



## KH'S LISA BIANCONI - MUSIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR

Lisa Bianconi, Director of Music at New England Kurn Hattin Homes for Children in Westminster has been awarded the 2020 Vermont Educator of the Year Award for District VI from Vermont Music Educators Association.

This prestigious award is "for outstanding professionalism and contributions to music education and children."

A District VI colleague nominated Bianconi and described her as "one of the greatest, dedicated, passionate, and capable music teachers you will ever meet. Any individual familiar with the Kurn Hattin school would quickly comment on how music is an integral part of this amazing school culture and the remarkable work done by this recipient."

The award was presented at the Winter District Festival in Springfield.

Lisa was truly honored with the award. "I am so fortunate to be able to work in such an amazing community where the value of music education and the performing arts is a high priority. It is truly a gift to come to work every day and create joy through music."

Kurn Hattin Executive Director, Stephen Harrison stated, "We're all quite proud of and happy for Lisa. Lisa's dedication, expertise, and enthusiasm give us all inspiration for doing our best in our areas of responsibility. This is a very well-deserved recognition and award."

*Lisa Bianconi, Director of Music at New England Kurn Hattin Homes, at the piano surrounded by students. Photo credit: Kristie Lisai*



## COMPASS SCHOOL DIRECTOR RETIRING

Compass School's Director and founding board member Rick Gordon has announced his retirement at the end of this school year.

Gordon will leave a legacy of giving students a fresh start and opportunity for success in his over 20-year career at the school. He was instrumental in implementing many of the Compass School's signature programs including Global Connections, a travel program to provide every student, regardless of family income, the opportunity for international travel and cultural exchange.

He also started the school's now foundational portfolio system, where every student is actively engaged in reflecting on their learning and celebrating their growth. And he spearheaded many capital improvements including adding an arts lab and science lab, solar powered electricity, and an outdoor soccer field.

"We have done a great job the past few years detailing and documenting our curriculum, our overall educational program is well established and strong in all its purposeful elements, and we have a stable, high quality staff," Gordon said. "I think any organization benefits from a change of leadership from time to time to keep things fresh and vibrant and this seems like a good time for me to be moving on."

In 1999, Gordon, along with a small group of parents

and community members, wanted to create a public school system with options so that every child could find a school where they fit, felt valued, and could find success. After initial efforts to be part of the public system, they were successful in starting Compass as an independent school, and over the following 20+ years, Compass has been supporting students to achieve a near 100% graduation rate with 90% of graduates accepted for post-graduate education.



"Rick is more than just a director," stated Compass Senior Ben Allaire of Westminster. Ben has been a Compass student his entire middle and high school career, during which he wrote and directed documentary and dramatic films, interned at local historical societies, taught special history classes, and along with his entire class traveled to Spain with Rick. "Rick is a teacher and a mentor, and more than anything else a friend. He has helped me become a better student and a better person, and he has helped me discover the wider world." Ben,

who will graduate in May and is headed to college in the fall, echoed the sentiments of other students. "Compass is a great school, and we wouldn't be where we are today without Rick's leadership."

Gordon's successor will be Eric Rhomberg, Assistant Director and teacher at Compass School who has been with the school almost as long as Gordon and is beloved by students and parents alike. "Working with Rick has been one of the highlights of my career. His vast experience, intelligence and skills and his heart-centered commitment to the Compass mission have been a bedrock of our success", Rhomberg said. "I am thrilled to be working with our outstanding faculty and the entire Compass community to advance this mission next year and beyond."

"Rick's philosophical approach to education is unparalleled," remarks co-board director Randi Solin. "Over the last twenty years he's continued to evolve educational practices at Compass and keep up with the ever-changing theories of learning. He will be sorely missed, but with Eric on board we can be certain that the Compass School will continue with the same vibrant, creative spirit Rick has cemented in the fabric of our school."

## RFPL OFFERS "BORROW THE INTERNET" & ONLINE LEARNING TOOL PROGRAMS

The Rockingham Free Public Library is offering a new service, lending portable WiFi Hotspots to enable Library Card holders to "Borrow the Internet." This new program is made possible through a grant from the Public Library Association and its DigitalLead Initiative. Provision of these hotspots is a natural extension of the free WiFi service currently provided at the Library. "The community looks to the Library for public Internet access," said Céline Houlné, Library Director. "The hotspot lending program will allow even more of our patrons to use our online services."

Digital inclusion is a strategic priority for the Rockingham Library. Through this lending program, the Library provides students and parents access to educational resources and job seekers access to employment resources, with the aim to bridge the digital divide for low-to-moderate income residents. This is

part of a growing national trend where public libraries are expanding their services to meet the unique needs of the communities they serve.

