to 2 p.m. at the the First Congregational Church of Westminster. Bring a potluck item if you are able. This wraps up the Souper Wednesday season. Come and enjoy outside if weather permits, inside if not.

The Women's Fellowship will host its Annual Plant Sale on Saturday, May 18. Besides annual vegetables and flowers, perennial plants and bushes, even some houseplants, a surprise or two and some related garden items, we will have baked goods for sale, a cookout, and lots of nice items for our white elephant sale—a sale not to be missed.

We are always looking for more items for our white elephant sale (no clothes, please).

Bring the items to the church between Sunday, April 28 and Thursday, May 16.

Spring Happenings - From Ducks to Horses

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

My life viewing Allen's Swamp is back. After my early morning walks in Bellows Falls, I stop at Allen's to watch the geese and to see what has come north overnight. Joining the geese, and not being intimidated by them, are ducks. The ducks are mostly Mallards, Ring-necked Ducks, Wood Ducks and Hooded Mergansers. The Wood Ducks and the Mallards will nest and raise their families here.

Most everyone recognizes the male Mallards with their green heads, white neck bands and rusty breasts. The females are mottled brown. Mallards are surface-feeding ducks that tip their heads and the front of their bodies down into the water to feed but don't usually dive. They eat mostly vegetation but will eat insects, mollusks and small fish. They are agile fliers that take off from the water almost vertically.

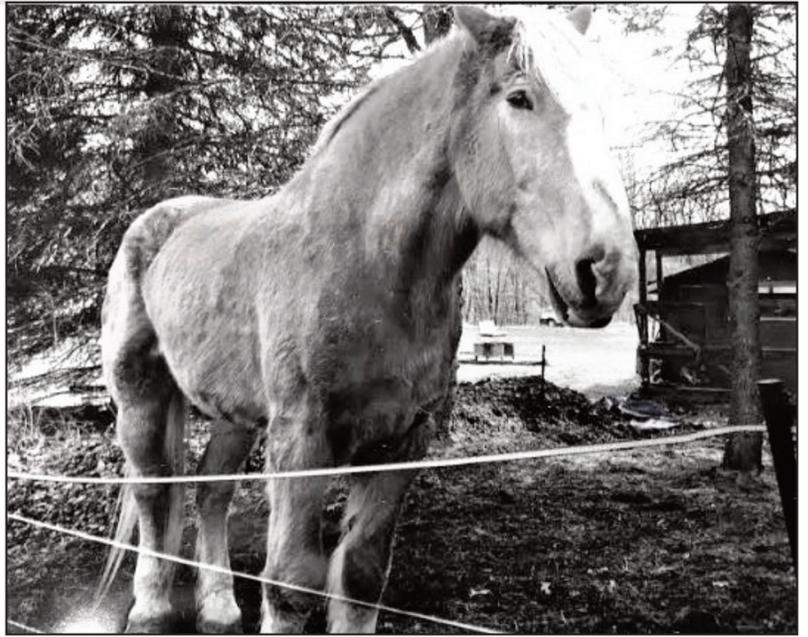
The male Ring-necked Duck has a solid black back, a chestnut collar on the black neck, a vertical white stripe and a narrow white ring around the bill. When I see him, I always think that he should be called Ring-billed rather than Ring-necked. They are bay ducks that spend their winters in protected coastal bays and river mouths. They dive from the surface of the water and swim underneath.

I've always thought the colorful male Wood Ducks with their large heads with slicked back crests to be the most gorgeous of our local ducks. Their feathers in metallic shades of yellow, orange, red, blue and green cover the entire body. Even the bill is multi-colored. The females are a drab brown with a little blue on the wings which help make them invisible on the nest. But now that I am studying the Hooded Mergansers, they are beautiful, too.

In our area, we have the Common Merganser, the Hooded Merganser and the Red-breasted Merganser. The Hooded Mergansers (Hoodies) and the Wood Ducks (Woodies) nest in cavities while the Red-breasted Mergansers nest on the ground. All are migrators but the hardy Common Merganser can be seen in winter if there is open water.

