



SIGNS OF SPRING AT WCS

Spring is here at WCS and with the warmer days the children can finally be outside more - sans hats and boots and warm coats. And we made it through mud season with the school bus only getting stuck in the mud once!

Thank you Chuck Lawrence and crew for helping free the stranded children and making the back road bus routes smooth and safe again.

In late March, the third and fourth grades visited the new lambs at Patch Farm. David and Yesenia Major and their team did a wonderful job showing the children the whole process of birth and care of the new lambs. The third grade watched a lamb actually being born and then getting on its feet in about 30 seconds. As the pictures show, the best part was holding and bottle feeding the new lambs.

Recently, we held the annual JumpRope for Heart event at the school. All 154 students participated, some for the first time and some keeping the tradition going from year to year. Parents were able to join their children with jumping and turning the ropes.

Another fun event recently was the schoolwide Scribble of the Week activity. Each student and staff member starts with a random "scribble" and then turns it into whatever their imagination sees there. This year's output included snails, unicorns, underwater scenes, and many more designs. This showed everyone how satisfying it can be when we let our imagination run freely.

Summer Camp registration forms went home with students recently. Kim Budzik is our new afterschool program director. Contact her at kim.budzik@wnesu.com with questions. The programs will take place at the Westminster Central School running from July 5th through August 5th. Each week has its own theme from arts and crafts, to coding and robotics. Campers will go on weekly field trips and weekly swimming trips. It is guaranteed to be a fun summer!

This year's Parent and Community Night will be on May 11th at the High School at 6 pm. Our guest



speaker is Dr. Lynn Lyons, a well-respected practitioner, author and speaker on anxiety and emotional health in families. Even though many aspects of life are returning to "normal", the pandemic has shown how vulnerable children (and all of us) are to isolation and disruption of learning and routines.

Lynn's book, *Anxious Children, Anxious Parents* and her talks and workshops can provide a wealth of helpful insights on how to reset our responses to anxiety and avoid many of its painful side effects.

Town meeting this year will be held outdoors again at the Butterfield library - on Saturday April 30th starting at 10 a.m. Once again, the WCS parent/teacher organization will be coordinating and serving lunch. Please contact Rosie DeCamp at rosiem84@gmail.com if you wish to help. The Westminster school board will present voters with a budget

of \$4.6 Million for the 2022-23 school year. They will also report on the surplus of funds that will come back to the district when we officially separate from the merged Westminster, Athens and Grafton Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District (WNUESD) on June 30th.

As of July 1st, 2022 Westminster will once again be a fully independent school district and the school board will be responsible for all aspects of the operation of our schools.

The Westminster School Board (WSB) welcomes three new members - Karen Blanchard, Jeff Carlstrom and Tine Biolsi - who were elected by paper ballot on March 1st, to join Cheryl Charles (chair) and Charlie Hutchison (vice-chair).

*Liz Harty - Principal
Charlie Hutchison - Westminster School Board*

KCHI PONTEGOK PROJECT AWARDED GRANT

A collaborative of the Elnu Abenaki Tribe and the Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission has been awarded a National Park Service Underrepresented Community Grant to support reassessing the historic landscape of the Bellows Falls petroglyph site, Kchi Póntegok.

In the language of the Indigenous Western Abenaki Kchi Póntegok (pronounced kit SEE POHN tuh guk) means "at the Great Falls" and inspires the project name. The site is a rare instance of petroglyphs in New England and marks a sacred place.

"It is good to see folks starting to understand the history of Kchi Pontegok," said Abenaki Chief Roger Longtoe Sheehan. "The Great Falls and the landscape around it is not just a few hundred years old but thousands and thousands of years old. This much older history is that of Indigenous Abenaki Peoples who have lived and still live here and consider Kchi Pontegok and the lands around it sacred. We hope other folks will start to understand why this history is important."

The site is located at the Great Falls along the Connecticut River in Bellows Falls Village near the Vilas Bridge. It is identified in the State of Vermont's archaeological site inventory and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

"I am hopeful this can be the beginning of a little more emphasis and appreciation on the stories of Kwenitekw, with the Great Falls being at the heart of it," said Rich Holshuh, Elnu Abenaki Historic Preservation Officer.

"Understanding and preserving the significance of Kchi Póntegok and the petroglyph site is essential to the acknowledgment of the Indigenous people who were here and are still here," added Diana Jones, a Sokoi-Abenaki citizen and Historic Preservation Commissioner. "The acceptance of this project through the federal grant process speaks volumes."

Goals of the project are to affirm the sacredness of the Bellows Falls petroglyph site, address cultural representational inequalities, and to update the site's listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

"The town of Rockingham and its environs have always recognized that we have history that extends back millennia before people of English descent settled here



in the eighteenth century," said John Leppman, Historic Preservation Commission chair. "Artifacts such as the petroglyphs at the Great Falls remind us of this heritage. The Commission is delighted to have support from an Underrepresented Communities Grant to expand our vision of a heritage that is not only ancient but decidedly lasting and relevant."

Since the 1980's when research of the petroglyph site was undertaken for the National Register, new studies have revealed greater detail and ways of understanding and interpreting the carvings. The Kchi Póntegok Project will include a review of current scholarship, archaeological field research, collection of oral histories and traditions, and archival research. The intent is to raise awareness of their place as an anchor in a sacred landscape of significance to the Indigenous Western Abenaki Tribe.

