

INAUGURAL BELLOWS FALLS FESTIVAL JUNE 10TH

IT’S MUSIC, FOOD & THEATER AT THE WAYPOINT CENTER, SATURDAY, JUNE 10

Summer is just around the corner and the Wild Goose Players, The Rotary Club of Bellows Falls and local sponsors Mascoma Bank and M&T Bank have teamed up to create the first Bellows Falls Festival, on Saturday, June 10 from 1 to 10 p.m.

The BFF is a one-day event but promises to be packed full of excitement and entertainment. The festival will take place outdoors at the Waypoint Center at 17 Depot Street in Bellows Falls.

Food vendors will include Jamaican Jewelz, Bellows Falls Moose Club, Smokin’ Bowls and Tito’s Taqueria.

Adult beverages will be provided by Donovan’s with lemonade and sweet treats available from Parks Place and the Bellows Falls Woman’s Club.

But of course, the real highlight of the BFF will be the music and performances. The lineup of artists is truly impressive, and you will find something for everyone’s musical taste.

From Ben Jennings Quartet’s funky dance grooves to the Americana stories and dual harmonies of the Milk House Heaters you will not be disappointed.

Gaslight TInkers and Blue Motel

will round out the afternoon, and as we move toward evening, The Mammals will bring their indie-folk ballads and fiddle and banjo driven foot stompers.

Then singer/songwriter Sarah Borges takes the stage with a gritty mix of country, blues and roots rock.

Her music, described as “walking that fine line between punk and country,” will get you out of your seat and dancing in the street.

In addition to the music line-up, there will be plenty of other local artists performing throughout the day. Be sure not to miss the much-anticipated performances from the Wild Goose Players and Keene Pride.

Tickets are on sale now and are priced to be affordable for everyone. Visit bellowsfallsfestival.org

This is a family friendly event so bring the kids and introduce them to the joys of live music. Don’t forget to bring a blanket or chair so you can relax and enjoy the music. Chairs under the big tent will be provided and will be on a first come first serve basis.

This event promises to be a day to remember. So come on out, support the local music scene, and have a great time with family and friends.



KURN HATTIN HONORS RESIDENTIAL STAFF

GREATER FALLS REGIONAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HONORS LOCAL ROCK STARS

The Greater Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce recently held their Annual Meeting. Following the meeting, the winners of their Community Rock Star Contest were announced and awards were presented.

Receiving the award on behalf of the entire residential staff at Kurn Hattin Homes, was Houseparent Robert Anderson.

The Kurn Hattin Homes Residential Staff are a very special group of dedicated professionals who love children and the work they do to positively transform children’s lives.

At Kurn Hattin Homes, it always

comes back to this—they are there for the kids in everything they do. Without question, the residential department staff are the key to the children’s wellbeing and success. They are rock stars!

Congratulations to the KHH residential staff on receiving this fantastic award. It’s a great honor and very well deserved for the incredible work they do every day with the Kurn Hattin Homes’ children.

Congratulations to the other winners: Bellows Falls Rotary Club, Greater Falls Pharmacy Employees, Amanda Reed, Wanda Salter, and Betsy Thurston.



In photo, Houseparent, Robert Anderson accepts the Community Rock Star award on behalf of the entire residential staff at Kurn Hattin Homes.

1ST FRIDAY GALLERY WALK RETURNS

On May 5th, Brattleboro’s most long running and beloved arts and community event returned after it’s winter hiatus. This season the program will run every first Friday May through December from 5 to 9 p.m., rain or shine.

For going on 30 years, Gallery Walk has been a staple of the Brattleboro community. Monthly events embodying Brattleboro to a T: art in the galleries and in the streets, creative food, pop-up musicians, friends and neighbors gathering downtown to catch up and celebrate.

Revamped in 2020 with a significant expansion in programming, the new iteration has got it all.

You can expect a huge block party with street closure of Elliot Street and Harmony Parking lot featuring an outdoor stage with live music, a food truck food court, 80 feet of community table featuring white table cloths and locals blooms courtesy of the Brattleboro Garden Club.