Since both Woodies and Hoodies nest in cavities and both lay eggs in other nests, called egg dumping, it is not unusual to see a female with a long string of babies following her. The young are precocial which means born covered with down and are fully active. The hatchlings leap out of the cavity within 24 hours of hatching, from many feet in the air, and land in the water or onto the ground without injury. How can they do this? When they hit the ground, they bounce like tennis balls because they are so light.

Now for my horse story. I sometimes see Frank with his dog walking toward me as I'm watching the geese and ducks at Allen's Swamp. He told me how hard the winter ice was on his horse, Hans. The first time Hans fell, Frank got him up but the second time



he couldn't. He had called his vet and was told if he couldn't get him up by later that day, Hans would have to be put down.

Frank called the Basin farm to see if they could help and several of the men came over with their John Deere that had forks. Frank also called Phil who came over with hoses. Together they made a sling to put under Hans and with the tractor, pulled him to his feet. After a good rub down, Hans was good as new. Having grown up on a farm with horses, how I treasure happy endings like this.

UPCOMING BIRD WALKS AND GREEN UP DAY INITIATIVE

The Saxtons River Valley Trails Initiative (SRVTI), a collaboration between the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association and the Rockingham Conservation Commission, invites the public to participate in three spring bird walks.

Join Peter Bergstrom, local birding enthusiast, on Saturday, May 4, May 11, and/or May 18 at 8:30 a.m. at the Bellows Falls Historical Society's Riverfront Park and Trail System along Mill Street. Mill Street looks like a driveway where it starts on the Square between the Flat Iron Exchange and Mountainside Tattoo.

We will meet at the parking lot on the left below Adams Grist Mill. Bring binoculars if you have them. We will walk if there is light rain, but if there is heavy rain, contact Peter (see below) to see if the walk is still on.

The May 4 bird walk will be followed by a clean-up effort in recognition of Green Up Day at the Riverfront Park. Greening up will start at 10 a.m. We will meet at the parking lot at the end of Mill Street, just

outside the wastewater treatment plant gates.

For this activity, please wear long pants, gloves, and boots for tick and ivy protection, and if possible, bring rakes, garden carts, or wheelbarrows. We'll provide the green trash bags. All of the filled bags will need to be brought back to the parking area for pickup. Please dress for the weather; Green Up day occurs rain or shine!

On May 11 and 18 at 10:00, Peter will lead a walk south along the riverfront trail that we are developing from the wastewater plant to Paper Mill Road in Westminster, and we could continue from there up the Saxtons River and through the Basin Farm, and back to BF on Forest Road. Parts of the trail are uneven so wear suitable shoes or boots. The walk will start at the parking lot at the end of Mill Street, just outside the wastewater treatment plant gates.

For more information, contact Peter Bergstrom at pwbergstrom@gmail.com or at you can call or text him at 289-3271.

PINNACLE ASSOCIATION EVENTS IN MAY

The Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association is offering the following nature programs in the month of May.

May 4, Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Spring Wildflower Walk. (Rain date May 5th) Libby Mills and Sarah Waldo will lead this favorite stroll to discover delicate ephemeral flowers of the hardwood forest.

Meet at the Westminster West Church in Vermont to carpool to the mystery site. Wear waterproof shoes.

For questions and requested registration, contact sarah_waldo@hotmail.com or 387-6036.

May 5, Sunday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.. Herrick's Cove Activity. Rain or shine. Vanessa Stern and Rick Cowan will host a table at the Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival with maps, program information, and a nature-based craft project for children. Herrick's Cove is off Missing Link Road (Route 5) in Rockingham, VT. Visit Herrick's Cove Wildlife Festival Facebook Page for more information on the Festival.

May 5, Sunday, 10 a.m. to noon. The Mysterious Lives of Trees: How trees help us mitigate global warming.

Tim Morton, Vermont State Forester, and Silos Robert from WHPA, will lead this walk in the woods. We will visit the largest White Ash in Vermont and discuss factors that contribute to its success while identifying other trees on the way.

We'll also talk about are ways trees affect local rain cycles, carbon sequestration, and how their roots communicate. Meet at the Holden Kiosk. For questions and registration, contact Tony Coven at 387-6650

May 11, Saturday, 7am. Bird Walk on Athens Dome. Join WHPA trustee Paul Wilson for an early morning bird walk on Athens Dome. Yellow Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler are among the diverse species commonly identified in the area. Bring binoculars, bug repellent, water, and waterproof boots. Meet at the Athens Dome trailhead on Route 35.