"I feel excited and honored that our partnership received this grant," said Walter Wallace, Commission Coordinator. "Excited because this is an important collaboration between the Abenaki and Euro-American

communities in our region, honored because this is the first Underrepresented Communities Grant awarded by the National Park Service to a Vermont town."

The Underrepresented Community Grant program is supported by the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) to identify, plan, and develop nominations to the National Register of Historic Places increasing representation of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color listed on the Register.

The HPF uses revenue from federal oil leases on the Outer Continental Shelf to assist with a broad range of preservation projects without expending tax dollars, with the intent to mitigate the loss of a nonrenewable resource to benefit the preservation of other irreplaceable resources.

For more information about the Kchi Póntegok Project email clg@rockbf.org.

For more information about NPS historic preservation programs and grants and the Underrepresented Community Grant program visit their websites.

Photo by Robert Smith

Our Monthly Community Newspaper May 2022 Vol. 18 No. 5

Westminster Gazette

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The in-person Town Meeting will be held on the Westminster Institute lawn, Saturday, April 30, 2022 at 10 a.m. Rain location will be in the bays of the Westminster Fire District # 3 on Grout Avenue.

Town Reports are available at the Town Hall, Butterfield Library and Westminster West Library.

RFPL PROGRAM ON THE MEANING OF PETROGLYPHS



On Wednesday, May 11 at 7 p.m., join Dr. Michael J. Fuller for a conversation about the meanings of petroglyphs created around the world, while referencing a local site: the petroglyphs at the Great Falls in present-day Bellows Falls (known to the Abenaki as Kchi Ponteku) on Wednesday, May 11 at 7 p.m. over Rockingham Library zoom.

Dr. Fuller is a Professor Emeritus of Anthropology at St. Louis Community College in Missouri. He has participated in over 60 archaeological surveys and excavations in Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee and Oregon from 1970 to 2022. His ongoing research project involves the location and documentation of rock art sites in North America. He visited and documented the petroglyphs in Bellows Falls in 2014.

His program, co-sponsored by the Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission and the Rockingham Library, was made possible in part by funding through the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service.

To request a zoom invitation to this program, email programming@rockingham-library.org, call (802) 463-4270 or stop by the library at 65 Westminister St. in Bellows Falls.

Photo of Bellows Falls' petroglyphs by Gerry Biron

GREATER FALLS FARMERS MARKET

The Greater Falls Farmers Market is held Fridays from 4 to 7 p.m. in downtown Bellows Falls.

The kick-off fundraiser with live entertainment will be on Friday, May 20 from 5 to 8 pm on BF3F.

The first Market starts the Third Friday in June with live entertainment, take-out food and vendors and runs Fridays from June 17 through September.

For more information or becoming a vendor visit them on Facebook at Greater Falls Farmers' Market.

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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

JOIN US FOR GREEN UP DAY MAY 7

Help keep our town green: come on out on Green Up Day, Saturday, May 7, and clean up a Westminster road or street.

Green Up bags are available at the Town Hall in Westminster and the Westminster West Library. Please do not use them until the week of May 2 (so the bags aren't left along the road for long periods of time).

You may also pick up bags in front of Town Hall on Green Up Day, Saturday, May 7, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

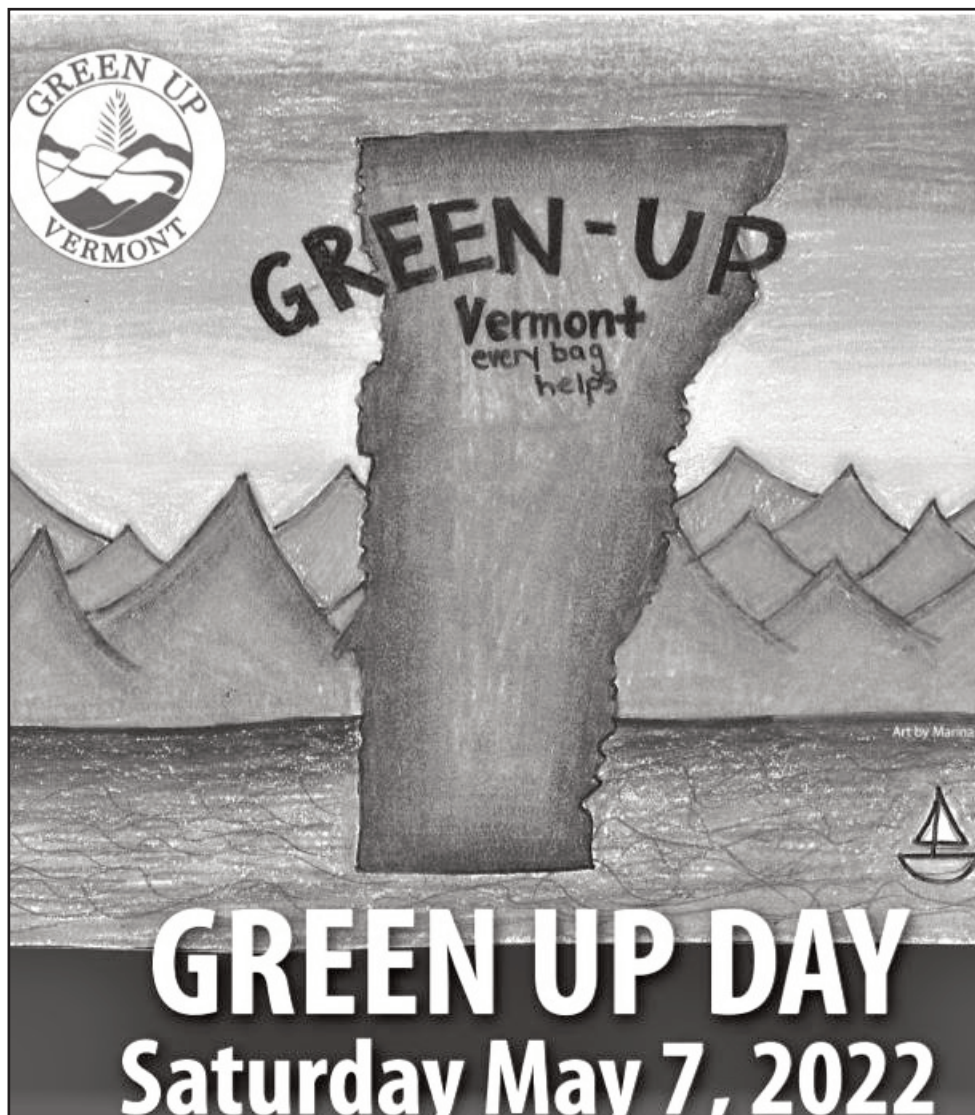
On Monday and Tuesday, May 9 and 10, the Westminster Town road crew will pick up bags, including any of your own trash bags used for Green Up. Please do not leave them on private roads.