Eighteen galleries will boast new exhibit openings, many with the artists present to speak with guests. Interactive art stations pop-up all over Downtown with a diverse array of activities and exhibits- for example you’ll see artists live painting on easels along Main Street. A point of considerable pride is that these events are free and are meant to truly have something for everyone. Art, in all it’s forms, brings people together like no other and that’s what Gallery Walk is all about.

The Music Schedule includes June- BrattRock, Brattleboro area youth rock festival; July- Jatoba & The Di-trani Brothers; August- Sweet Lightening & Tilden; September- Thus Love w/s/g Beetsblog; October- Gaslight Tinkers.

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Westminster Gazette

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GREEN UP THANK YOU

A big thank you goes out to all of you who helped clean up Westminster on Green Up Day. And thanks also to the Westminster town road crew: they picked up 130 bags of trash and 93 discarded tires. Our roadsides look great! Let’s keep them clean.

OUR WORKING LANDSCAPE

Westminster has many farms and businesses which work the land to create products (mostly edible) and jobs, while making the landscape that we see today. The *Gazette* will be highlighting this part of our economy with short articles and letters which explain and recognize the importance of our working landscape.

WELCOME BACK, CIGAR VALLEY



Did you know that in the early 20th century, Vermont was first among the states in growing tobacco? TOBACCO? Here? In Westminster?

In yield per acre, Vermont and especially Windham county, outdid the South, specializing in the large, valuable tobacco leaves used to wrap cigars.

Tobacco growing in Windham County died out in the 1950s, but in 2022 it was brought back to Westminster with a successful harvest by a local farm. And 2023 will see the second year that this historic cash crop returns.

The Connecticut River Valley from Massachusetts to Westminster was known as Cigar Valley due to the large amount of tobacco grown here. This success was due to the unique combination of rich soils, our summer weather, and cool autumn fogs.

Older residents remember the days when acres and acres of tobacco surrounded Westminster Village, and many worked in harvesting and packing the crop. High school students had August jobs in the cutting, and several very skilled women were specialists in stripping the leaves from the stalks.

A tobacco barn is special, with a sys-

tem of slats and louvers to control ventilation as the tobacco cures.

Vermont Life described "the leaves impaled by their stalks on laths and hung up in tiers, floor to roof, in the tobacco barns to cure. Here they stay for two months while they go through a succession of bacterial changes - altering in color from green to yellow and then to a deep brown, and achieving just the right degree of brittleness. During this two months' period, the tobacco man watches temperature and humidity in his tobacco barn like a mother watches her child, and like a mother he is often up at night - to close or open the doors of his barn." (from April 1955 issue kindly lent by the Holton family).

Today, there is only one of the old tobacco barns left, near the corner of Sandhill Road. Even now it is impressive at 100' long by 45' wide, with a still-preserved ramp in front where wagons could drive up inside the barn to unload.

Best wishes for a successful harvest in our historic Cigar Valley!

*In photo, 2022 Westminster tobacco on the way to the curing barn
Photo credit: Helma Holton*

WESTMINSTER HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUMMER SCHEDULE



The Westminister Historical Society Museum and the Bradley Law Office (*in photo*) will be open Saturdays from 2 to 4 p.m., between July 3 and Sept. 2.

As we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Westminister Massacre and the American Revolution, it's a good time to remind yourself of Westminister's role in those historic events.

Our current exhibit puts the Massacre in context and makes it vivid with arti-

facts including a board from the old Court House with a musket ball hole through it, and the drum used by the Westminister militia during the uprising.


If you are interested in helping host at the museum or law office, call Pat Haas at 387-5778.

If Saturdays are impossible for you, contact us through our website to see about arranging a special tour.

Kids welcome!

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Page 8 - approx. 2.5"x3.25" - \$175 a year

ABCDEFGHI

BF CELEBRATES PRIDE MONTH & LOCAL LGBTQ HISTORY

Throughout the month of June, Bellows Falls will once more become a destination for the LGBTQ+ community in New England and beyond.

Classic Film Wednesdays will feature gay-themed films at the historic Bellows Falls Opera House, with the largest screen in the region and where tickets cost \$6 and can be purchased online or at the door with cash/credit card. Don't miss the famous \$5 concessions Triple-Up of popcorn, candy and a drink to complete the classic movie experience.