Register at 869-1166 or e-mail wilsonupaul@gmail.com. Check the Pinnacle website or Facebook closer to the event to make sure there is no change in the meeting location.

For more information on Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association and upcoming events, please visit their website at www.windmillhillpinnacle.org.

RFPL ANNUAL BOOK SALE - DONATIONS ACCEPTED

The Rockingham Free Public Library will be hosting their annual book sale through Saturday, May 11, and donations are welcome now.

Relieve those overflowing shelves, free up some space and support your local library.

Donations can be made during Library hours.

Books of all kinds are welcome, with the exception of encyclopedias, textbooks and musty books. DVDs and audiobooks are also welcome.

All proceeds from the book sale will benefit the Rockingham Free Public Library.

For more information, call the Library at 463-4270, visit rockinghamlibrary.org or stop by the Library at 65 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls.



NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

The Westminster Fire and 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 May 7 at 7:00 PM The Prudential Committee normally meets once or twice a month. A warning will be posted 48 hours prior to each meeting.

- Number of calls in March: 39
- Number of calls through April 25th: 25
- Number of calls calendar year to Date: 131
- Number of calls fiscal year to date: 356

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting April 2nd with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 22 members present and 5 member excused. Currently there are 34 members of the volunteer fire department.

POWER EQUIPMENT: A tip for those who still mow their own lawns, do their own rototilling, leaf blowing, cut their own wood or use other motorized power tools. After use, let the engines and mufflers cool down for awhile before parking them, especially in a wooden structure.

Buildings have been known to catch fire when tools are put away before having time to cool off. Mufflers can stay hot enough to ignite a fire for some time after the machine is shut off.

Burn Permits: We can't stress enough the impor-

tance of getting a burn permit and using common sense when doing an outside burn. You must speak with one of the wardens before a permit will be issued. Leaving a message on a machine does not count. You need to speak with one of the wardens, all are 802 area code. Keep in mind that there may be times when permits are not given out due to sudden changes in the dryness and wind conditions.

Always be aware of open dry areas and windy conditions before considering a burn.

The wardens are: Warden: Cole Streeter 722-3178; Deputy Warden: Mark Lund 463-9355; Deputy Warden: Pat Haas 387-5778.

Scholarship Fund: The members of the association decided they would like repeat last year's idea of setting up a scholarship fund to be given to a Westminster resident who graduates from the Bellows Falls Union High School. The amount of the scholarship is \$500.

To qualify, the student must be pursuing a career in some area of emergency work. Check with any member of the department for particulars.

Emergency responses: We have had another busy month in April with 25 total calls through the 25th. The breakdown goes like this: 14 rescue /medical calls; 1 motor vehicle accident; 7 mutual aid calls, 2 to Walpole, 2 to Brattleboro, 1 to Springfield, 1 to Newfane and 1 to Alstead; 1 tree on wires ; 1 mental issue, 1 smoke investigation.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR SALE: Anyone

want to buy a fire extinguisher? We have them for sale and there are 4 sizes available. See the Chief or stop by the fire station for more information if interested.

Dishes: Several dishes and platters have been left behind at the fire house from functions using the facility. Stop by and claim yours. We need to return them to the rightful owners.

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

Donations Given in March: To Ludlow Ambulance Service in lieu of flowers for James Ghia.

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 website www.westminsterfire-andrescue.org.

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

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SWEDISH DEATH CLEANING

By Gyan Yankovich

It's nowhere near as horrifying as it sounds.

If you've ever lost a family member, you know the conversations surrounding who gets what stuff don't always end well. And even if they do, cleaning out the home of a loved one isn't easy.

That's where Swedish death cleaning comes in — the process of organizing and de-cluttering your belongings before you, well, die. But it's as much for you as it is for the people who come after you.

For you, death cleaning can be the motivation to live with less, by considering how much your stuff actually means to you. But it's also a process that saves your significant other, family, and friends from having to decide what to do with all your belongings while they're grieving.

