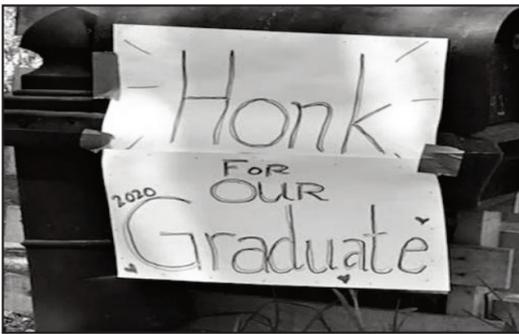




SIGNS OF THE TIMES

DRIVE-BY PARADES, ROADSIDE "THANK YOU'S," "WEAR A MASK!" NOTICES



The last few months have been challenging, but Vermonters have risen to the occasion, and locally we've adapted to the need for social distancing in creative ways. It has been especially heartwarming to see the numerous encouraging signs, the congratulations to our local high school graduates, and local businesses stepping up to help those hardest hit.

Several folks have been sending in photos from the greater Westminister area, and we thought we'd share some with our readers. Most of them are self-explanatory, but we'd like to highlight a few of them.

In the top row, tons of friends and community residents showed up on May 17th to honor and celebrate one of our town's most senior residents, Phyllis Anderson. Phyllis turned 97 on May 18th.

Route 5 was filled with cars, bicycles and walkers from the church to Courthouse Hill. Many were decorated with balloons, signs, streamers, flowers and other accessories. The celebration was led by several trucks from Westminister Fire Department. The drive-by birthday celebration event was organized by members of the first Congregational Church of Westminister where Phyllis and her family have been long-time members. The family wishes to thank everyone who turned out for the occasion.

Second row, first photo on left, on Friday, May

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING - NEW VENUE

The special Town Meeting warned for 10 a.m., Saturday, June 6, 2020, will now be held on the outside lawn at the back of Westminister Institute.

The selectboard hoped to use the Bellows Falls Union High School but, with unforeseeable circumstances, it was denied by the Superintendent of Schools for WNESU. The alternative location is the Westminister Institute on Route 5 in the Historic Village District.

We will vote on the FY21 town budget and accompanying articles. You can find the warning and articles at westminstervt.org/departments/town-clerk under Documents.

The meeting will take place rain or shine so we ask you to dress accordingly. Because of the COVID-19 restraints to this meeting, please bring your own chair, if you so choose.

Porta-potties will be available but you will be responsible for sanitizing them before use with town-supplied sprays, soap, and paper towels.

Also, we ask all attendees to wear masks and gloves, for your own protection. Social distancing will be mandatory, per the CDC's regulations.

These are challenging times and we are sorry for

22nd, Faith's Toyota/Ford in Westminister held a drive-thru food-box giveaway to assist those negatively impacted by COVID-19. Two hundred boxes of food were given away to community members and families in Westminister and Bellows Falls.

Faith Mba, the dealer principal, and his son loaded cars with the boxes, while staff members directed traffic. Each box contained a week's worth of food for two people plus four face masks.

The 200 boxes were estimated to have a \$20,000 value. The "Day of Service" was sponsored by the Toyota/Lexus Minority Owners Dealership Association in partnership with the Salvation Army. The TLMODA is a group of minority automotive dealers dedicated to sustaining diversity and inclusion within the automotive industry.

Thank you to Faith and his team at Faith's Toyota/Ford for their strong commitment to their customers and to the residents of the communities where the dealerships are located.

Thank you to photographers Ira Wilner, Don Dawson, Donna Dawson and Robert Smith.

any inconvenience that this may cause, but safety for all is our main goal.

Thank you in advance for your understanding. If you have any questions please call the Town Hall.

CONGRATULATIONS FROM THE GAZETTE AND FROM ALL OF OUR READERS TO THE CLASS OF 2020 SENIORS WHO ATTEND BFUHS, BUHS, LELAND AND GRAY, PUTNEY SCHOOL, VERMONT ACADEMY AND COMPASS SCHOOL!

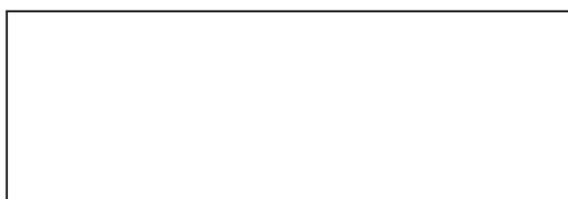
Our Monthly Community Newspaper June 2020 Vol. 16 No. 6

Westminster Gazette

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 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:
 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**

COMPASS SENIORS PLAN FUTURES

Our seniors have been finalizing their plans for next year even amidst all the turmoil of this spring.

A great host of them will be attending UVM, one is headed to NYU and another to Champlain College, and a couple are contemplating Americorps.

They are planning to study subjects such as Engineering Management, Nursing, Music Technology, and Cybersecurity. We're so excited for them all!

Here is the list of colleges where our students were accepted this year: UVM, NYU, University of Hartford, SUNY-Oneonta, SUNY-Albany, Bishop's University, Guilford College, Johnston & Wales University (Providence), Landmark College, Norwich University, Rivier University, Northern Vermont University, Vermont Tech, Castleton University, Champlain College, Saint Michael's College, Thomas, University of Maine, Plymouth State, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Ithaca College, Clark College, Hofstra University, UMass Boston, Drexel University.