For more information about the WiFi Hotspot Lending program and other digital services offered, contact the Library at 802-463-4270, [reference@rockinghamlibrary.org](mailto:reference@rockinghamlibrary.org), or online at [rockinghamlibrary.org](http://rockinghamlibrary.org). Or stop by the Library at 65 Westminster St in Bellows Falls, to join the Library and fill out a MobileWiFi Hotspot User Agreement Form. Youth 16 and younger will need a parent/guardian to fill out their form.

RFPL also now offers Learning Express, a free online learning tool (created by EBSCO) which gives any library patron easy access to a host of tutorials and test preparations to ready them for just about anything.

Getting ready to attend college? Brush up on any academic skills needed including writing, math, science

and social studies with "Essential Academic Skills."

Want to get a commercial driver's license? Take online practice tests at home to know what to expect at the DMV. Prepare for your GED test with over 600 flashcards that include the most-tested content on the exam, including the words and themes that come up year after year. Learn English as a second language and so much more.

Any Rockingham Library patron can access this tool at home by choosing Learning Express from the RFPL Online drop-down menu on the Library's web page: [rockinghamlibrary.org](http://rockinghamlibrary.org).

THE 2020 DOG LICENSES ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT ALL DOGS MUST BE LICENSED BEFORE APRIL 1, 2020.

### BRING YOUR APPETITE TO TOWN MEETING

Town Meeting - Saturday, February 29th

Remember to come to Town Meeting and bring your appetite for a good cause!

Westminster Cares will be serving coffee, tea, breakfast items and an amazing assortment of baked goods. The Westminster Community Schools will be serving lunch.

Purchasing bake sale goodies and lunches helps support these two local organizations.

### NEED A RIDE TO THE POLLS ON MARCH 3RD?

Senior residents of Westminster and those who are unable to drive and want to vote, should call Westminster Cares at (802) 722-3607.

PLEASE NOTE THE UNUSUALLY EARLY MARCH 18 DEADLINE FOR THE APRIL 2020 GAZETTE

Our Monthly Community Newspaper March 2020 Vol. 16 No. 3

## Westminster Gazette

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#### MARCH TOWN MEETING SCHEDULE

Annual Floor Vote at Bellows Falls Union High School

Saturday, February 29, 2020 at 10:00am

Australian Ballot Vote

Tuesday, March 3, 2020 from 8:00am to 7:00pm

at Westminster Institute

Bellows Falls Union High School Annual Meeting

Wednesday, February 26, 2020 at 7:00pm

at Bellows Falls Union High School

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Annual Rates:  
 Pages 2-3 - approx. 4"x5" \$275 a year - \$30 for one month  
 Pages 4-7 - approx. 4.7"x6.8" \$525 a year - \$80 for one month  
 Page 8 - approx. 2.5"x3.25" - \$175 a year

New Sections Introductory Rates:  
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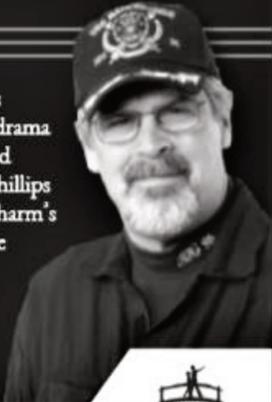
Underwriting Support is a donation of at least \$300 annually and does not include advertising. Underwriters are listed in the box on page 6 each month.  
 We also welcome article submissions that would be of interest to the community. We ask for a maximum size limit of 500 words, and reserve the right to edit for content and length. Thank you!  
 On-line at: **www.westminstervt.org**

## ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & EVENTS

SPECIAL EVENT TO SUPPORT KURN HATTIN HOMES *for*  
CHILDREN'S TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES/STEAM LAB

# JOIN CAPTAIN RICHARD PHILLIPS

FOR AN EXCEPTIONAL EVENING OF COURAGE



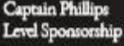
For five days in April 2009, Captain Richard Phillips became the center of an extraordinary international drama when he was captured by Somali pirates who attacked and boarded his ship. To protect his crew, Captain Phillips made a conscious decision to put himself directly in harm's way, knowing full well that he might pay the ultimate price for his decision. Amid the standoff, he offered himself as a hostage to get them off his ship. This dramatic story was also made into a motion picture by Columbia Pictures starring Tom Hanks.

**MAY 1, 5:30-8:30PM**  
Kurn Hattin Rd., Westminister, VT . Mayo Memorial Center

**\$75 TICKET INCLUDES:**

- DELECTABLE HORS D'OEUVRES & LIBATIONS (BEER & WINE INCLUDED)
- THE COOL, SMOOTH SOUNDS OF THE DON BALDINI TRIO
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**THIS IS AN EVENT NOT TO BE MISSED!**  
Purchase tickets at [kurnhattin.org/CaptainPhillips](http://kurnhattin.org/CaptainPhillips) or call (802) 721-6916.

  Sponsorship opportunities available. Contact for more information.