Safety reminders:

Do not remove dead animals or suspected toxic/hazardous waste.

Don't disturb needles or questionable debris.

If you have a safety concern, please inform the proper local authorities. Or contact VT State Road maintenance personnel (<http://vtrans.vermont.gov>) or the State Police <http://vsp.vermont.gov/>.



NEWS FROM THE TOWN GARAGE

Hello Neighbors,

The mud has dried up leaving the roads a little rough, so I caution you all that you don't drive around with your tongue hanging out or you may bite it off. I know the whole trash thing was a pain and didn't work as good as it could of but from some of the feedback it did make a difference on the effort to keep the roads passible.

We had a good time at our open house with all the little kids and big kids playing on the equipment, and checking out the building and grounds. I hope everyone had a good time as well.

We are hauling in gravel, now that the roads have dried out, and getting around with the grader as fast as we can. I thank you all for your patience as always.

The highway department got a taste of how the Patriots felt when they lost Tom Brady, we are sad to say Carson Fullam, the gentleman in the excavator most of the time, has decided to embark on a new adventure with M&M Excavating, where his skills will be used on residential and commercial construction projects around the Chester/Ludlow area.

Thank you Carson for your years of hard work and dedication to the Town of Westminster. Good luck on your next adventure.

Road posted signs are down and grading, ditch cleaning and normal road work will continue, please keep an eye out when guys are working and slow down! We can't afford to lose any more help.

*Thank you for your support,
Chuck and The Crew*



Westminster Road Crew with satisfied customer Libby Mills at Town Garage Open Day.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met April 6th via WebEx with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: President Lori Larue, Regina Borden, Miriam Lanata, Pete Harrison, Pat Goodell, Don Dawson, Cindy Moses, Doug Oftedahl, Kathy Elliot and director Donna Dawson.

Programs & Services Provided in MARCH

Meals-on-Wheels: Two new residents started in March. WC volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 26 different people. Those in need of week-end meals received two frozen meals each Friday.

Transportation Program: Currently back "on hold" through April.

Healthy Aging Programs:

Both of our Strong Living exercise classes, (Karen W. and Ronnie F.; instructors), are happening two times per week on Zoom.

Gentle Yoga and Tai Chi classes are also being offered online as well.

The Secrets of Healthy Aging Group has been on hiatus through April.

Assistance and Referrals: Volunteers picked up prescriptions at a local pharmacy and delivered them twice in March.

Friendly Visiting – ON HOLD

However, friendly phone check-ins are happening via the Director and our Community Nurse.

Medical Equipment – In March we loaned out 10 pieces of equipment and accepted returns of 6 pieces of equipment. We also were offered supplies of disposable items.

Community Nurse Program – In March our Nurse continued to consult with clients by phone and advise the Board on protocols for re-opening.

There were no Blood Pressure Clinics as Senior Lunches have been cancelled indefinitely.

April Honorary and Memorial Donations

In honor of Ronnie Friedman from Standish and

Virginia Bourne

In memory of Almon Flagg from Ken Flagg

In memory of Dale McGivern from Silver Forest, Inc.

In memory of Harold and Alice Shattuck from Barbara Greenough

In memory of Janet L. Young from Francis W. Rogenski

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Killdeer

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Killdeer are among the earliest ground nesters to arrive back in the spring. As I eagerly await their return, I listen for their shrill, piercing calls repeated over and over high in the air. The calls are from males, advertising to their mates and other rivals that this is their territory.

They have slender shapes with long wings and tails, large eyes and two black breast bands although the young have only one breast band. The adults have brown backs, white bellies and rust-colored rumps and tails. The rust only shows in flight or in distraction displays. Their pointy-winged flight suggest small falcons or nighthawks.