Above, this year's graduating class on their Global Connections trip to Spain last May.

WESTMINSTER CARES CANCELS GARDEN TOUR FUNDRAISER

Due to many factors regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, including restrictions on gathering sizes and exposure risk for participants, volunteers and host gardeners, Westminister Cares has announced the cancellation of the 19th Annual Westminister Garden Tour fundraiser.

Although the event has sustained challenging weather including heat waves and downpours, this will be the first time the event has been cancelled since its inception in 2002. The coronavirus presented unprecedented circumstances which left us no options but to cancel the tour. The 2020 event was scheduled to be held the weekend of August 1st and 2nd.

The Garden Tour Committee is working on a plan to commemorate the weekend and remind past attendees that we will fully expect to continue this successful fundraising event in 2021. Preliminary plans include a virtual garden tour and online workshops. If you would like to be notified of upcoming Garden Tour-related activities, please send an email to: wecares@sover.net. Announcements about virtual events will be made on our website (www.westminstercares.org) and Facebook page.

HUNTER SMITH SHRINE BOWL FUNDRAISER

My name is Hunter Smith from Westminister, a soon to be BFUHS graduate.

On Aug. 1, I will be playing in the 67th Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl Game. It is a privilege to have been selected to participate in this prestigious event.

After the game, I will become a member to a group of over 4,400 men who have played in this game.

The Shrine Maple Sugar Bowl Football Game is played between two all-star teams of graduated high school seniors from Vermont and New Hampshire. The game is preceded by a spectacular parade of Shrine Units from throughout the Northeast Region.

It is one of 30 Shrine Football Games played every year across the country.

"Strong Legs Run That Weak Legs May Walk" is the motto of every Shrine Football Game and it can be seen every summer as 72 young men from New Hampshire and Vermont play their hearts out for the benefit of the children in the Shrine hospitals. And, when they step off the field at game's end, they become alumni and as such never forget the children they played for.

I am currently fundraising for this event and my goal is \$1,000. I am requesting your assistance to raise funds for the kids at the Shriner's Hospital by visiting my fundraising page at <https://www.firstgiving.com/fundraiser/hunter-smith-4/Hunter-SmithsPage> where you can donate thru this secure site. I also have Red Sox tickets for 2 seats and Patriots tickets for 4 seats, tickets are \$5.00 each. If you are interested in purchasing raffle tickets, please contact me at 802-722-9034 or smithsyryp802@gmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your support of this honor and for your support of the Shriner Kids in the hospitals.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminister Cares Board of Directors met May 6th via WebEx with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: Pete Harrison, Miriam Lanata, Regina Borden, Don Dawson, Pat Goodell, Heidi Anderson, Kathy Elliot and Director Donna Dawson. The board decided to continue limitations to programs and services in compliance with the most recent Governor's Be Smart, Stay Safe Order; especially as they pertain to adults aged 65 and older.

On May 5th, Westminister Cares promoted an online fundraising event via Facebook, "Giving Tuesday Now". Funds raised through this event have been used to replenish our Emergency Fund. The fund is used to assist senior residents of Westminister with an emergency need such as an unexpected bill or repair.

Are you in need of a face mask? We have several volunteers who have donated fabric masks and have offered to sew more for anyone in need. These are washable, cloth masks. All Vermonters are encouraged to wear face coverings over their nose and mouth any time they are interacting with others from outside their households, including in outdoor settings where it is not possible to maintain physical distancing.

Westminister Cares is especially appreciative of the recent donations received to support us during this difficult and uncertain time including those received during the Facebook "Giving Tuesday Now" Fundraiser in early May. We welcome donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember or honor a loved one.

MEMORIAL & HONOR DONATIONS RECEIVED IN MAY

In memory of Georgette Savoy and Margaret Harris from Millie Barry

In honor of my mother, Evelyn Aubuchont, on Mother's Day from Judy Harrison

In honor of Alma Beals from Allison Deen

In honor of Bruce and Lee MacDuffie's anniversary and Bruce's birthday; from Pete and Judy Harrison

Our office voicemail is checked daily; leave a message for Donna Dawson at 722-3607 or by email at wecares@sover.net. Check us out on the web@ www.westminstercares.org and like us on Facebook.

"WHAT'S UP AT THE TOWN HALL"

PUBLIC SAFETY: As the "Stay Safe" order continues from the State of Vermont, the need for services are increasing from our neighbors and residents. If you or somebody you know are in need of help with daily tasks through this time of solitude, please feel free to call the Town Hall or Westminister Cares. These services could be as simple as the need for someone to pick up groceries or a prescription for you. There is no need to go without. Please use our great community and its resources.

SPECIAL TOWN MEETING: The Town has scheduled a special Town Meeting on June 6th, 2020 at 10:00 am and we were hoping to be able to use the Bellows Falls Union High School but with unforeseeable circumstances this was denied by the Superintendent of Schools for WNESU. The alternative location is the Westminister Institute on Route 5 in our Historic Village District. This meeting will be on the outside lawn behind the Institute and will take place rain or shine so we ask for you to dress accordingly for the weather.