2020 **Kid's Dance Away Cancer Benefit Dance & Auction** **NEW DATE**

**When:** Friday, March 6th from 6-9pm  
**Where:** Westminister Center School Westminister, Vermont  
**Cost:** \$5 per child, adults enter for free

DJ, refreshments and auction items

Rescheduled from February 7th



## WHS PROGRAM ON GRAND RESORT HOTELS

On Friday, March 6, at 7 p.m. in the Walpole Town Hall, architectural historian Bryant Tolles will share the history and architecture of the grand resorts of the White Mountains from the pre-Civil War era to the present.

The richly illustrated free presentation, sponsored by New Hampshire Humanities and the Walpole Historical Society, will focus on the surviving grand resort hotels: The Mount Washington Resort, the Mountain View Grand, the Balsams, the Eagle Mountain House, and Wentworth Hall and Cottages. Extensive illustrations will document these buildings and others no longer in existence.

With degrees from Yale and Boston University, Dr. Tolles has been on the faculty of the University of Delaware, Tufts, and Harvard, teaching courses on the history of tourism in America and the history of New England.

Refreshments will be served.

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## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminister Cares Board of Directors met Feb. 5 at the Westminister Institute with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: Pete Harrison, Miriam Lanata, Regina Borden, Doug Oftedahl, Pat Goodell, Heidi Anderson, Kathy Elliot and Director Donna Dawson. Don Dawson was unable to attend.

Westminister Cares creates opportunities for seniors and adults with disabilities to live with independence and dignity in the community. Anyone interested in learning more about Westminister 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 email at [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net).

Check us out at [www.westminstercares.org](http://www.westminstercares.org) and like us on Facebook.

Programs & Services Provided in JANUARY 2020

**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 seven people for weekend meals (14 total weekend meals). One new recipient started in January; and one client passed away during the month.

**Transportation:** During the month, 24 rides were provided by six volunteers who drove seniors to/from the dentist, doctors, BMH, pharmacies, grocery shopping, the bank and our Healthy Aging Group.

**Programs:** Two Secrets of Healthy Aging group, four Gentle Yoga classes, 26 Strength Training classes; four Chair Yoga classes; eight Intermediate Tai Chi classes and four Beginner Tai Chi classes.

**Assistance and Referrals:** One Meals-on-Wheels intake and home visit were completed; one referral to Senior Solutions for case management services.

**Friendly Visiting** – One volunteer made two friendly visits in January.

**Medical Equipment** – Five pieces of equipment were loaned out and eight pieces of equipment were returned to us.

**Community Nurse Program** – In January our Nurse made 14 home visits and various phone contact calls in support of clients. She saw an additional eight people at the January Blood Pressure Clinic held during Senior Lunch.

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

**MEMORIAL & HONOR DONATIONS RECEIVED THROUGH FEB. 20th:**

In memory of Duane and Madeline Law from Philip and Donna Simoneau

In memory of Bob Haas from: Alison Latham, Bill and Marlene O'Connor

## “WHAT’S UP AT THE TOWN HALL” - BROADBAND, & THE CENSUS

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

**NOTIFICATION:** The Town Reports are in at the Town Hall, Westminister West Library, and the Butterfield Library. Please pick up your copy before Town Meeting which is on February 29, 2020.

**EMERGENCY AUTOMATED CALLS:** The Selectboard needs your opinion. It was brought to their attention a possible opportunity to create an “Automated Call System” for Westminister residents. This call system could be used for urgent road closings, Police matters in your neighborhood, or something as simple as a reminder that taxes are due. The Board is interested in knowing if this is something our taxpayers would be interested in. This service, even if implemented, would be optional and strictly used for Town matters to only the subscribed users. It should be noted that this service call could be in the form of an email, text to your phone, or a traditional phone call. Please call the Town Hall and voice your opinion.

**CENSUS CARDS:** Shortly it will be time to fill out your census cards. This information is extremely important to Westminister in how much money is provided by the State and Federal Government when the town is in need. Please remember that all of your family members in your care are to be counted even if they are students in college, family living abroad temporarily, or even in the process of moving but haven't yet.

**BROAD BAND OPPORTUNITY:** The Town of Westminister has an opportunity to be part of the advertised State wide push to make available high speed internet to all Vermonters. Windham Regional Commission for Windham County, is in the process of creating a feasibility study on which households need a new broad band service or broad band service, period. Please fill out the survey in this GAZETTE and return to the Town Hall. We need all residents to respond even if they are not interested in the service right now. Deadline will be in the third week of March for all surveys. Any questions call the Town Manager.

**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.

**HARLOW FARM WINTER MARKET**



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Or just stop in.

## Wild Turkeys

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Arriving home from work last Saturday, I found about 25 Wild Turkeys under the bird feeders in my yard. They apparently had been there for some time, judging by the many tracks and the tossed about leaves under the thin layer of snow.