When we think of plovers, we think of the ocean but killdeer are inland plovers. They have adapted to humans and are present in our cultivated fields, lawns, airports, cemeteries, parking lots, driveways and roadsides.

They nest on the ground in a shallow depression which may be unlined or lined with pebbles, wood chips, grass or assorted debris. Their four eggs are buff colored, with black or brown spots, scrawls or blotches that resemble the stones. The eggs need to look just like the stones because they can be eaten by snakes, foxes or crows.

The breeding season starts in late March with both parents incubating for 24 to 28 days. The young are precocial which means leaving the nest soon after hatching covered with down, eyes open and capable of obtaining their own food.

Migrating back this early can be a challenge to find food. They eat invertebrates (earthworms, insect larvae, grasshoppers, beetles and snails). Almost all of a killdeer's diet consists of animal matter.

In the summer, half of their diet is made up of adult beetles and beetle larvae. Typical feeding habit is to sprint rapidly, stop, wait and then sprint again. When foraging, they sometimes will pat the ground with one foot to scare up a meal.

The killdeer is famous for a behavior called a distraction display or a "broken-wing act." If a predator, either animal or human, comes too close to the eggs or young, they do the distraction display, pretending to have a broken wing.

Seeming in great distress, they cry, stumble and drag a wing on the ground. When the predator is lured far enough away from the eggs or babies, they simply fly away.

It is a very convincing display.



photos by Don Clark



A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: GRAND OPENING

At long last, your historical society is preparing to re-open its museums. On July 2, we'll host an ice cream social outdoors, and guided tours of the town hall museum and the Law Office.

We've been shuttered for several years due to town hall construction and the pandemic. Construction is behind us. The pandemic continues to morph in frustrating ways that we'll be paying close attention to, but we feel confident that we can allow safe access to exhibits once again.

That means we need your help. Both museums must be staffed 2-4 p.m. on Saturdays throughout the summer. You don't have to be a history expert to do this. We offer our docents plenty of support through exhibit fliers and notebooks that take deeper dives into aspects of the exhibits.

Minding the museum, or the Law Office, is a low-key way to commune with history, and help increase interest in the story of our town.

The town hall exhibit focuses on the Westminster Massacre, correcting some misconceptions and placing this event squarely in the series of nonviolent mass protests that led to the Revolutionary War.

Thousands of people participated in Massachusetts in 1774, closing courts and forcing officials to resign, but there were no deaths on either side. Our protest here in Westminster, however, was greeted with lethal and treacherous violence on the part of government officials.

William French and Daniel Houghton were killed, in what Vermonters have always considered to be the first loss of life of the Revolution. As the sescentennial (250th anniversary) of the Massacre approaches,



this is a good time to refamiliarize ourselves with this event.

The Bradley Law Office, in photo, will be set up as it would have been when William Czar Bradley, affectionately known in town as "Papa Bradley" was a fixture of the Vermont judiciary. He was a lawyer and Congressman in the era of Daniel Webster and Henry Clay, who had similar small law offices, though Bradley's is the most elegant, and is furnished exactly as it was during his working life. Many people who have 'babysat' the Law Office over the years have developed a deep fondness for this beautiful, peaceful building.

If you'd like to be a docent, or to help out at the ice-

cream social, please contact us through our website - Westminster Historical Society - Preserving information in Westminster, Vermont (westminstervthistory.org)

Here's another way you may be able to help. We're in the early stages of seeking more space for storage, our archives, and possibly for exhibits. We love our archive room in the Institute, but it's already bulging at the seams.

Storage space at the town hall is limited, and we are quite cramped there. The town hall exhibit space

is beautiful in its new configuration and we have no wish to go elsewhere, but we are aware that the town might someday decide it wants the space for something else.

So we're looking for a lot or building, preferably in the village, for purchase or long-term lease. We've begun discussions with the Institute board, but all options are on the table, including the ones we haven't thought of yet.

Do you have an idea? If so, please contact us through our website--Westminster Historical Society - Preserving information in Westminster, Vermont (westminstervthistory.org).

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

The Westminster Fire and Rescue Department holds its monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month and a combined drill on the third Tuesday of every month. Rescue training is the second Tuesday of the month. Next association meeting is May 3rd at 7 p.m.

The Prudential Committee normally meets once or twice a month. A warning will be posted 48 hours prior to each meeting.

Number of calls in March: 29

Number of calls through April 21st: 17

Number of calls calendar year to date: 147

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 377

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting April 5th with President Greg Holton presiding. There were 30 members present and eight members excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department.

The department welcomed Ryan Struthers as a full member having successfully completed his six months' probation.

Emergency responses: We are having another

busy month in April with 17 total calls as of the 21st. The breakdown goes like this: eight rescue/medical calls; two motor vehicle accidents; three Mutual Aid calls: one to Putney, one to Saxtons River and one to Walpole; one Welfare check; two with alarms sounding and one service call for truck with overheated brakes.

Also there were a couple of training classes during the month of April.

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

There have been some pedestrian fatalities due in part to walking on the wrong side of the road. When biking ride with the flow of traffic on the right side of the road.