When I first heard about Swedish death cleaning I assumed, fairly, that it was some special process Swedish people used to clean the dead. I was...incorrect.

In Swedish, the word for death cleaning is *döstädning*, which is a term for the cleaning and de-cluttering you do when you think your time on Earth might be coming to an end. But really, you can death clean at any age or stage in your life.

A complete guide, *The Gentle Art Of Swedish Death Cleaning*, was released in January this year and the concept has since spread the word all around the world.

The book is written by the very funny Margareta Magnusson, who describes herself as being somewhere between "80 and 100 years old."

"Let me help make your loved ones' memories of you nice — instead of awful," she writes. "A loved one wishes to inherit nice things from you. Not all things from you."

When it comes to death cleaning, an important thing to remember is that it's meant to be hard, but not sad.

In terms of the actual process of death cleaning,

Magnusson has a lot of advice on how to do it:

- Death cleaning doesn't have to be done in one go. It's something to slowly chip away at over the years.

- Begin with the things you have in storage, hidden away in attics or garages. She suggests telling your friends and family when you're starting the process so they can feel free to come and claim things before you throw them away or donate them to charity.

- Shred or throw away anything that could be upsetting, hurtful, or embarrassing for your family to find.

- Leave your photographs, letters, and journals until last. As anyone who has ever tried to de-clutter can attest, it's all too easy to get stuck in a vortex of nostalgia and procrastinate from getting any actual tidying done.

- If you know what you'd like to be done with certain belongings after you die, tell someone or leave a note. When Magnusson's mother passed away, she found notes attached to clothes and other belongings, explaining what should be done with them — like a will but for books that should be returned to their original owners, and a jacket that belonged in a museum.

- Death cleaning is a great chance to actually ask people if they want your stuff.

"To know something will be well used and have a new home is a joy," she says.

But one of my favorite tips is to create a "throw away" box, filled with items that mean a lot to you, but nothing to anyone else. This box could hold anything from "old love letters, programs, memories from traveling" to "a dried flower, a stone with a funny shape, or a little, beautiful shell". The idea is that your friends or family may look through the box, but have permission (from you!) to get rid of anything inside. And of course, while you're still around, you get to enjoy all your lovely little things.

So, there you go: Swedish death cleaning isn't morbid, it's just a thoughtful way to de-clutter your home and life.

NANCY DREW QUILT RAFFLE FOR LIBRARY

Linda Fawcett and Ann Ashcroft, librarians for Westminster's Butterfield Library, have created an amazing Nancy Drew Quilt! The quilt features book covers and book spines with titles from the more than 55 books in the Nancy Drew series.

The 53" x 66" quilt was quilted by Four Pines Quilting and has vibrant colors that would make a beautiful bed cover or wall hanging.

Raffle tickets are on sale now during open library hours. Tickets cost \$2 for one, and a book of 3 tickets is \$5. All funds raised from the raffle will help support the Butterfield Library.

Stop by; buy a ticket and show your support!



RVTC STUDENTS GET READY FOR INTERNATIONAL DECA CONFERENCE

On March 8, eight students from the River Valley Technical Center Business and Financial Services Program (or the Business Foundations class) attended the Vermont DECA conference in Burlington.

The students competed in Sports and Entertainment Marketing, Buying and Merchandising, and Principals of Marketing competitions. Students took home five medals earning seven of students the opportunity to compete in the DECA International Career Development Conference in Orlando, FL.

"I wanted to participate in DECA to get out of my comfort zone," said Madison Gould, a Business Foundations student. "I wanted to attend the DECA conference to meet other kids that might have the same interests as me," echoed two other students.

The state DECA conference is an opportunity for students to spend the day practicing their communication skills and competing in marketing, sales, and business challenges with other students in DECA programs across the state of Vermont. Students said the competition was just one part of the day. As a group, they also pitched a product in a Shark Tank scenario, competed in a balloon tower build, and saw a hypnotist. "The event helped me to improve my communication skills," said Olivia Ennen, a Business Foundations student.

All the students agreed enthusiastically that they



Pictured from left, Sue Dana, Business and Financial Services Instructor, Madison Gould, Amelia Turner, Jordan Jackson, Aaliyah Sargent, Skye Frasier, Kaylee Norton, Olivia Ennen, Gary Clay.

would attend the DECA conference again if given the chance and, in fact, seven of the students will get the opportunity to represent RVTC at the DECA International Career Development Conference (ICDC) in Orlando, Florida at the end of April!