Turkeys are very common today as they were in the Colonial days before over hunting and habitat elimination wiped them out. By the mid-1800s more than 75 percent of Vermont was open land having been cleared for farming. Turkeys require several types of habitat in their home range which can be from 400 to 4,000 acres. They need forests as well as open fields. The forests provide trees for nuts, large trees for roosting and evergreens for winter cover. They prefer southern slopes for warmth and less snow accumulation. Open fields provide nesting sites and insects.

In the 1950s, efforts were made to reestablish turkeys by releasing "game farm turkeys."

These turkeys lacked the ability to survive our rugged winters. They did not have the keen eyesight and hearing that the wild turkeys have. In 1969 and 1970, a few wild turkeys were trapped in New York and released in Vermont. This introduction was a successful story with a population having grown to 600 in three or four years and then exploding to the huge numbers we have today.

The adult males are called toms and the younger males are called "jakes." Toms are polygamous, meaning they will mate with several hens. For nests, the hens will scrape out a small depression in the ground, usually hidden in the edge of the woods.

They lay one egg a day for several days until the clutch has 10 to 15 eggs or more. As the last egg is laid the hen will start incubating for 28 days, only leaving



the nest occasionally to eat.

The young, called "poult" face a world of danger not only from cold, wet springs but are vulnerable to predators. The predators are raccoons, foxes, snakes and many other animals that have a taste for eggs. If the nest is destroyed a hen will often re-nest. The second clutch is often smaller and the poults will have the disadvantage of being smaller than the other poults.

As spring turns to summer, the hens and their poults will join together and form flocks of 30 or more that will stay together until the following spring. Young hens are called "jennies." Unsuccessful hens often join other hens or jennies to form small spinster flocks. Males often form bachelor flocks.

In April, the toms can be heard gobbling and seen

strutting to attract the hens. It is a great show to watch the males fan out their tails and to see their head and neck displays of red, white and blue. Mary Holland in "Naturally Curious" tells us that the fleshy protuberances that adorn their throats and beaks are called wattles, caruncles and snoods. She writes that a large wattle, or dewlap, is a flap of skin on the throat of a male turkey. The bulbous, fleshy growths at the bottom of the turkey's throat are major caruncles.

Large wattles and caruncles have been shown to correlate with high testosterone levels, good nutrition and the ability to evade predators, which makes the genes of a tom turkey very desirable to a female. The snood, another fleshy outgrowth which hangs down over the male's beak, is normally pale and not very long. When he starts strutting and courting a hen, the tom's snood (and caruncles) becomes engorged with blood, making it redder and longer impressing the female.

Turkeys roost in trees and sometimes roost in the evergreens behind my garage. In the early morning while it is still dark enough so that they only show up as black lumps, I have tried a few times to sneak up on them. They instantly know I am there and crash haphazardly through the trees disappearing.

I often repeat an adventure from an Audubon bird walk several years ago on the late Fred Hunt's property in Reading. Our group was looking for birds while the owner's poodle was exploring ahead of us. Suddenly she was running flat out back toward us with a hen, also flat out, gaining on her. The hen was concentrating so hard on the poodle that she was almost up to us before she realized it. Then she veered off into the woods. Suspecting a hidden nest, we immediately moved along. Naturally this was the highlight of our walk.

## A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: THE DRUM

For at least two Historical Society board members, Barb Greenough and Jessie Haas, a favorite object in the collection is the drum. It is a military-style snare-drum, typically made of ash wood and calf's skin, with gut 'snares'. Ours is painted red, with blue bands dashed with yellow, and circles of brass studs, and is said to be the drum used by Azariah Wright's militia—not at the Westminster Massacre, but the day after, the day the whole thing became truly revolutionary.

Our story-telling around the Massacre usually focuses on the events of March 13, 1775, when a drunken sheriff Paterson and his posse fired on unarmed protestors, killing 21-year-old William French of Dummerston. It was a shocking event, the first bloodshed in a long series of peaceful protests that had closed courts all over Massachusetts and into New Hampshire in 1774.

The previous protestors were also unarmed, but had the advantage of overwhelming numbers—five or six thousand, for instance, in Worcester. In Westminster there were only a hundred, and many had left the court house to find supper and a place to sleep. The vast quantity of rum and cider consumed by the posse—Paterson ran up a bar bill at the Tory Tavern north of seventy-seven pounds—was a contributing factor, but there was not enough rum in New England to persuade a posse to attack a crowd of 6,000 people. Here, under cover of darkness and booze and facing only twenty or thirty, it seemed a gamble worth taking.

The posse marched up the hill just before moonlight, and fired two volleys at the unarmed men at the court house door. French was mortally wounded, shot several times in the head and leg. He was dragged into a cell, his dying moans mocked by court officials. His fellow-prisoners were packed in with him, so tightly they were unable to help him. Hours later a doctor examined him, but by that time



he was dead.

At that point it was a massacre of one. But for the New Hampshire Grants it was Tienenman Square—a 'massacree,' an outrage, a sign of the brutality of the regime, and its complete unfitness to rule.