Dispatchers needed: If there is anyone out there living in the village or close to the fire house on Grout Avenue who would like to become a member of our dispatch team, contact Chief Streeter or stop by the fire house on a Sunday morning to find out

more information.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR SALE: Anyone want to buy a fire extinguisher? We have them for sale and there are four sizes available. See the Chief or stop by the fire station for more information if interested.

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

Donation Received in April from Kevin Hughes.

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 firehouse, 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 their continued support.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

HEARING LOSS: A SILENT DANGER IN OLDER ADULTS

By Mara Brooks, Communications Coordinator,
Community of Vermont Elders (C.O.V.E.)

Hearing loss affects tens of millions of people in the United States and can be brought on by aging, noise, damage, ear wax, or heredity. Some issues attributed to aging are common side effects of hearing loss: higher risk of falling, trouble following a conversation, and increased risk of dementia.

Approximately one in three people between the ages of 65 and 74 are living with some form of hearing loss, generally caused by a combination of age and exposure to noise.

When hearing loss is caused by aging it usually occurs slowly over time, and in both ears. For that reason, it might go undetected until it reaches an advanced state and interferes with basic activities. While some dangers of hearing loss are obvious (difficulty hearing smoke alarms, doorbells, warnings) others are more ambiguous. If an older person finds they increasingly struggle to make out what friends and family are saying, they might start to withdraw from social events and lead a more isolated lifestyle.

Isolation is a serious issue affecting older adults and has been associated with a 50% increased risk of dementia. It was also found to significantly increase the risk of both heart disease and stroke. Isolation can also lead to depression, anxiety, and suicide in older adults.

There is currently no cure for hearing loss, but there are many treatment options, with new advances in technology all the time. Of course, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, so remember to always protect your ears from loud, prolonged noises. Earplugs and earmuffs can help by placing a buffer between your ear and the source of loud, external noise.

But if you are already living with hearing loss, several strategies are available to help you reclaim your life, health, and social confidence.

Hearing aids, which are electronic devices worn in or behind the ear, are among the most popular treatment options. Unfortunately, they can also be expensive and are not always covered by insurance.

In recent years, legislation has been introduced in many states compelling insurance companies to cover the cost of hearing aids, but mandates still vary from state to state.

Hearing aids can be life-changing but finding the right one can take a little effort. Audiologists can help to diagnose hearing loss and find the right hearing aid to suit your needs.

Another option involves surgically implanted ear devices known as cochlear implants. These are helpful to provide sound for those with profound hearing loss or deafness. Unless your hearing loss is very severe, this might not be your doctor's first course of action.

There are also over the counter listening and amplifying devices, as well as apps where a user can upload their personal hearing profile so that sounds filtered through their headphones are customized to their specific hearing needs.

The first and most important thing to do is to have your hearing tested by a medical professional. With the right treatment, you or your loved one might find you are again able to participate in robust conversations, enjoy family and social events, keep a sure foot, and take in the full range of sounds life has to offer.

Over 17% of all Vermonters across age groups suffer from hearing loss, and Vermont is the only state in New England that does not require some form of hearing aid insurance coverage from private insurance companies. Thousands of Vermonters who are hearing disabled are wrongly excluded from accessing care and services for one of their primary health concerns. Community of Vermont Elders (C.O.V.E.) has partnered with numerous Vermont Agencies to address this critical issue.

NEWS FROM FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

The First Congregational Church of Westminster has been holding hybrid services every Sunday at 10 a.m. Those who choose can attend church, following safety precautions by wearing a mask. Others can attend church services via zoom.

Others may enjoy the recorded service on the church Facebook page. We again have live organ music during our Sunday worship service.

Church activities:

Communion will be held on Sunday, May 1st.
Women's Fellowship will meet on Tuesday, May 3rd at 11 am.
Bible Study will continue on Wednesdays at 10 a.m.
Standing Committee will meet on Monday, May 16th at 5:30 p.m.
Spring Sale will take place on Saturday, May 21st, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

There are many good offerings during our church Spring Sale.

The plant sale offers lots of Geraniums for Memorial Day planting; garden vegetables, including broccoli, kale, cabbage, tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants; lots of perennial flowers, including lilies, red astilbe, peonies, blue salvia, Columbine, and many more; annual flowers, marigolds and petunias; herbs, basil and parsley.

There will also be many bushes, including Rose of Sharon, Beauty Bush, and White Forsythia. There will also be a White Elephant sale which will include lots of craft items which may interest school teachers looking for items for their classrooms. Also puzzles and various other items.

This is just a sampling of what will find when you come to our Spring Sale. We look forward to seeing you.

MOTHER'S DAY WILDFLOWER WALK

Join the Westminster Conservation Commission on Sunday, May 8 from noon to 2 p.m. in search of springtime's ephemeral woodland wildflowers.

We will meet in Westminster West village and carpool to local deciduous forest trails in search of these short-lived blooms. (Exact location TBD).

Registration is required, and maximum number of participants is 16.

To register or for any questions, email westminstervtconservation@gmail.com or call Sarah Waldo at (802) 387-6036.

Photo of Dutchman's Breeches by Nicholas Erwin.



BFDDA & GFRCC MEET & GREET FOR VOLUNTEERS

Come meet other volunteers and learn about our local non-profits! The Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance and Great Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce are hosting a Meet & Greet for Volunteers at BFDDA's first Keep BF Beautiful on Saturday, May 14 from 9 a.m. to noon.