Students have been organizing fundraisers since they found out they will be going to ICDC. The event costs between \$1,000 and \$1,200 for each student to attend the conference (this includes travel, meals, and admission to the conference.) Students will be holding a silent auction on Wednesday, April 24th from 11 to 3 in the

WESTMINSTER MYSTERY PHOTO

WE NEED MORE MYSTERY PHOTOS!

The Mystery Photo may be the most popular part of the Gazette, and we need the help of readers to keep it going. If you have any photos that you think might work, contact us at westminsternews@gmail.com and we'll help you get them in the paper.

A big thanks to Barbara Greenough for the wonderful story she sent us about last month's Mystery Photo of the home she was raised in. We loved it!

OPEN MIC POETRY NIGHT AT RFPL MAY 13

Calling all poetry lovers. It's time to get ready for Rockingham Library's Spring Poetry Open Mic. Rustle up some poems by a favorite author. Dig out some poems you've penned over the years. Or sharpen your pencils (and your wits) to write some original poetry. Then get ready to share on Poetry Open Mic night Monday, May 13 at 7 p.m. at the Rockingham Library in Belkows Falls.

Readers should come prepared to read up to five poems. To begin, each person will read one poem. Depending on the number of participants, a second, third, fourth and even fifth round of reading will follow.

For more information, go to rockinghamlibrary.org, call 463-4270, e-mail programming@rockinghamlibrary.org or stop by the Library at 65 Westminster Street.

MOREHOUSE ART EXHIBIT



Home At Heart - an exhibit of the artwork of Fiona Morehouse, will be on display at Main Street Arts, located at 35 Main Street in Saxtons River, through May 10.

Home at Heart is the journey toward belonging, a sense of home within the tension of the human experience. With vibrant color and rhythmic movement, Fiona Morehouse's expressive realism provides an invitation to explore the dwellings of the mind and the landscapes of the spirit.

SPRING RUMMAGE SALE

There will be a Spring rummage Sale at the 1st Congregational Church in Walpole, NH on Friday, May 3 from 4 to 6 p.m. and Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A bag sale starts at 11 on Saturday, all you can stuff in a large trash bag for \$10 or a small bag for \$5. Good quality used spring and summer clothing and household items.

HEALTH CARE INFO PROGRAM

On Wednesday, May 15 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Westminster West Public Library there will be a program on Finding Reliable Health Information Online.

When you need information about your health, it can be difficult to wade through all the material available online and find the best information.

Join us for a workshop with a biomedical librarian to learn about reliable sites for health information and how to evaluate the health resources you find online.

Bring a laptop or tablet if you wish, but not required!

HEALTH CARE INFO PROGRAM

atrium at the River Valley Technical Center. The retail value of the donations is just over \$2700! Included are a set of Nokian Tires with installation included from Vianor in Springfield, valued at \$1000; and a Lenovo ThinkCentre small form computer with Intel i3 processor, donated by All Service Office Machines of Charlestown, NH valued at \$575. There are many other items to bid on including gift certificates, quilts, a case of bacon, and a ½ cord of firewood. Please come to bid on these fantastic items and support these local students.

Student Medals at the Vermont DECA conference were as follows:

Written Exam Buying and Merchandising: Gold - Gary Clay, GMUHS

Role Play: Buying and Merchandising team decision: Bronze - Gary Clay, GMUHS and

Kaylee Norton, SHS

Buying and Merchandising Team Decision: Bronze - Gary Clay, GMUHS and Kaylee Norton, SHS

Sports and Entertainment Team Decision Overall: Bronze - Madison Gould, SHS and Jordan Jackson, SHS

Sports and Entertainment Team Decision Role Play: Bronze - Madison Gould, SHS and Jordan Jackson, SHS

To learn more about the River Valley Technical Center, Business and Financial Services program, or how to support the students attending the International DECA conference, visit rvtc.org or call 885-8300.

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.