Because of the COVID-19 restraints to this meeting, we are asking you to bring your own chair if you so choose and please be on notice that porta-potties will be available but you will be responsible to sanitize before you use it with Town supplied sprays, soap and paper towels. Also, we are asking for all attendees to wear masks and gloves for your own protection and social distancing will be mandatory as per the CDC's regulations.

These are challenging times and we are sorry for any inconvenience that this may cause, but in the end we want to make sure that safety for all is our main goal. Thank you in advance for your understanding and if you have any questions please feel free to call the Town Hall.

APPOINTMENTS OF RECORD: The Selectboard are looking for residents to fill the "Appointments of Record" positions within the Town. The following positions are needed:

Windham Regional Commission Representative and Planning Commission Member (2).

FOOD SCRAPS: Reminder in case you missed it: After July 1, 2020 we are not allowed to throw food scraps into our trash by State order. You have many options to comply with this State mandate here in Westminister. Here are a few:

Create an individual contract and payment schedule with our Town Hauler (Ruggiero) to pick up your food scraps at intervals that work for you and Ruggiero.

Bring your food scraps to the Rockingham/Westminister Transfer Station or to the Windham Solid Waste Facility in Brattleboro for a fee.

Bring to neighbors that have created a backyard composting system.

TRASH TAGS: The new sets of trash tags are coming out in late June. If you are running short please contact the Town Hall and order more. They are \$2.50 each or 5 for \$10. If you have excess tags from years past, please feel free to pass them along to a needy family or return them to the Town Hall and we will give them out to people of need.

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.

Market swings making you uneasy? Let's talk.



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Birds in My Yard and at the Marsh

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist



Like most of us who have spent the last couple months social distancing, I have enjoyed my flower gardens and birds in my backyard. My other enjoyment has been spending an hour or more every morning at Allen's Marsh.

The Canada geese are the most fun. They think they own the road and expect cars to go around them, which most do. There almost always is a pair that nests on top of the beaver lodge because they are usually safe from land predators. Studies have shown that beaver lodge activity warms the water and thaws the ice about 11 days sooner than ponds without beavers so that the geese can nest sooner on the lodges. This year the pair is still on the lodge with no babies yet. If I am at the marsh at the right time, the female will leave the nest and call. The male will float in and they fly together to the road. He stands watch in the road while she eats nearby. I wonder if something happened to her first nest as the other geese have all had their babies. There have been 23 babies. The first pair had six, the second pair four and the last pair 13. So far, all but one have survived.

Wood ducks and mallards usually have several families at the marsh. I have only seen three hooded mergansers with babies. One had 13 and the other two had



smaller numbers. It is still early so they will probably catch up.

Last year was the first time that great blue herons nested at the marsh. The nest is very flimsy, so we did not know if herons would nest again this year. With only minor repairs to the nest, it is being used again. There are two babies. There could be another but two heads are all we could see. We assume the parents are the same ones as last year, but all herons look alike, so it is only a guess.

While watching birds, we also see muskrats, a beaver and a huge turtle. There are various songbirds, shore birds, bitterns and rails. Depending on the weather there can be swarms of swallows dashing back and forth after insects. They are amusing to watch as they land on a small tree, dash off and then dash back. I try to watch to tell if they have a leader who tells them all to fly or whether they do it randomly.

Now that I am sure that all is well at the marsh, I head home to enjoy my yard. Most of the migrating birds have returned to join the ones who have been here all winter. I am waiting for the hummingbirds to come through. I put out my feeders on May 1 expecting them to arrive about May 5, as usual, but one returned on May 12, took a few drinks and left. I am still waiting and hoping.

The rose-breasted grosbeaks have arrived and sing

all day. I expect them to nest in my yard as usual. The 14 cardinals that were here all winter have moved on leaving a pair who have nested in my yard. I have four Baltimore orioles. The experts have gone back and forth whether to name them Baltimore or northern orioles. Three are definitely males, but the fourth one could be a female or a last year's male. Eventually a pair will nest in my yard.

The male is a vivid orange and black. The female is yellow/ brown on the upper parts with darker wings and dull orange/yellow on the breast and belly. The orioles spend the winter in the southern United States or Central America and northern South America.

The female builds the nest which is a tightly woven pouch on the end of a branch. The nest is so well hidden that I look and look before I find it. Sometimes I don't find it until the leaves fall. One year I watched a female pulling on a piece of frayed blue tarp. I felt sorry for her, so I cut off a few pieces, but she didn't want those and continued to pull on the one she wanted. Their nest is likely to be 23 to 30 feet from the ground. They used to nest in elm trees before most of them died but now nest in other trees like maple or willows. How I do enjoy watching them fly back and forth to the nest.

Photos of a Baltimore oriole and its nest courtesy of Don Clark.

A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: PARADES OF THE PAST

Submitted by Jessie Haas for the Westminster Historical Society

Many of us got to enjoy the school and Fire Department parade a few weeks ago. That one will probably go down in Westminster history as having the longest-ever route—basically, most of the town roads. It came at a time when almost everyone needed something cheerful, and we all appreciated it.

Westminster has had parades before. Annual events have included the Halloween parade in Westminster Village and the Church Fair parade in Westminster West. These always get an audience—but an audience of thousands?