Films include:

June 7 – *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* - Keene Pride, sponsor

June 14 - *PRIDE* - LGBT Hotline, sponsor

Special guest Welch singer/songwriter, Jon Langford will be at the Flat Iron Cooperative at 5:30 p.m. During the time of the Welsh miner's strikes depicted in the film *PRIDE*, Langford was an angry young man, leader of punk icons The Mekons. Langford is a fount of stories and anecdotes, and is making a special detour to BF to talk about his first-hand experiences participating in many of the protests and concerts depicted in the film. When asked if the events in the movie really happened, he said indeed they did, it was just as stirring as it is shown in the film, and that the movie is one of his favorite films ever.

June 21 – *But I'm A Cheerleader!* - LGBT Hotline, sponsor.

June 28 – *Moonlight* - Windham Antiques and Wunderbar, sponsors.

Visit The Field Center in Rockingham for a Queer T-Dance on Saturday, June 17 from 4 to 10 p.m.

Celebrate at the free community all ages dance on Friday, June 30 from 7:30 p.m. to midnight at the Moose Lodge, with DJ Wade the Great.

Merchants will be participating with special window displays, giveaways and stay open late on Wednesdays for your shopping pleasure.

Gather at Wunderbar before the film for dinner and drinks, or afterward for discussion.

View the photo exhibit of the Andrews Inn founders,

featuring six individuals who persevered for a decade.

Bask in the glow of the canal which will be lit with the colors of the rainbow.

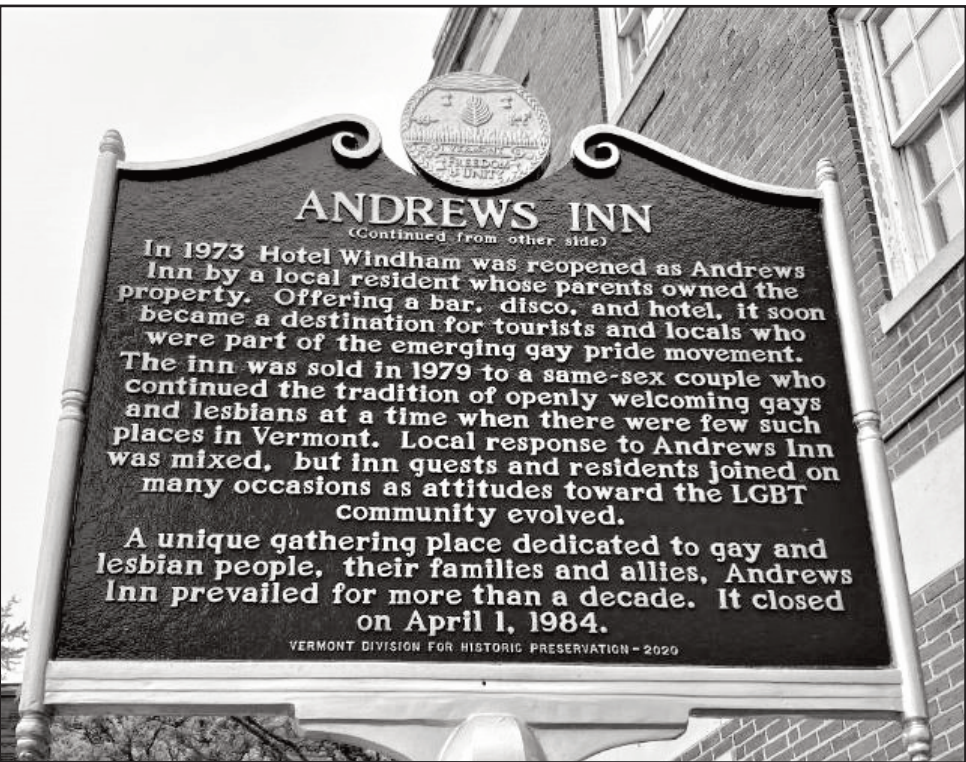
Be sure to pick up your commemorative postcards and pins at Windham Antiques.