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 Book Group

The Westminster West Library has a book group meeting every third Monday from 7-9. Call the library if you are interested in getting a list of the books we are reading. Contact Lise Cavanaugh at 387-4682.

Tai Chi Classes

Wednesday's at the Institute
Beginner Class 9:45 - 10:45 a.m.
Intermediate Class 11 a.m.- noon

The Living Earth Action Group meets most Fridays at 5 p.m. at the Westminster West Congregational Church. For actual schedule e-mail Caitlin Adair at pcadair@sover.net.

Souper Wednesday

Wednesday, May 1, 12 to 2 p.m.. Last Souper Wednesday of the season will be a cookout and potluck. Come and celebrate Spring.

RFPL ANNUAL PLANT SALE

Stop by the Friends of the Rockingham Library Annual Plant Sale to purchase some of the area's finest plants at great prices. Held on Saturday May 11, the day before Mother's Day, it's the perfect opportunity to bring something special home to Mom.

Perennials, annuals, bulbs, shrubs and ornamental grasses will all be available. Organic herbs and vegetables will also be ready for pick up and planting.

If you'd like to donate some plants for the sale, place plants in pots or plastic bags, and label them to the best of your ability (including name and light preference).

All plants are welcome, as long as they are not invasive.

Drop them off at the Library between Monday, May 7 through Thursday, May 10 during these Library Hours: Mon.-Tues-Weds 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Thursday 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For more information, call the Library at 463-4270, e-mail programming@rockinghamlibrary.org, visit rockinghamlibrary.org or stop by the Rockingham Library at 65 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls.

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

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Town of Westminster
Westminster Activities Commission
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Faith Community

The First Congregational Church of Westminster

Rev. Sami Jones McRae, Pastor. 3470 Route 5, Westminster, 722-4148.
The church is handicapped accessible. Sunday School is available; call to register your children. We are an Open and Affirming church; all welcome.
Tuesday, May 7, 11:00 AM – Women's Fellowship. Meet at the First Congregational Church; Bring a sandwich, our hostess will serve drink and dessert.
Sunday, May 12, 10 am, Worship.
Saturday, May 18, 9 am to 2 pm. Annual Plant Sale, with crafts, white elephant, baked goods, cookout and more.
Sunday, May 19, 10 am, Worship
Sunday, May 26, 10 am, Worship
Sunday, June 2, 10:00 am, Worship and Communion

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. 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 wheelchair accessible, and the congregation is Open and Affirming. Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno is the pastor. She currently holds office hours on Monday and Thursday afternoons, and people are welcome to drop by. She can be reached at 387-2334, via cell phone at 579-8356 or e-mail 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. More information at www.walpolebiblechurch.org.

Walpole Unitarian Church

The corner of Union and Main Streets, Walpole, NH
Services begin at 10:am with Rev. Elaine Bomford.
First Sunday of each month is Circle Sunday with visiting presenters.
www.walpoleunitarian.org.

Meetings

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

Planning Commission 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Conservation Commission meets every 4th Thursday at Town Hall at 7:15

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

Development Review Board 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 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 and 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
Tuesday, May 28 at 5 p.m. at the Rockingham Library.

Westminster Institute Board will meet on Tuesday, at 7 p.m. in the Institute.



Primary Care
Holistic Medicine
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Biological Medicine
Chiropractic
CranioSacral Therapy
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For more information about Rotary,
contact Alma Beals at
almabeals@gmail.com or 722-3355

Service above self throughout our community and world.

The FOUR WAY Test
Of the things we think, say or do

- Is it the TRUTH?
- Is it FAIR to all concerned?
- Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
- Is it BENEFICIAL to all concerned?

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

KURN HATTIN HOSTS SPRING GET ACQUAINTED DAY

Guests had a chance to experience what makes Kurn Hattin such a special place at Spring Get Acquainted Day on April 5th.

Traveling from NYC to attend the event, alumna Aaliyah Olmo, Class of 2010, gave a stirring speech about the lasting impact Kurn Hattin had in her life. It was at Kurn Hattin that 11 year old Aaliyah first discovered her talent and passion for music.

"Lisa got gears in me rolling that I didn't know I had," she said of Lisa Bianconi, Kurn Hattin's Music Director. Aaliyah then performed a song, accompanying herself on the ukulele, one of the many instruments she plays.