Westminster has had two parades on that scale. The first occurred 100 years ago on July 4, 1920. It combined an Independence Day celebration with Old Home Days, groundbreaking for the Westminster Institute, and dedication of the monument to those who served in the World War (It didn't have a number then. It was supposed to be the War to End All Wars.)

An astonishing 4,000 people attended the big celebration. The street was lined with parked automobiles (think Model-Ts) for nearly a mile, and the sidewalks—

yes, we had sidewalks then—were crowded with pedestrians. The parade began at ten o'clock at Westminster Station and marched up to the village, arriving around 11. Floats included Ethan Allen and his bride (who were married in Westminster), two Granges, Kurn Hattin, and three or four from Connecticut Valley Orchard, one of which included a 'spraying outfit in action' according to the paper. Spraying something nontoxic, one hopes.

George A. Dascomb, lumber magnate and proprietor of Connecticut Valley Orchard, was the president of the day, and awaited the parade at a reviewing stand built in front of the town hall. Following the parade, the street was given over to athletic events including a greased pig race. The pig, a 135 pounder, "when first given its liberty made straight for a group of girls with white dresses, but after a short chase, John Parker and Lynn Fullam brought him back," according to *The Bellows Falls Times*. Dinner for 500 was served at the Grange and in the town hall dining room. The Grange sold 90 gallons of ice cream.

After lunch speakers addressed the crowd from the porch of the S.M. Nutting house; George Dascomb outlined his plans for "a commodious community building" on the site. This would be the Westminster Institute,

which opened four years later. The war monument was dedicated and the day ended with a game of baseball, Westminster against Alstead, with the home team winning 10-7.

The other large parade in Westminster occurred in 1929, when the King's Highway (Rt. 5) was paved. A celebration in Bellows Falls was followed by a motorcade to Westminster, where nearly a thousand white handkerchiefs were waved to welcome the governor and his wife. George Dascomb was again the chairman of the day, and read a declaration from British Prime Minister Ramsey MacDonald, who said,

'I am deeply touched by the remarkable fact that this re-dedication ceremony will take place near, and this King's Highway will run past, the very spot where was shed some of the first blood of the struggle for American independence.' The highway was dedicated to International Peace.

Though not a parade, exactly, the 1830 funeral procession for Stephen Rowe Bradley, the former U.S. Senator, was also remarkable. It was reported that when the hearse was entering the cemetery in Westminster, the last carriage was leaving Bradley's home in Walpole, nearly two miles away.

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 June 2 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 April: 25

Number of calls through May 22nd: 21

Number of calls calendar year to date: 155

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 385

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting May 5th. There were 26 members present. Currently there are 38 members of the volunteer fire department.

Andrew Malshuk was welcomed as a full member under the six month probation guidelines having turned 18 May 3rd. Also Jared Atkin was welcomed as a junior member and will become a full member at age 18 in May 2022.

Emergency responses: We are having another fairly busy month so far in May with 21 calls by the 22nd of the month. The breakdown goes like this: 11 rescue /medical calls; one motor vehicle accident; two false alarm activation; two tree on wires; one smoke investigation; one mental health emergency; three mutual aid, one to Rockingham,

one to Bellows Falls and one to Putney. Also there were a couple of training classes including driver training.

Walkers, Runners and Bikers: We see more people than usual walking, running and biking out on the roads these days, and a few of them are still walking and running with the flow of traffic. That can be very dangerous. Be sure to always walk or run facing traffic.

There are places, such as on Rt. 5 just south of the village where walking south you will need to cross over to the right side of the road because of a blind corner and often fast moving traffic heading north. Just use common sense. There are probably other places with the same situation. And try to wear bright clothing to be more visible to the vehicle traffic.

When biking ride with the flow of traffic on the right side of the road. Also a flashing LED light on the rear of your bike is a huge help even in daylight hours.

Scholarship/ Continuing Education Fund: Since 2013 the association has awarded scholarships to 14 Bellows Falls High School graduating seniors for a total of \$10,000. Up until this year we have received enough memorial donations to keep our plan going. Currently our fund account is in need of some money. If anyone would like to contribute to this account it will be very much appreciated. If you would like to give in honor or memory of a friend or loved one just list their name with your donation. We pub-

lish the names of the donors and the names of those being mentioned without a dollar amount. Make the check out to: Westminster Fire and Rescue Association and label it continuing education fund, if that is where you would like it to go, and mail it to: PO Box 111 Westminster, 05158. Thanks in advance.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Association welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember or honor 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.

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

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE.....WHO COMES UP WITH THIS STUFF, ANYWAY?

With all very serious concerns going on around us, let's take a minute to recognize how important it is to keep your sense of humor close at-hand.

By Scott Funk

At my last visit, the doctor had me fill out a form for Medicare. Boy, was that a pip! "Do I have trouble running?" I don't know. Haven't considered running in a very long time. "Do I wear a helmet?" No, but I've got a nice Panama hat for summer. "Am I afraid of my spouse?" Can't say; she's sitting right here. "How much alcohol do you drink?" Not as much as I used to, but I'm doing the best I can. "Do you worry about money?" Only the amount I don't have. "What keeps you up at night?" Wondering about fool surveys.