Two occasions are of particular note. The historic marker sign that documents the significance of the Andrews Inn will be moved from the back of the building to the street so it can be more readily seen.

On Sunday, June 11, which is also national Making Life Beautiful Day, join the PRIDE Whistlestop Train Tour. From St. Albans to Brattleboro, LGBTQ+ organizations and allies are invited to appear at each of the 10 Amtrak Vermonter train stations to show support and love for the gay community, under siege across the country, by taking a moment to make our Vermont communities more beautiful. And if you're traveling from the north, remain in town for the afternoon before boarding the train to head home at 5:30 p.m.

Bellows Falls' history includes a storied love of trains, one of the first canals to operate in the United States, and the Rockingham Meeting House which dates back to the 1700s and is designated as a National Historic Landmark.

It also holds a place in the hearts of the LGBTQ+ community when remembering the establishment of the Andrews Inn, located in the downtown Windham Hotel



One of the events for Pride Month in Bellows Falls, will be moving the Andrews Inn historic markers to the front of the Windham Hotel.

building from 1973-1984.

Gay rail travelers, many of whom were seeking safety and community would travel by train from the Northeast to the only gay destination in the state for a weekend of dancing and house parties. Described in 1979 as a “cultural cross between Mayberry and Fire Island,” the Andrews Inn had 56 rooms to rent, a bar, juke-box disco and coffee shop.

It was owned by the Moisis family, whose son John had the initial vision which would go on to save the family business.

This article is not a complete list of events. For up to date information on all the June Pride events in BF, check online at www.bellowsfallspride.com.

NEWS FROM THE TOWN GARAGE - GREEN UP REPORT, PAVING AHEAD

Hello Neighbors,

Green Up efforts went well with volunteers pulling together 104 green up bags, 20 black bags, 6 clear bags, a few chairs, 2 truckloads of tires and 20 gallons of used oil. Thank you all!

The comment was made that the State pays for this, that is false, the State offers no money for green up, it comes out of taxes. So when we get new tires it is a lot cheaper to get rid of them at the tire store than dump them beside the road. Pay now or pay later, it still costs.

On the paving schedule for this summer is Gage St., Church Ave., Oak Hill, Alden St., Grout Ave. and the Westminster West Road from Beebe Rd. west to Cross Rd. Grout Ave. and Alden St. will be a full depth reclaim, the others will be milled and paved with any water shut offs and sewer manholes being raised to proper height.

Catch basins along 121 in North Westminster are going

to be replaced with concrete structures due to the fact the old brick ones are failing and becoming unsafe. The thought is to pave from the 121 bridge over the Saxtons River back to the Bellows Falls line while the bridge is under construction and go from the bridge to Saxtons River the next year. In the next few weeks I will be working on an updated paving schedule and projected cost in order to come up with a realistic budget that will help keep us on track in the future.

At the town meeting tax payers asked that FEMA reimbursement be put back into the highway budget, there was a discussion on where and on April 26th the select board moved \$200,000 into highway to be used on all roads. A portion of that will be used on North Westminster catch basin upgrade and paving from Beebe to Cross Rd., we also purchased 8,000 yds. of 1-1/4 gravel to help replace what was lost to plowing and the rest will go towards

next year's paving.

Back in May we went to the American Public Works Association's Vermont Municipal Equipment Show and Field day where we were able to touch base with suppliers and sales reps, see the latest and greatest and get up to date pricing and also explore solutions to early thaw snow plowing and asphalt maintenance as well as competitions in snow plowing and excavator and backhoe operations, in which I was proud to say that I came in second place only 1.50 points behind the winner, until Corey pointed out that I was just 1st place loser and I should simmer down. Nonetheless, good time had by all and a good representation made by Westminster.

Thank you all,
Chuck & Crew

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met May 3rd in person and via WebEx with President Lori Larue presiding. The following attended in person: Lori Larue, Pete Harrison, Pat Goodell, Kathy Elliot, Doug Oftedahl and director Donna Dawson. Those attending via WebEx were Miriam Lanata, Don Dawson, Cindy Moses and Regina Borden.

The board welcomed two new members who were elected to 3 year terms each, Nancy Dalzell, a past member and Fran Waldron.