The next day militia from all surrounding towns, including 400 men from New Hampshire, poured into Westminster, in the section of the King's Highway between the present Town Hall and the top of Court House Hill. It's hard to know how many exactly; at least four hundred, possibly many more.

This was at a time when the fighting-aged male population of Westminster was around a hundred. To the tune of fife and drum, everyone argued, and a group of men from Dummerston, probably friends of William French, voted to shoot their muskets indiscriminately into the court house, killing everyone inside. Captain Benjamin Bellows of Walpole set guard over the building to prevent a second massacre.

Tension built until sometime in the afternoon

when two men—possibly Azariah Wright and one of his lieutenants—simply walked into the court house and demanded the officials' surrender.

That was the revolutionary act. In that moment, the people of what is now Vermont overthrew their government. Court was adjourned and never reopened. The court officials were put in the cells. Later many were taken to jail in Northampton. Some kind of fighting would likely have ensued, but just over a month later the battles of Lexington and Concord ignited the war, and focused it on Cambridge. Westminster men headed there immediately, and many took part in the battle of Bunker Hill; New York and British rule over southern Vermont was never re-established.

We don't know who the drummer was in Azariah Wright's militia, but circumstantial evidence suggests it may have been Jonathan Fuller. He lived in Westminster West, near the Ranney-Crawford House, and later enlisted in the 1st New Hampshire Regiment, where he served as a drummer. The New Hampshire regiments saw heavy fighting during the battle of Freeman's Farm, part of the Saratoga Campaign of 1777. Fuller was killed, the only Westminster man to die in battle during the Revolution. He was likely buried there in a mass grave.

Some work has been done on our drum over the years, including replacement of the ropes, to conserve it. It remains a remarkable item, one of the most handsome in our collection and one Westminster can take pride in. The care of generations past has preserved it for us; it's up to us to preserve it for future citizens of Westminster.

Westminstervthistory.org

Westminster Historical Trivia

Where is "the Upper Street?" Where is "the Lower Street? If you think you know, email [kjh@sover.net](mailto:kjh@sover.net). We'll mention you in this column next month if you get it right.

## 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 March 3 at 7 p.m. The Prudential Committee normally meets twice a month. A warning will be posted 48 hours prior to each meeting.

Number of calls in January 33:

Number of calls through February 25: 26

Number of calls calendar year to Date: 55

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 285

**Association Meeting:** The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting February 4th with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 23 members present and six members excused. Currently there are 37 members of the volunteer fire department.

During the meeting, the department welcomed three new members, two junior members and one regular member under the six month probation guidelines. The junior members will be full members when they turn 18. The junior members are Dominic Kendall and Jack Burke. The regular member is Nathan Fairbrother.

We all feel very fortunate to have these young men join us. Many fire departments are struggling with their membership numbers.

**Emergency responses:** We have had another busy month so far in February with 26 so far by the 19th of the month. The breakdown goes like this: 13 rescue/medical calls; two motor vehicle accidents; one accidental alarm activation; one lift assist; one chimney fire; three mutual aid calls, one to Putney, one to Keene and one to Chester-

field; four CO detector incidents; one smoke/fire investigation. Also there were a couple of training classes.

**CO Detectors:** As you can see by the list above there has been several calls regarding carbon monoxide issues. Checking smoke and carbon monoxide detectors for proper operation should be done regularly.

**Hot coals and ashes:** When removing hot coals and ashes from a wood stove or fireplace, first put them in a covered metal container. Then put them outside away from the house or other buildings. Several homes are lost each year when hot ashes are left in a container on a wood floor porch or deck or left too close to a building that a spark could reach. Also, be careful not to spread them in an area where there are dry leaves or dry grass that may ignite very quickly.

**Mud Season:** Although the worst of mud season is yet to come, it is always a good idea to limit travel on muddy roads as much as possible, giving them a chance to dry out. If using a muddy road is unavoidable, be sure to drive toward the center when possible. The shoulders are apt to be very soft adding to the chances of getting stuck or tipping over.

**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 people holding functions at the station. Stop by and claim yours. We would like to return them to their rightful owners. Or you can contact anyone of the members of the department to check on yours.

**NEW VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED:** From time to time there is a need for food to be brought to the Fire House. During calls when the fire fighters are out for an extended period of time, having something to eat and drink when they return is a huge compliment. Also, once in a great while there are special events which require feeding a large number of people. If you are available and are willing to be on a call list for these occasions or if you just want more information, call Chief Cole Streeter or June Streeter or any one of the members you may know and let them know. This is a great way to help the people who help the community in so many ways. Thanks in advance.

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

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

We would like to have additional volunteers from the Westminster West area. There is a Fire House, an engine and a rescue vehicle located in Westminster West and more help is always welcome to utilize that equipment during calls.