Like those surveys they try to get you to take when you call customer service. "At the end of the call you will be requested to take a brief survey to help us serve you better." No. It's too late for me. The call's done. Besides, if you want me to work in the quality control division of your customer service department, give me a call and we can discuss time and money. Otherwise, I've got my own problems, which is why I called customer service in the first place.

Or on the internet. You go to a site looking for information or a product and they ask you to friend or follow them. No. I'm not looking for a new pal. I've got my dog and am set in that area. What I need is a

used CD of Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*. Let's just leave our relationship there and go our separate ways.

Do robo-calls actually work? You see a local number, pick up and hear, "This is Julie. I'm calling you because your 1989 refrigerator is now out of warranty. Don't worry. I can offer you an extended warranty right now. Just hang on a minute so we can get started with the paperwork." No. That refrigerator went with the house I sold back when you were still in school, Julie.

"Hi, this is Bob Ferguson. I'm calling to make sure I can count on your vote . . ." Sure, for your opponent, unless that person calls me too with a fake personal recorded message. What about the unsolicited email offer for a great stock option? Wow! My lucky day! Someone I don't even know wants to give me the inside skinny, so I can make a bundle in the market. Sure glad I didn't send off my life savings to that Nigerian prince that emailed me last week. I've still got the cash for this opportunity. Or not. No. No. No. No. No. No.

OK. Maybe I'm feeling a bit "Lewis Black" today, but don't you wonder? What do they think? We're sitting in our rockers on the front porch waiting for nobody to tell us everything we don't want to know?

Thanks to Scott Funk for allowing us to reprint his wonderful articles. Keep a smile close by and be sure to share one with a neighbor or family member, as soon as you can and often.

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WILLIAM DANIELS
7/24/1951 - 4/21/2020
FORMERLY LIVED IN WESTMINSTER
TERRY SHEPARD SR.
7/21/1948 - 5/9/2020

PERENNIAL PLANT SALE

There will be a Perennial Plant Sale (at a distance) on Saturday, May 30, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. (rain date Sunday) at The Westminster West Library-- new venue, take note!

It is located at 3409 Westminster West Road.

Large, beautiful field-grown perennials potted with love, by plant lovers, for you!

All proceeds benefit Library Programming and Westminster Children's Community Fund.

Park at the church or along the road, and look for signs and instructions for maintaining physical distance.

Email westminsterwestlibrary@gmail.com or call 802-579-6413 for additional info, or to be added to the email list for pre-orders.



BURLINGTON RECTOR INITIATES CHARITABLE EFFORT SPANNING SIX STATES

Father Lance Harlow, Rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Burlington, created the St. Nicholas Project after many years of being involved with Kurn Hattin Homes for Children in Westminster, a charitable, year-round, residential home and school for children, ages 5-15, from throughout the northeast.

The St. Nicholas Project is a collaboration between the Catholic community in Vermont and Kurn Hattin Homes that provides material and financial support to assist Kurn Hattin in its mission of transforming the lives of children and their families forever.

Since 2015, the St. Nicholas Project, with Father Harlow's guidance, has initiated many successful fundraising efforts including a winter coat drive and a back-to-school fundraiser to obtain donations for the purchase of shoes for the children. The St. Nicholas Project is named after St. Nicholas, the patron saint of children, who was renowned during his lifetime for his charity towards children and families in need.

This year, inspired by the national pandemic that has created such a hardship for so many of the children and their families, Father Harlow and the St. Nicholas Project donors have once again stepped up to help and their



efforts have exceeded everyone's wildest dreams!

During one week at the end of March and early April, members of the group mounted a campaign to seek donations that would provide a fund to purchase gift cards for food and gas for families of the Kurn Hattin children.

Since the children are temporarily back at home with their families during this unprecedented time, food

and gas purchases have become challenging for many. After sending out over 600 letters to potential donors throughout the state of Vermont and beyond, more than 180 donations have been received from individuals, businesses, and several Knights of Columbus councils in Vermont.

The total raised to date has exceeded \$24,000 and gifts continue to arrive each week. They have come not just from Vermont but also from NH, MA, NJ, CT, and NY making it a charitable effort spanning six states.

This success comes as no surprise to those who have observed Father Harlow and his ceaseless efforts on behalf of Kurn Hattin for the past 15 years. When he was presented with the organization's 2017 "Charles Albert Dickinson Award", the words on the proclamation summed up the depth of his commitment to the organization and most especially to the children.

It read, "for his unwavering dedication to Kurn Hattin, his untiring support of our children, his spirit of graciousness in all matters, and his spreading the good news of Kurn Hattin Homes throughout the state of Vermont and well beyond."

We thank you, Father Harlow, for the support and generosity that you and all the members of the St. Nicholas Project have shown and the difference that you have made in the lives of the Kurn Hattin children.

Pictured is Father Lance Harlow, Rector of the Cathedral of St. Joseph in Burlington.

NEWS FROM THE TOWN GARAGE

Hello Neighbors,

Flowers are coming up, gardens are getting planted and a lot of our projects are underway.

It seems as though the majority of us have managed to stay healthy. So far the road crew has not been affected.