Programs & Services Provided in APRIL 2023

Meals-on-Wheels: During April we had another new recipient start meals. WC volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 27 different people. Those in need of weekend meals received two frozen meals each Friday. The First Congo. Church made treats to give out in honor of Easter and spring.

Transportation Program: In April, two rides were given for medical appointments. Other deliveries were made to drop off supplies.

Healthy Aging Programs: Both of our Strong Living exercise classes, (Karen W. and Ronnie F.; instructors), are happening two times per week on Zoom. A Gentle Yoga class is also being offered online as well. The new Tai Chi class is happening on

Tuesday's at the Institute.

Assistance and Referrals: Volunteers picked up prescriptions at local pharmacies and delivered them one time in April. Volunteers also dropped off monthly pet food to 7 residents participating in the Foxy Fund program through Senior Solutions.

Medical Equipment – In April we loaned out 8 pieces of equipment; had 7 pieces returned; and received a large donation of supplies which we shared with the B.F. Senior Center.

Community Nurse Program – Our Nurse is on hiatus from mid-March until early May.

Westminster Cares welcomes donations throughout the year for anyone wishing to honor or remember a loved one of a friend.

Donations Received in April & May 2023

In memory of Laura Leonard from Nancy Dalzell.

In memory of Lori Miller from Wendy Cross

In memory of Roger & Natalie Patrick from Bill Smidutz

In loving memory of Mary Brandt from:Barbara Angers, Mark and Diana Damon, Mary Griswold, Hugh & Betty Haggerty, Jane (Muzzey) Kirkpatrick, B.F.U.H.S. Class of 1950.

In loving memory of Claudia Giese from: Diane Conklin, Nancy Dalzell, Claire Greene, and Pete & Judy Harrison.

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Smith College & Orchids

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Recently a friend invited me to go with her to visit the Botanic Garden at Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. I have been to the annual bulb show which occurs from early to mid- March when the outside gardens are only beginning. Each time I have said, “I must come back in a few weeks to see the outside gardens.” This time I made it.

What impressed me the most was a huge old ginkgo tree and the rock garden that was full of wildflowers, also call ephemerals. Everything was labeled so identifying was easy and what a show of early flowers.

Back inside again, we enjoyed looking at all the orchids which are the largest family of plants in the entire world. There are between 25,000 and 30,000 different species. Ten thousand of these can be found in the tropics. We noticed some of them were growing on bark on the wall.

The majority of the orchids found on the continent are in Africa. Some of them may weigh up to a ton with petals as long as 30” while others can be the size of a nickel.

We purchase orchids at nurseries or box stores. Box stores often don’t understand how to care for plants. Orchids are found growing wild in the tropics like Indonesia or the Philippines and they spend a long time in tightly packed crates before they reach our country. Growing in the tropics means that orchids are accustomed to heat, a great deal of humidity, rain and moving air. Thus, their growing season is determined by rainy and dry seasons and not by summer and winter.

Many ceramic, hand thrown pottery or brass planters



Orchid photos by Don Clark, above, and David Parent.



that the box stores use don’t have drainage holes. It is common to use a plastic pot with holes that sits inside the decorated pot. Many times, anyone buying the orchid doesn’t realize that the plastic pot needs to be removed for proper watering.

Although there are many types of orchids, the five that are recommended for beginners are Cattleya (corsage orchid), Dendrobium (dens, spray orchid), Oncidium (dancing ladies), Paphiopedilum (lady’s slippers) and Phalaenopsis (Moth orchids).

The orchid I have had for about 3 years is a Phalaenopsis orchid. When it was given to me I knew I had to brush up on growing it. Being from the old-school, I depended on my houseplant books and the books I borrowed from the library.

A good one was “The Complete Houseplant Survival Manual“ by Barbara Pleasant. Another was Tovah Martin’s “The Unexpected Houseplant.” What I like about

Tovah’s book is her no-nonsense approach. She doesn’t have any more patience with coddling a houseplant than I do.

Most orchids grow best in bright, indirect light from a south window. Mine grows in a southeast window with good light but not in the sun. It is happy there and has been blossoming for some time so I leave it alone. Orchids require a nighttime temperature of 10 to 15 degrees cooler than the daytime temperature.