Join us at the Waypoint Center for coffee and pastries from the BF Rotary Club and find out more about our non-profits and upcoming events. A list of activities for the morning is below, choose something you would like to paint, clean or plant and stay for a potluck lunch at noon.

Please dress accordingly and bring gloves and any tools that might help! Jobs for the 14th: Planting flow-

ers in planters and other pots, cleaning up existing flower beds, sweeping and cleaning stairside, spring cleaning the Waypoint Center, cleaning windows and glass on kiosk, painting, brainstorming and having fun!

Keep BF Beautiful is a monthly volunteer event where we pick a small project around town and make it pretty. Future projects include hydrant painting, brush clearing, poison ivy control. We would love other ideas.

BFDDA is looking for help for the fundraiser at the Guilford Welcome Center on Friday, June 3. Do you love baking? We need treats and savory items, please contact bfdda1@gmail.com if you can help and check out Facebook for all of the latest activities around Bellows Falls

BEEKEEPING WORKSHOP IN ALSTEAD

Charles Andros, former NH/VT Apiary Inspector, will hold a beekeeping workshop from 1 to 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 21. Topics of discussion: finding queens, requeening colonies, pollen collection, swarm control, supering, and bee venom therapy.

Look for the "BEE" sign on the south side of Wal-

pole Valley Road (18 MacLean Road, first on right, Alstead, NH) Bring a veil, if you have one, as we shall be opening some colonies. Water and sunscreen are also a plus.

Registration required. Email lindenam1@gmail.com or call 603-756-9056.

REMEMBRANCE-

WALTER STEWART ALLBEE, 78
9/26/1943 - 3/25/2022
WESTMINSTER, VT

GEORGE BOUSQUET JR., 86
3/19/1935 - 3/13/2022
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

VICTORIA J. GOLEC, 62
5/17/1959 - 4/8/2022
BELLOWS FALLS

JEFFREY F. GREEN, 53
11/6/1968 - 3/18/2022
WESTMINSTER, VT

FREDERICK WARYAS SR., 84
2/2/1938 - 2/24/2022
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

CALLING ALL 90+ YEAR OLDS

This year Westminster Cares will hold their annual Celebration of Aging in September. The event will be held outdoors on the back lawn of the Westminster Institute.

Residents of our town who are 90 years of age and older will be recognized and celebrated.

If you are 90 or older or know someone who is 90 or older, please call Pete Harrison at 289-3776 or Donna Dawson at 722-3607.

Help us locate as many 90+ residents as possible. We want everyone to be a part of the celebration!

CELEBRATION OF LIFE FOR RUSSELL ALLEN

Please join us for a Celebration of Life for Russell Allen at Higgins Hill Orchard, formerly CVO, at 178 Airport Road in Westminster on Saturday, May 14 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Lunch will be served.

RETIRED EDUCATORS MEET

Windham County Retired Educators will meet on May 10 and June 14.

VT-NEA Member Benefits Director, Mark Hage, will speak about Vermont Blue Advantage and answer questions about this program at the May meeting.

The meeting will occur at Black Mountain Estates (Brattleboro) in the Community Room at 11:30 a.m.

Please contact Joanne Corey if you plan to attend: jkgall@sover.net. The location of the June meeting will be determined at the May gathering.

CELEBRATE YOUR MOM!

The Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance (BFDDA) invites you to join us in celebrating Mom's with the Mom of the Year contest!

Nominate your favorite Mom between April 16 - May 8 and your Mom will be entered into a drawing to win flowers and pampered gifts from Halladay's Flowers & Gifts, Village Square Booksellers, Grace & Miss Mouse Soap and more!

Visit BFDDA on Facebook or www.bellowsfallsvt.org to learn more.

WESTMINSTER CARES HAS PPE & TEST KITS

Westminster Cares has N95 face masks and "Binax Now" COVID-19 antigen test kits for older adults in our community who may need them in the coming months.

If you get symptoms or are exposed to the illness, stay home and contact your primary health provider early as there are highly effective therapies against Covid-19 available in the early days of illness. Having an at-home Covid test on hand can be very helpful. These test kits contain easy to follow instructions and two tests.

Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order four free at-home, COVID-19 antigen tests. Orders will usually ship in 7-12 days. For technical support call 1-800-344-7779. Online ordering is at: <https://www.healthvermont.gov/covid-19/testing>

Want to know how your activities balance your risk? Visit <https://www.healthvermont.gov/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/COVID19-Risk-Grid-Activities.pdf>

Supplies are limited. Please call Donna Dawson in the office to inquire. (802) 722-3607.

THE GAZETTE STAFF WOULD LIKE TO THANK CLARENCE AND AUDREY GOCHY FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATION.

WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

Activities

WHILE WE ARE LEAVING THESE ACTIVITIES, MEETINGS AND SERVICES LISTED ON THIS PAGE, OUR READERS SHOULD ASSUME THAT MANY PUBLIC EVENTS ARE CANCELLED 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 OUR ISSUES PROVIDING OFFICIAL DIRECTIONS AND CHANGES AS VERMONT CONTINUES 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.

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, 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 Sami 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 until further notice.

Thank you for your support of the First Congregational Church.