Kurn Hattin's Get Acquainted Day also featured musical performances by the Kurn Hattin Jazz Ensemble and Star-Spangled Heritage Tour Choir, a film and Q&A session, student-led tours of the school and cottages, and a lunch.



Above left, eighth grader Alexia and seventh grader Tayshaun, explaining a recent class project to guests, from left, Steve Birge, Nancy Birge, and Jim Lynch. And right, alumna Aaliyah Olmo, class of 2010, performing a song.



CHESTER PLANT SALE FRIDAY MAY 31-JUNE 2

Spring is here, and gardens are calling. But cold nights can be dangerous for new plants. So consider avoiding temptation and waiting for the Chester Plant Sale that is scheduled for Friday May 31 and Saturday June 1, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and Sunday June 2, 1 to 3 p.m. on the side lawn of St. Luke's Church at 313 Main Street in Chester.

Plants featured are hardy perennials from Vermont gardens, as well as some special, hardened annuals that cannot be found locally. The plants offered are top notch and ready to go into the ground without additional hardening!

A group of knowledgeable gardeners has been working to dig, pot, and groom the specimens. Buyers last year appreciated the separation of plants by growing conditions (sun, part sun, and shade), as well as the wide variety of abundant, healthy, weed-free plants in large pots at bargain prices.

Some favorite offerings are varieties of iris, hostas, daylilies (including ever-blooming Stella d'Oro), bee balm, butterflyweed, perennial geraniums, Lamb's Ears, Shasta Daisy, Sedum Autumn Joy, coral bells, Chinese astilbe, Lady's Mantle, various herbs, and so much more.

In addition, there will be Gardener's Log Notebooks, original watercolor notecards of birds and flowers, homemade jams and preserves, and seasonal produce, if the weather cooperates. Also present will be knowledgeable gardeners eager to give advice on plants and garden design.

Ask any of last year's attendees. This plant sale is worth the trip. For questions, please contact Lillian Willis at 875-1340 or lbwillisct@comcast.net.

ED CENTER RECEIVES GRANT

Southern Vermont AHEC received a \$5,000 grant from the Vermont Women's Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation. The grant will help further SVTAHEC's MedQuest 2019 program, a 6-day, residential program for students in 10th, 11th, and 12th grades.

MedQuest provides students with opportunities to explore various health careers while gaining comfort in a college environment. Through interactive presentations and job-shadowing experiences at local hospitals and community provider offices, students strengthen their leadership skills and gain a clearer understanding of career options in health care.

Participants have the opportunity to learn from graduate-level health professions students who serve as mentors for the week.

The Vermont Women's Fund is a statewide organization committed to supporting the advancement, self-sufficiency, and economic and social equality of women and girls ages 15-25. Learn more at vermont-womensfund.org.

Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center (AHEC) is a non-profit agency with a volunteer board of directors from Addison, Bennington, Rutland, Windham, and Windsor counties. The Southern Vermont Area Health Education Center improves access to quality health care by working with community and academic partners to support healthcare workforce development through recruitment, retention and continuing education of health care professionals.

HOW TO BE KIND TO THE EARTH IN YOUR BACKYARD

By Caitlin Adair

At Living Earth Action Group we have been learning so much about the capacity of healthy soil to reduce flooding, sequester carbon, protect watersheds, as well as grow healthy food for humans and animals.

Just think, it was only about discovered in the mid-1990s that a community of mycelial fungi, plant roots, bacteria and microorganisms in living soil act in concert to create health on Earth! Nature knows how to do it.

How can we mere humans support the 'soil-carbon sponge' and the web of life on our properties, here in Westminister? Here are a few suggestions from what we have gleaned over the two years of our studies:

1. If there are leaves on your lawn in spring, instead of carting them away, rake them right into the flowerbeds and veggie garden. They will cover the soil (that's good) and provide mulch and eventually turn to humus. If you have a lot of leaves, you may have to move them to under shrubs or trees, because you don't want to smother your perennials.

Everything in moderation, with the exception of oak leaves. If you have a lot of oak leaves, put them in the woods or in their own pile, as they take too long to break down, and tend to mat.