We are out cleaning ditches in a manner that is compliant with Act 64. This is the clean water act that generates a fair amount of fill that's available to the public as long as the area is suitable. No wet lands, out of the town right of way, and will not affect your neighbors. Also, easy access as to not damage town equipment. Most of the roads in town need to be done within the next five years, so please keep this in mind.

As the knot weed and roadside grasses come up we will be mowing road sides and cutting back intersections. Please feel free to call with any concerns with roadside plantings we are unaware of. However, please keep in mind that any plants allowed to stay in the town right of way will be the landowners responsibility to keep them trimmed back, out of the way of traffic, grader and general road maintenance.

All the plows, wings and plow frames have had their spring maintenance performed, have been painted and are all put away. We hauled in some gravel and are getting geared up for some culvert replacements throughout town.

I would like to thank the Westminster Volunteer Fire Department for donating their old tanker truck to us for the purpose of washing bridges in the spring and flushing out culverts. We can also water the roads with it, as we fitted it with a water bar that can be quickly removed and still be used as a fire truck if such an occasion ever arose.

*Thanks, stay strong and be safe!
 Chuck and Crew*

WESTMINSTER INSTITUTE AND BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY REMAIN CLOSED IN JUNE

We are living "in interesting times," as the old saying goes. And for the time being the Westminster Institute and Butterfield Library are closed to the public, and will remain so at least through June.

The great variety of activities and in some cases the physical nature of the building make ensuring adequate sanitation after each use too difficult to be reliable. The playground also is closed, because controlling use and ensuring proper sanitizing of all surfaces following each use is all but impossible.

We hope to establish book lending on a pickup & drop-off basis before too long, but we don't expect that to happen before July at the earliest.

In the meantime any library patron can access eBooks or audio books through the Green Mountain Library Consortium for free.

Simply go to gmlc.overdrive.com, sign in and select Butterfield Library. You'll be taken to another page where you'll be asked to enter your library card number, and you'll then be able to borrow any of 1,000's of books for 2-week loans.

"Wait! I have a library card number?" is a common

reaction. If you're a member, you do but you may not know what it is. In that case you can email the library (butterfieldlibrary@outlook.com) or call (722-4891) to ask and we'll be happy to provide that to you.

Staff are only in for short periods a few times per week, so it may be a couple of days before you hear back. And if you are a Westminster resident but not a library member, no problem! You can become a member the same way, just email or call with your name, address and contact info; there is no charge for Westminster residents to become members.

The Green Mountain Library Consortium website is pretty user-friendly, but we'll also be posting a video explaining its use on our Facebook page.

In June we will be developing a specific phased-in reopening plan in accordance with CDC and State of Vermont recommendations & requirements. The entire focus of that effort will be protecting the health and safety of all staff persons, volunteers and patrons of the Institute and Library.

We hope to be welcoming people back before too long, and until then please be careful and be well.

HOSPICE ZOOM MEETINGS - GIVE THE GIFT OF LOVE

Brattleboro Area Hospice's Taking Steps Brattleboro (TSB) program will host weekly ZOOM information meetings on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10-11 a.m. through June. These will be Advance Care Planning/Advance Directive Question and Answer Information sessions.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Don Freeman by email at don.freeman@brattleborohospice.org or calling 257-0775 ext. 101 and leave your contact information so that you can receive the emailed zoom invitation and/or telephone call-in number.

Interested people are encouraged to attend this informational session to ask questions about how to complete or update an Advance Directive for healthcare including where do I find the forms, who should be named as an healthcare agent, who do I give the completed form to, and how do I talk with my family about my healthcare wishes if I am unable to speak for myself? Anyone over 18 years old should have a completed Advance Directive

The COVID-19 crisis informs everyone that unplanned medical emergencies can happen to anyone at anytime. Completing an Advance Directive for medical care is an important self-care planning task that will assist your family and medical providers in honoring your wishes should you not be able to speak for yourself. TSB trained volunteers are available to assist you in completing an Advance Directive. It is the first step in taking care of yourself and those who love you, it is a gift of love.

Some have found previewing information at www.vtethicsnetwork.org is helpful to see forms and obtain information to ask questions during these information sessions.

Brattleboro Area Hospice (BAH) 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. Visit www.brattleborohospice.org .

WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

Activities

WHILE WE ARE LEAVING THESE ACTIVITIES, MEETINGS AND SERVICES LISTED ON THIS PAGE, OUR READERS SHOULD ASSUME THAT ALL PUBLIC EVENTS ARE CANCELED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.

WE HAVE ALL BECOME AWARE OF HOW VITAL SOCIAL DISTANCING IS AT THIS TIME AND FOR THE WEEKS AND PERHAPS MONTHS TO COME.

WE THANK EVERYONE FOR COOPERATING, AND IT IS OUR SINCERE HOPE THAT, IF EACH ONE OF US DOES OUR PART, WE CAN MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS AS MUCH AS HUMANLY POSSIBLE.

PLEASE NOTE THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE PROVIDING OFFICIAL DIRECTIONS AND CHANGES AS VERMONT BEGINS OPENING UP.

OUR BEST WISHES TO EVERYONE, AND PLEASE TAKE CARE OF ONE ANOTHER.

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.

Supper 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.

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.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and following the State of Vermont guidelines, we have been worshipping online. Many of us enjoy getting together virtually Sunday at 10 a.m. and some of us enjoy a recorded service.