The Congregational Church of Westminster West

The Congregational Church of Westminster West worships online by ZOOM every Sunday at 10 am, and church musicians record music to be played at all services. On the first Sunday of every month, everyone provides their own elements for Holy Communion at home, and on the second Sunday, the congregation still collects a special offering for the food shelf at Our Place in Bellows Falls

The congregation is Open and Affirming, and the Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno is the pastor. Monday is Susie's day off, and she holds telephone office hours on Thursday afternoons; she can be reached at 579-8356 or by email at susiewt@gmail.com. The church building is closed for the duration of the pandemic, but it remains wheelchair-accessible: an elevator provides direct access to the sanctuary on the upper floor.

If you wish to get a zoom invitation, check our website where the zoom link is found under CCWWHOME or email Pastor Susie.

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 3rd Tuesday at 7 p.m. on the second floor of the Westminster Town Hall

Westminster Gazette Meeting 3rd Monday of the month online, for the time being.

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

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

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

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westminsternews@gmail.com

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- Massage
- Physical Therapy
- Herbal Medicine
- Immune Support
- Apothecary

Please Note:
The Deadline for the June 2022 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, May 18

Publication Date is Wednesday, May 25

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

WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY WESTORY EXHIBIT MYSTERY PHOTO

Everyone is invited to an Open House at the Westminster West Public Library celebrating the Library's recent improvements, on Friday May 6 (5 to 9 p.m.) and Saturday and Sunday (noon to 4 p.m.).

We are proud to announce the first WESTORY! exhibition:

Village Treasure: the West Parish between the Wars 1870 -1910 includes historic photos and maps featuring the families and farms of the West Parish, a collection of portraits called 'Grand Old Women of Westminster West,' the Fire of 1917 and more.

You may also pick up your new electronic library card - it is not only pretty, but gives you access to the Catamount inter-library system of more than 500,000 books which can be ordered from the comfort of your own home and picked up here in Westminster West.

Please drop in, enjoy the new exhibition, pick up your card, and have a cup of tea.

You will always be very welcome at the Westminster West Public Library!

MYSTERY PHOTO

So who are these girls? And why is their dress almost like a uniform? Several of them seem to be wearing the same pin or badge.

The photo is from the Reuben Miller family album, and names written underneath are "Sarah Worthman, Alita Handy, Charlotte Miller, Maynard, and Carrie Handy."

Any ideas?



RETHINKING OUR LAWNS

By Rachael Shaw,

Westminster Conservation Commission

The Spring rains will soon make our lawns green and lush, and it will be time to start mowing again. This is a good time to re-think our mowing habits, and mentally prepare ourselves for an updated (modified to support pollinators and the environment) lawn experience.

One way to think about our yards is as a relationship with Nature/Earth. In any relationship, there is cooperation and compromise. Instead of having an antagonistic attitude (battling Nature to produce a perfect lawn), we can ask ourselves what is best for ourselves, and what is best for the Earth?

Happily, this can become a highly functional relationship, where everyone's needs are met.

Why is this important? For many reasons, including the following:

1. To protect and support a diversity of species. Insect numbers have declined precipitously in the past decades, driven by habitat loss, pesticides, and climate change. Besides pollinating food crops, insects break down waste and are the base of the food chain, affecting all levels of life. The Sustainable Review reports that insect populations have declined by 45% in the last four decades. Moths, butterflies, bees, and dung beetles are most at risk.

2. To protect the soil, water and micro-organisms.

3. To reduce carbon emissions and noise pollution. When we are running our mowers and other loud equipment, the birds and insects can't communicate with each other.

4. To save fuel, money and time.

Here are some ways that you can help:

1. Consider mowing less often. Instead of every week, try mowing every two weeks. I've been doing this the last couple years. The lawn gets a little shaggy in between, but I appreciate that I am using less gas, time and creating less disruptions. It's interesting to see all the life that emerges in this more friendly habitat.

2. Reduce the lawn footprint. This is also excellent for saving time and gas and increasing habitat. We are all concerned about ticks, so may want to keep certain areas mowed for family recreation. However, if sections of the lawn are not being used, mowing is not necessary.

3. Try mowing walking paths through larger areas, so that wildflowers can seed. This will serve as excellent habitat for pollinators, butterflies, ground-nesting birds, and provide more food for birds and animals. Your lawn will become so much more alive! If you have a section with lots of flowers blooming, mow around them.

4. Rethink attitudes toward lawn "weeds" and soil micro-organisms. For example, dandelions are a healthy wild edible and medicinal plant, as well as a provider of

early blooms for pollinators. Plus, they are a brilliant yellow color, like the sun. I never understood why people took such issue with them! They die back mid season and settle back in to the grass. Violets, clovers, mosses and other plants help diversify the lawn, making it more interesting and beautiful, and less susceptible to damage by droughts and heavy rains. Increased species of native plants (including edible landscape options such as low bush blueberries) make the habitat much more valuable to the insects and microorganisms that depend on it.

5. Consider doing a "walkabout" on the lawn before you mow, and encourage frogs, snakes, moths, etc to move to the edges so that they will survive the mower.

6. Consider investing in a battery powered mower (on my list!) or a manual mower if you can. You won't need to buy gas for the mower, or deal with the fumes. Battery powered mowers are quieter, and easier to turn off and on for when you stop to help an animal or insect move out of the way.