As always, we would like to thank the members of the community for its continued support of the fire department. Check us out on our web-site at [www.westminster-fireandrescue.org](http://www.westminster-fireandrescue.org).

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

# Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

## THE EPIDEMIC OF SOCIAL ISOLATION

By Tammy Pozerycki, *Alzheimer's Caregiver Support* – [www.AlternativesinAlzheimerscare.com](http://www.AlternativesinAlzheimerscare.com)

In 2018, the Center on Aging and Health, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore Maryland, published a study of social isolation and its effects on the aging population. Social isolation is a global problem that certainly has negative consequences on the physical and mental health of older adults. Loneliness has been termed the “hidden killer” of older adults isolated in the community. It is not so much about being alone as it is the person’s perception of loneliness. Loneliness is a subjective, detrimental feeling as a result of lack of social relationships. These relationships are often on the decline due to the loss of friends and family the older we get.

Humans are social beings and although some may choose to live in isolation, others are isolated by uncontrollable factors. These factors may include lack of support, lack of transportation, uninvolved family, physical limitations, cognitive decline, etc. In my experience, one of the greatest risk factors to isolation and loneliness is the development of dementia. It is common among those living with dementia to withdraw and self-isolate.

The negative effects of social isolation are associated with decreased physical and mental health. These include increasing the risks of cardiovascular disease; decreased immune system; Major Depressive Disorder; Anxiety Disorder; symptoms of dementia; low self-esteem and self-worth; and negative coping mechanisms.

The symptoms of dementia experienced, associated with loneliness, may include sleep and appetite distur-

bances; depressed mood; apathy; fatigue; loss of interest; decreased functional independence; memory impairment; and, decreased concentration and attention. A Dutch study reports that people who feel lonely are more likely to develop clinical dementia over a period of three years compared to those who do not experience loneliness.

Approximately 28 percent or 13.8 million older adults live alone according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Social isolation is the highest risk factor for developing the feelings of loneliness. When isolated older adults have access to the opportunity to engage in purposeful and meaningful activities, their life expectancy increases. Having a purpose positively impacts mood, self-esteem, and self-worth.

The other positive impact of purposeful engagement is that it improves the person’s cognitive functioning. Dr. John Cacioppo, a pioneer in the field of social neuroscience passed away in March 2018, his wife, Dr. Stephanie Cacioppo made a very humanistic statement, “As a social species, we are accountable to help our lonely children, parents, neighbors, and even strangers in the same way we would treat ourselves. Treating loneliness is our collective responsibility.”

It is true that many who have lost their life-long partner die of a broken heart. It is a real diagnosis called “taktsubo cardiomyopathy.” This is induced by grief and stress. Think of the impact we could all make if we acknowledge just one lonely older adult and did what we could do to decrease their isolation and loneliness by providing them with the opportunity to participate in purposeful engagement.

*Used by permission.*

## TOP SCAMS OF 2019 CONTINUED: # 5 - 7

*(Continued from February Gazette)*

### 5. Debt collection threats

Scam: Scammers pose as debt collectors or law enforcement and say legal action will be taken against you if you don't pay them what you owe.

How to spot: If you did owe a debt, collectors are not allowed to threaten you with arrest over the phone. You can request verification of the debt, which has to be sent to you in writing. If you ask them to stop calling you, they are generally required to stop.

What to do: Hang up the phone, and if they call again, let the call go to voicemail. If you think you do actually owe money to a debt collector or other agency, make sure you call using a trusted number.

### 6. Grandchild imposter

Scam: Scammers pose as grandchildren and claim to be in serious trouble, such as in prison or at the hospital. They urgently request money in the form of wired funds or prepaid gift cards. They may also claim that their voice sounds unfamiliar due to injury.

How to spot: Call your grandchild or family members on known phone numbers to ensure your grandchild is safe.

What to do: Never wire or otherwise send funds un-

less you can verify the emergency.

### 7. IRS imposter

Scam: A phone call claiming you owe “back taxes” or payments to the government allegedly from the IRS or “US Treasury and Legal Affairs.” They may threaten you with arrest or investigation.

How to spot: The IRS will never call you at home to threaten legal action.

What to do: Don't respond to these callers. If you think you may actually owe back taxes, hang up and contact the IRS directly at 1-800-829-1040. You may also contact the Tax Advocate for the Vermont Department of Taxes at 802-828-6848.

In December, an alert was issued in response to a rising Medicare card scam. During the open enrollment period, scammers posed as Medicare saying they need your Medicare card number or Social Security number to issue a new card or to verify medical information to keep your coverage active.

This scam also involved the spoofing of local phone numbers. Vermonters can report a scam or sign up for the Scam Alert system by going to [ago.vermont.gov/cap](http://ago.vermont.gov/cap) or by calling the Consumer Assistance Program at 1-800-649-2424.

## WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY HOSTS POET & ARTIST



During February vacation week, the Westminster West Library hosted poet Rajnii Eddins and artist Amber Paris. A group of kids spent all week writing poetry and creating great works of art.

Originally from Seattle Washington, Spoken Word Poet/ Emcee and Teaching Artist Rajnii Eddins (*at right in photo*) has been engaging diverse community audiences for over 27 years. He was the youngest member of the Afrikan American Writers Alliance at age 11 and has been actively sharing with youth and community in Vermont since 2010. His latest work, *Their Names Are Mine*, aims to confront white supremacy while emphasizing the need to affirm our mutual humanity.

The children started the morning writing poems from prompts such as: “If my imagination was a nation.....If the ocean could speak... and: Write a poem as if you are truth personified. You are traveling the world. Who do you meet and how do they greet you?”

The children showed great creativity and diversity of voice while answering these prompts, and they wrote many, many poems both individually and in groups.

Rajnii is a gifted poet and teacher who held their attention and interest throughout. We are hoping that this will not be the last time he visits our community.

Amber Paris is a visual artist living in Putney, Vermont with her husband and three homeschooled children. When she's not busy making art or learning alongside her children, she facilitates collaborative, community art in libraries, at farmer's markets and in other community spaces. Amber received her BFA from Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia. She has made Vermont her home for the last decade.

After lunch, the children worked with Amber Paris on a community art project. The process included carving a large branch, cutting several pieces of metal pipe, and sewing weights for an impressive wind chime. The weights each feature one of the children's original poems.

Amber Paris is a fascinating artist and gifted teacher of art. This wind chime will soon be hanging at the Westminster West Library. Please stop by and take a look.

## REMEMBRANCES

Beverly Major: 1935 – 2020

## NEWS FROM THE TOWN GARAGE

Hello neighbors,

It's been almost a year since Mark Lund handed me the reins and all in all its been good. I can't say I didn't suffer a few bumps and bruises along the way with the crazy weather, a young crew and the new position. It was an adjustment and I thank all of you that showed us overwhelming support, with kind words, notes and goodies throughout the year.

I apologize to those folks who's expectations and goals we fell short of achieving and assure you that we will strive to become the best we can as we attempt to concur old and new challenges. I would also like to thank my crew for working long hard hours without complaining and giving one hundred ten percent without being asked. I also thank their spouses and children for the sacrifice they make when their loved ones work all hours to assure the roads are safe and passable.

*Thank you,  
Chuck Lawrence  
Road Foreman*

## DNA TESTING, GENEALOGY SHARING

Genealogists Wayne Blanchard and Jerry Carbone are teaming up to host a DNA-Genealogy discussion session to share and learn from one another on Thursday, March 5 (snow date March 12) from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Rockingham Library at 65 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls.

DNA testing doesn't replace traditional genealogy but it is another tool to be used with other sources. For those who have taken a DNA test for genealogy, the results can be confusing and it is not always obvious how to use this information. Wayne and Jerry will go beyond the ethnicity estimate and discuss how to search for best relative matches in your family tree. For those willing to share discoveries with the group, be sure to bring your username and password to log into your testing company's website.

Because millions of people have taken DNA tests, there are many more opportunities to locate genetic cousins. This information in turn can assist in expanding family trees. Information on how to contact DNA matches will be reviewed. Resource lists and tip sheets will also be provided to encourage further research. For planning purposes, please contact the Library (802) 463-4270) or email [programming@rockinghamlibrary.org](mailto:programming@rockinghamlibrary.org) to register for this event.d open to the public.

## TRAILBLAZERS WANTED: ADVANCE CARE PLANNING PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

On Saturday, May 2, Saturday May 16, and Saturday May 30, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Brattleboro Area Hospice's Taking Steps Brattleboro Program will host a three-day ACP Facilitator/Volunteer Training. The three-day training will be held at Brattleboro Area Hospice at 191 Canal Street in Brattlebor. Applications are due by Monday, April 6.

The training is offered to anyone who would like to learn how to assist people in completing and registering their Advance Directive. Advance Care Planning ensures that a person's loved ones and health professionals know what a person wants in case of a medical emergency or illness when a person cannot speak for her/his self.

Taking Steps Brattleboro is a program that provides trained Facilitators to help people understand the ACP process, map out individual steps and assist people in completing this vital task.

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. BAH is 100% locally funded, provides services free of charge, and can be reached at 257-0775. Visit [www.brattleborohospice.org](http://www.brattleborohospice.org)

For more information about this training, to receive an application and to schedule an interview with Don Freeman, Taking Steps Brattleboro Program Coordinator at 257-0775 ext 101. [don.freeman@brattleborohospice.org](mailto:don.freeman@brattleborohospice.org).

## RITE AID HELPS KH

The Rite Aid Foundation has selected Kurn Hattin Homes to participate in its 2020 KidCents program, which annually supports a select group of nonprofit, kid-focused organizations committed to improving the health and wellbeing of children living in the communities Rite Aid serves.