If you would like to participate in our digital services, which include a fellowship meeting the first Tuesday of the month and Bible study on Wednesday mornings, please contact Pastor McRae or Deacon Christina Smith via email at westminstercongoline@gmail.com for more information. See our Facebook page for our recorded services. Watch the Brattleboro Reformer, the Vermont Journal and Shopper or notices posted on the Church Door for up-to-date information.

Activities at the church building will not happen through the end of June. However, our congratulations are extended to graduates of all ages. Our congregation is thinking of you and your unprecedented passing from one school to another or on to another phase of your life. Best wishes to all.

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. 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 3rd Monday of the month at the Flat Iron on The Square in Bellows Falls.

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

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

Editor: Robert Smith
Board of Directors:
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Donna Dawson
Alma Beals - Treas.
Joyce Sullivan - Sec.
Jennifer Skrocki

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Please Note:
The Deadline for the July Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, June 17

Publication Date is Wednesday, June 24

To Contact the Westminster Gazette
E-mail:
westminsternews@gmail.com

KH STAFF WORK ON OUTDOOR CAMPUS



Kurn Hattin staff taking this opportunity to spruce up the campus trails and outdoor classrooms for when our students return.

KURN HATTIN STUDENT NAMED VERMONT AMERICAN LEGION ESSAY CHAMPION



Deeanna Nicol, Class of 2020 at New England Kurn Hattin Homes, was named as this year's Americanism Essay Champion for grades 7-8 by the Pierce-Lawton Unit 37 Vermont State American Legion Auxiliary.

This national Americanism Essay Contest, open to students in grades 3-12 and sponsored by the American Legion Auxiliary, promotes patriotism and responsible citizenship.

The title of this year's contest was "How can we address the health and well-being of our veterans, the military, and their families?" Thirteen students from Kurn Hattin submitted essays in the statewide contest this year, and this is the second consecutive year that a Kurn Hattin student's essay has been selected as state champion.

Deeanna's winning essay will be forwarded to the National Eastern Division Championship where a select few will be sent to the National Finals. Congratulations to Deeanna and thank you to everyone at the Vermont American Legion Auxiliary and Kurn Hattin Social Studies teacher Richard Long!

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

*In photo, Deeanna Nicol, Vermont Americanism Essay Champion
Photo by Kristie Lisai.*

SEVCA RECEIVES FUNDING TO HELP WINDHAM & WINDSOR COUNTY RESIDENTS WITH COVID-RELATED IMPACTS

Generous local, regional and statewide partners have given Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) funding to provide critical services to local residents who need help to alleviate the negative effects of COVID-19 and achieve or re-establish financial security, whether or not they were previously eligible for SEVCA's services.

Grants from the Vermont Community Foundation, Couch Foundation, Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition, and Danforth Charitable Fund will enable SEVCA to provide needed services to an expanded number of households seeking emergency relief and recovery.

SEVCA also anticipates receiving additional funding to help people experiencing COVID-19's impacts navigate the resources available to them that can resolve their crisis and provide greater stability at this time and into the future.

Although SEVCA's offices are currently closed to the public and many staff are working from home to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, most services are still being provided but in different ways: remotely, by phone, email, or internet, by appointment, and/or by mailing or drop-off of documents.

Steve Geller, SEVCA's Executive Director, wants everyone living in southeastern Vermont to know that "SEVCA is still here to help, and we're helping scores of people every day, even when we can't meet with them in person. We've become very creative at devising ways of meeting people's needs without having to sit face-to-face with them."

"In fact," he went on to say, "due to the additional COVID-19 relief funding and relaxed eligibility thresholds in some programs, many more households are now eligible to receive existing services and expanded and new programs developed specifically to remediate the devastating effects of COVID-19 for even more people. So even if you thought you weren't eligible for any of these services, this is the time to set aside those assumptions and contact us to find out for sure."

SEVCA will now be able to serve a wider range of local residents with a diverse array of services, such as: Navigating relief & recovery resources; 3SquaresVT (Food Stamps) application assistance; unemployment & health insurance access; fuel and utility assistance; eviction & foreclosure prevention, housing case management, and landlord mediation; financial management counseling & support; job readiness training & assistance; small business support; SEVCA Windsor County Head Start registration; weatherization and heating repair & replacement; and many other available services, connections, and referrals to other area and state-wide providers.

At times such as these, it's crucial to access all available resources to alleviate the short-term crisis and build future financial security. In order to do this, additional resources have been made available for SEVCA to support households who previously were not eligible to receive services. Those interested in getting help or finding out more should contact SEVCA at 800-464-9951 for information or an appointment.

In addition to offering expanded services to Vermonters who require emergency assistance due to COVID19, SEVCA continues to provide all services in a different format in accordance with the Governor's Executive Orders. Currently no weatherization or home repair work can be done, yet the agency is arranging for emergency heating system repairs & replacements to take place and continues to accept applications for the other services.

At this time, the Springfield, Hartford, and Bellows Falls Good Buy Thrift Stores are closed to the public, yet people can request and obtain vouchers for one of the stores from SEVCA's Family Services staff. Vouchers can be used for specific items and are available at no cost for emergency situations. SEVCA's Economic Development program now has available enrollment for ongoing Financial Fitness and Ready for Work online training; small business counseling is offered via phone; and trained staff are available to work with anyone interested in planning their financial security.