7. Eliminate chemical fertilizers and "weed" and "pest" killers (did you know that these also kill firefly larvae and other beneficial insects and microorganisms?) and go all natural! You will be creating a much healthier environment for yourselves, your family, your pets, as well as the soil, water and Earth in general. (Think no toxic run-off, no birds eating poisoned insects, etc). If you do want to fertilize, consider using compost, or 'slow-release' fertilizers, to avoid run-off of excess nutrients.

8. Set the mower to its highest setting. The lawn will be more resilient during droughts, and you will have less chance of killing animals and insects.

Many communities are adopting a "No Mow in May" policy, to help support the pollinator communities. For more information on this important movement, check out www.beecityusa.org For other ideas, look up 'The Natural Lawn Care for Healthy Soils Challenge' that the Ocean River Institute has launched (www.oceanriver.org).

These are some suggestions for creating a happier, healthier and more interesting and diverse lawn this year. Try it! You will be fascinated with all the life that shows up to share the Earth with you and your family.

Remember how curious we were as children? It's easy to get that curiosity back when you have lots of species to observe. There are also some wonderful opportunities to teach children and grandchildren (as well as ourselves) about how to love and co-exist with nature, and your yard will still be functional and pleasant. The Westminster Conservation Commission would love to hear the results of your experiments creating a more alive lawn. Write to us at westminstervtconservation@gmail.com.

Have a wonderful growing season!

COMPASS SCHOOL

GRADUATION ROUNDTABLES

The seniors at Compass School will be engaging in their culminating graduation roundtable meetings on the afternoons of May 24-27.

This is the most important rite of passage at the school, when seniors demonstrate their readiness to graduate. Part dissertation defense and part joyous celebration, the roundtable is a comprehensive review and culmination of their high school education.

The roundtable meeting is attended by advisors, teachers, peers, parents and family members, as well as a Compass board member and outside community members. The student presents an extensive portfolio of their work and written reflections to document their readiness for graduation.

The attendees will examine this work and have an in-depth discussion with the student about their strengths, challenges, accomplishments, and plans for the future. The role of the committee is to determine if the student is ready to graduate, using their judgment as representatives of the larger community. There are substantial, specific requirements for the portfolio, while at the same time allowing a highly personalized process. The roundtable is a holistic verification of competency as well as a reflective celebration of learning.

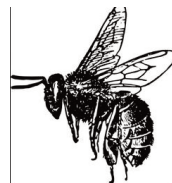
The outside community members provide a broader perspective to the discussion and feedback. These are interested community members who don't know the student and who can engage in the presentation from that more global view. These roundtable meetings are educationally very interesting and wonderfully rewarding. Any interested community members who would like to consider attending a roundtable can reach out to Eric Rhomberg, Director, by email at eric.rhomberg@compass-school.org.

Compass School is a state-approved independent school for grades 7-12 in Westminster. Information at www.compass-school.org.

CHESTER PLANT SALE

The annual Chester Plant Sale at St. Luke's Church, the gray church at 313 Main Street near the Village Green, has become a marvelous opportunity for the public to purchase a wide selection of proven, large, healthy, hardy plants at bargain prices. The sale is scheduled to run Friday, May 27 and Saturday, May 28, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. both days, and also on Sunday, May 29, 12 to 3.

The sale features numerous perennials, herbs, raspberry plants, dahlia tubers, and some special annuals and propagated shrubs, plus homemade preserves, rhubarb, a loose-leaf gardening journal, and one-of-a-kind pastel note cards of birds and flowers. The plants will have helpful labels and flower photos; and experienced gardeners will be on hand to give advice about planting and garden design. If you have perennials you would like to contribute or if you have plants to suggest or need more information, contact Lillian Willis at 802-875-1340 or lbwillisct@comcast.net.



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**MAY BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
HARLOW'S FARMSTAND**



Harlow Farmstand opens for the season on Saturday, April 30. Michael Lenox opens Cafe Loco for inside dining on April 30, as well.

Come and see our new walkways!
We'll have fresh organic produce from Harlow Farm, Old Athens Farm, and other local producers. We also sell bedding plants, including annuals, perennials, and herbs.

How about a hanging basket for Mom? We can fill her window boxes with beautiful annuals, too.

Organic berries from Harlow Farm include strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries. We sell eggs from our free-range hens and, starting in June, roasting chickens.

We have beef from East Run Farm in Westminister West and pork from Archway Farm in Keene. We also have beef from Westminister Wagyu, and Ethan will be donating \$1 from every pound of Wagyu hamburger sold to Ukrainian relief.

Find breads and other good stuff from Orchard Hill Breadworks. Check out our cheese variety, from Vermont Shepherd, Parish Hill Creamery, and other cheesemakers.

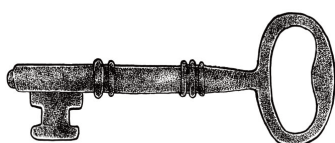
We also have milk, butter, yogurt, and ice cream. Find Harlow Farm-made jams, pickles, chutney, kimchi, and condiments, as well as our own frozen vegetables, along with beans, rice, nuts, olive oil, vinegar, spices, and a selection of other fine staples.

Most important, thank you to the community for 31 years of wonderful support.

For now, we have no Covid-19 restrictions or recommendations; keep your fingers crossed.

We'll be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day.

Stop in and say hello to Dan and his staff, Andrew, Cherie, Dee, Lori, and Ethan.



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