In addition to being selected as a KidCents charity, which allow members to round up every purchase to the nearest dollar at Rite Aid stores, Kurn Hattin received a \$5,000 grant, which will be used to provide a safe, healthy, and loving home for children.

The Rite Aid Foundation has been a supporter of Kurn Hattin since 2010.

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. Follow their journey at [www.kurnhattin.org](http://www.kurnhattin.org).

# 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](mailto:pcadair@sover.net).

### Souper Wednesday

Every Wednesday from January 8 to May 6 from 12 to 2 p.m., The First Congregational Church of Westminster will serve at least two choices of soup (including a vegetarian choice) and warm bread. Take-outs will be available. Donations are appreciated but not required.

## SOUPER WEDNESDAY & CROCKPOT SUPPER

The First Congregational Church of Westminster will continue to host Souper Wednesday in March. From 12 pm to 2 pm, there will be at least 2 choices of soup often including a vegetarian choice and warm bread. Take-outs will be available. Donations are appreciated but not required.

On Saturday, March 21, the church will hold their Spring Crockpot supper. Served from 5 to 7 pm, bread, coffee, tea, milk and dessert are included. \$11 for adults, \$5 for children, children under 5 eat free. A reminder of what the Crockpot Supper is: Lots of entrees served buffet style; salad, bread, coffee, tea, milk and dessert and lots of community fellowship. If you're interested in providing a crockpot entrée for the supper, please call Doug Smith at 376-8979.

## 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. Sunday, March 1, 10 am – Worship, First Sunday of Lent, Tuesday, March 3, 11 AM – Women's Fellowship. Meet at the First Congregational Church; Bring a sandwich, Hostess will serve drink and desserts. Wednesday - March 4, 11, 18, 25 and April 1, Noon to 2 pm. Souper Wednesday. Sunday, March 8, 10 am – Worship and Communion; Second Sunday of Lent, Daylight Savings Time begins Sunday, March 15, 10 am - Worship— Third Sunday of Lent Saturday, March 21, 5:00-7:00 pm. Spring Crockpot Supper. Sunday, March 22, 10 am, Worship—Fourth Sunday of Lent Sunday, March 29, 10:00 am, Worship—Fifth Sunday of Lent

### 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](mailto:susiewt@gmail.com).

### Walpole Bible Church

The Grace Bible Fellowship holds its Sunday Worship Service at 9:15 a.m. at 38 Elm Street in Walpole, NH. More information at [www.walpolebiblechurch.org](http://www.walpolebiblechurch.org).

### Walpole Unitarian Church

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

## 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.

### 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** - 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. on the second floor of the Westminster Town Hall.

**Westminster Gazette Meeting** Monday Mar. 16 at 5 p.m. at the Flat Iron on The Square in Bellows Falls.

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

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**Please Note:**  
**The Deadline for the April Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, Mar. 18**

**Publication Date is Wednesday, Mar. 25**

**To Contact the Westminster Gazette E-mail:**  
**[westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)**





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**MARCH BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: GREATER FALLS INS.**



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Bridget Kelly, owner, specializes in the Commercial and Farm Insurance, while Gloria Vancor is knowledgeable in all Personal Lines products. Rachel Comtois joined our agency in March, 2017 and has become our Auto Insurance specialist.

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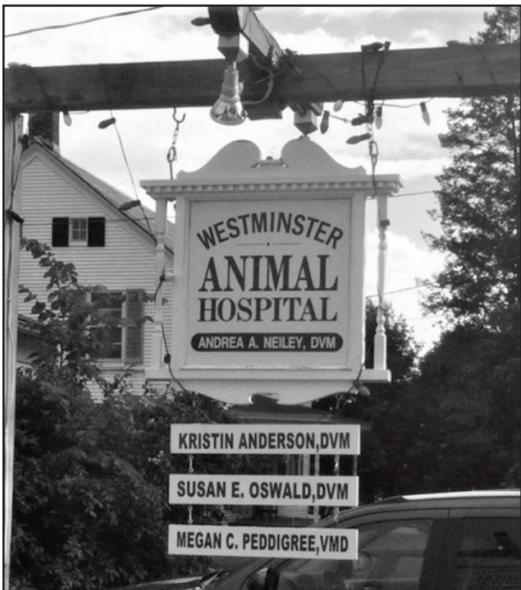
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**MARCH BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: WESTMINSTER ANIMAL HOSPITAL**



Westminister Animal Hospital opened in 1985 as a solo small animal hospital and has grown to a full service four doctor practice.

Our patients include dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets and various small rodents and birds.

Westminister Animal Hospital employs 14 people including the veterinarians, technicians, and animal caregivers. We take pride in providing compassionate care for our neighbors' pets.

Our resident pets include Gringo the parrot, Virgil the donkey, and Murka the hospital cat.

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