As the region's designated Community Action Agency (CAA), SEVCA works with local and state partners, and in coordination with CAAs nationwide, to help resolve crises, create opportunities for all people to thrive, build strong, resilient communities, and work toward a more equitable society.

SEVCA was founded on May 12, 1965 and has been meeting needs and changing lives in southeastern Vermont for 55 years. It is still here – and will continue to be here – regardless of the crisis, as they were during the Great Recession in 2009, Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, and now the Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020. More information can be found at www.sevca.org or (<https://www.facebook.com/SEVCAorg/>), or by calling 800-464-9951.

CHESTER PLANT SALE MAY 29-31

Generous pots of different healthy perennials, shrubs, and select annuals and vegetables are being prepared for the Chester Plant Sale to be held on Friday May 29 and Saturday May 30 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. and on Sunday May 31 from 1 to 3 p.m. on the side lawn of St. Luke's Church, 313 Main Street in Chester.

If there are any leftovers on Sunday, the sale will continue the next weekend. The perennials come from Vermont gardens. Some special, hard-to-find annuals will also be available. The plants offered are top notch, well priced, and ready to go into the ground without additional hardening!

Favorite offerings include varieties of iris, hosta, daylilies, perennial geraniums, grasses, ferns, Lady's Mantle, raspberries, herbs, some shrubs, and so much more. Also earthenware and other decorative containers, Gardener's Log notebooks, original floral notecards, homemade jams and preserves, and seasonal produce, such as cut rhubarb. Knowledgeable gardeners will be on hand eager to give advice on plants and garden design.

Attendees should wear a mask, stay 6 feet apart, and follow recommended guidelines for safety.

For details contact Lillian Willis at 875-1340 or lbwillisct@comcast.net.

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**JUNE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
 WESTMINSTER AUTO SERVICE INC.
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Oh my, what a year 2020 is turning out to be! We hope you are all staying healthy. Here at Westminister Auto we are adapting to these challenging times to ensure the safety of all of us. We are committed to providing the exceptional sales and service experiences our customers have come to expect over the last 30 years.

Westminister Auto Service, Inc, is a dealer of quality pre-owned vehicles and also a full service garage.

Our sales department consists of Vernon Kelton, Mallary Kelton and Liz Kelton. Vernon is on the road every week searching for the best vehicles to sell. Most of our vehicles have a 30 day/3000 mile warranty when they are purchased.

Each of our vehicles goes through a safety inspection by our service department consisting of all of the wear and tear items such as the brakes, tires and belts before they are sold. We work with many of the local credit unions for your lending needs. All the paperwork can be done right here at our place of business by Chris Williams, making it easier on you.

Our service department is able to handle all of your car repairs, from wheel alignments, oil changes, Vermont state inspections, brakes, tires, exhaust, engine repairs, light bulb changes and much more.

The service department is headed by Liz and Mallary Kelton and service work is done by our long time technicians, David Cheeny and Peter Loomis.

For those of you who prefer to research vehicles online, our inventory is currently listed on westminister-autovt.com. We can also be found on Facebook.

We are proud of the quality of the pre-owned vehicles we sell and the work we do in our service department. Our business is built on our repeat customers and we appreciate them all.

We are located at 6156 US Rte. 5, Westminister Vermont. You can reach us at 802-722-4722 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday thru Friday and 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Saturday or by appointment.

**JUNE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
 TIM E. LILLIS, BUILDER**

In the mid 1990s, I began my journey of learning the carpentry trade in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where I apprenticed with a master carpenter on historic, residential renovation projects. From there I moved to rural PA, where I accumulated more experience rehabilitating old houses. I relocated to southeastern Vermont in 2004 and have been building a client base across Windham County ever since.

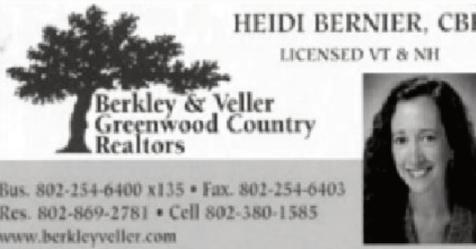
In my 24 years of professional experience, I have amassed skills in all areas of carpentry while specializing in the restoration and renovation of old buildings. I have a deep regard for historical structures and am able to preserve the aesthetics of the past while employing new concepts and technologies to get the job done. I have expertise working on porches, exterior restoration projects and rot repairs. I also currently offer comprehensive services on new construction and additions, tile, structural repairs, kitchen and bathroom renovations, outbuildings, stone work, decks, garden projects and more.

I have built a regional reputation of being friendly and pleasant to work with, accommodating, detail-oriented and reasonably priced. I consistently emphasize a client-led decision making process, and customer satisfaction is my ultimate aim.

If you're looking to brainstorm renovation ideas or start a seasonal project, please contact me for a free estimate. I am happy to provide photos of previous work and references upon request, and I'm available year-round for indoor and outdoor projects.

I can be reached at 802-376-5709 or timlillis70@gmail.com. Check me out on Facebook at fb.me/timlillis70.

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