2. While we're on the subject of lawn, think about how to reduce the size of your lawn. Why? Because short grass has short roots, and short roots do not sequester much carbon in soil.

Why not call a large section of lawn "wildflower meadow," which you will mow maybe twice a season. Our normal weeds around here are all wildflowers, actually, and if you let them bloom, pollinators will love you and roots will go down deeper and sequester more carbon and you will be appreciating the natural beauty of wild things, right where you live.

You could also create more or larger garden beds, or dig up the lawn and plant ground covers, maybe with shrubs and trees growing in them.

3. Planting more shrubs and trees maximizes photosynthesis in your garden. We want to do that absolutely everywhere, to rebalance the carbon and water vapor imbalance in the atmosphere.

Photosynthesizing plants pull carbon out of the air,

make sugar out of it and store it in the roots and soil, where it belongs.

Also, protect the trees you have on your property. Trees keep the water cycle moving, purify the air, create beauty and shade, and are the home for insects and birds. They communicate through their roots and the mycorrhizal network in the soil. It's a community down there! Underplant trees with shrubs, flowers and ground covers rather than grass, or at least mulch at the base with those leaves that fall down everywhere...

4. Grow food. Author Michael Pollan says growing food is a radical act because it connects us with our Mother, where all of our food comes from.

It will be free of toxins and full of your love and care. And there will be no transportation costs, no plastic packaging. Try fruit trees and bushes as well as a tomato plant or two.

If growing food is new for you, start small. Find a neighbor who has a great organic garden and ask them to teach you how to do it!

5. Make a compost pile. This can be just a pile of leaves and plant trimmings off in the corner, or more. There are many ways to compost. There is an article by Cat Buxton: "Building a Healthy and Active Backyard Compost Heap," at her website www.GrowMoreWasteLess.com.

6. Keep the rainwater that falls on your property. Don't allow it to run off into the street or the sewer or a drainage ditch, making its way to the sea! Keep it where it falls so it can soak in, hydrate the home landscape and replenish our aquifers.

As your soil gets healthier and spongier, it will absorb more of that rain, saving it for later use by your plants. You can create swales, collect water from the roof in rain barrels, redirect the flow onto the land instead of the rivers.

7. Of course, use no chemicals or other toxins on your land. We do not need to kill to grow. Change that mindset.

Living Earth Action Group meets every Friday from 5 to 6:30 at the Westminister West Congregational Church, 44 Church St, West West. New members are always welcome.

For more info, call Caitlin 387-5779 or e-mail pcadair@sover.net.



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**May Business of the Month:
 Harlow's Farmstand**



It's Our 28th Year!

Harlow Farmstand officially opens on May 4 — it's our 28th year of serving our local and not-so-local customers. Come in and say hello to Dan Harlow and his staff, Ethan, Andrew, Kate, and Kara. We can help with your garden plans for 2019!

Celebrate your Mom on Mother's Day with a beautiful hanging basket. We have a wide selection of bedding plants, too. Fresh organic greens and spinach will be coming along soon, and field-grown asparagus, lettuce, kale, collards, and other early produce from our farm. We have a full range of organic vegetables and fruits all season long.

We sell our own eggs. We have River Valley Dexter beef from Matt Tomberg's cattle, raised on the farm, and locally sourced pork. We will start to offer Harlow Farm fresh chickens in June.

At Harlow Farmstand you'll find organic and conventional dairy products—milk, butter, and more, along with local cheeses from Vermont Shepherd, Grafton Village Cheese, and AlpineGlo Farm. You can find bread from Orchard Hill Breadworks in Alstead, N.H. We have Harlow Farm-made salsa, jams, pickles, chutney and condiments, and our own frozen vegetables. We offer many snacks, drinks, and specialty products, too.

We are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Michael Lenox is running Café Loco for his eighteenth year, with delicious breakfast and lunch, and bakery goods available, as always. Stop by and ask him about his winter in Florida and the great new items he's offering. Café Loco is open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, except 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. You'll find more on our website, harlowfarm.com, and please like us on Facebook. Or call us at 722-3515.

In photos, from top, the Harlow Farmstand; farmstand owner Dan Harlow, and Michael Lenox, proprietor of Cafe Loco.

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