The temperature in my house is just under 60 at night and almost 70 in the daytime. Orchids really prefer a temperature of 70 to 80. I am tempted to move mine to my gazebo for the summer but I am afraid it would not like the change in temperature.

We have been told that orchids are hard to grow but if we pay attention to their needs, they are fairly easy to grow. They stay blossomed for many months at a time.

A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER : “ONE OF GOD’S NOBLEMEN”

by Jessie Haas

One of Westminster's most influential sons during the Civil War was Dr. Elisha Harris. He was born here in 1824, grew up here, and pursued medical studies while helping out on his father's Westminster farm. In 1849, He graduated from the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

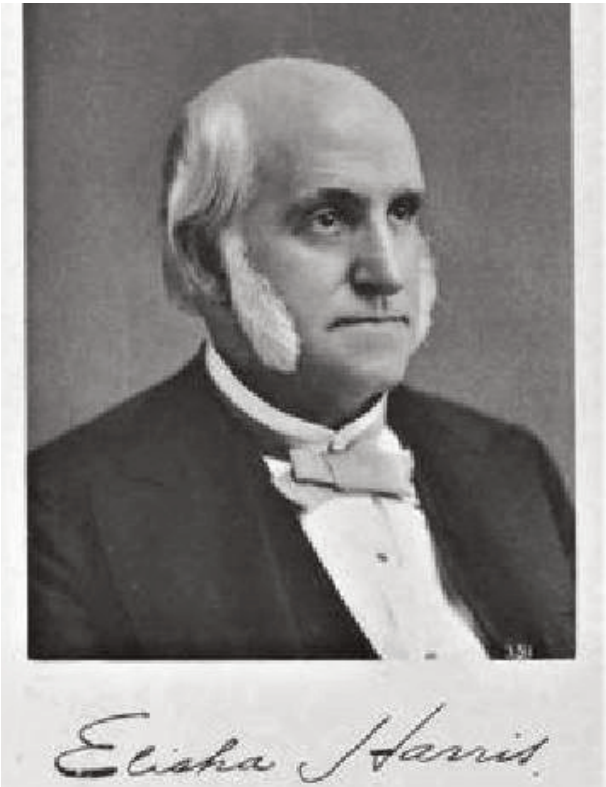
By catering to the rich and mighty, a doctor could rise in wealth and status. But most of Dr. Harris's working life was spent among the poor of New York, many of them Irish and German immigrants living crammed together in squalid tenements.

He entered public service in 1855 when he was appointed superintendent and head physician at the Quarantine Hospital in Staten Island, New York. In 1859 he supervised construction of a floating hospital which anchored below the Narrows.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, and following the early battles, when it became clear that the war would not be over by Christmas (no war is ever over by Christmas), pressure mounted for better care for sick and wounded soldiers. The United States had no system for their medical care, and countless unnecessary deaths were caused by sickness and neglect.

Women especially pushed for some system, and in response, several influential men including Dr. Harris, Wolcott Gibbs, and Frederick Law Olmstead established a national Sanitary Commission, a private relief agency created by Congress in 1861. It raised more than \$25 million in cash and in-kind donations (\$442 million in 2023 dollars) to care for sick and wounded soldiers, and worked on improving conditions in army camps so fewer soldiers became ill.

Westminster lost several soldiers to camp illnesses during the war; this was a significant cause of mortality,



but less in the North than in the South, as the Confederacy did not have a Sanitary Commission. Harris was a Commissioner and directed the Medical Committee.

One huge problem was transport for wounded soldiers. Then as now, swift access to medical care was essential to survival, and the commission worked hard to establish a rail system. But travel in freight cars was excruciatingly painful for wounded soldiers.

Following the first battle of Fredericksburg, Harris himself rode in a freight car transporting wounded soldiers, and witnessed their suffering. During the trip he sketched out a solution, a system for hanging stretchers

on India rubber rings to absorb the shock. A car was outfitted and donated by the Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad in October 1862. The railroad would go on to build 14 more cars before the end of the war.

The Harris Car allowed attendants to go from car to car (impossible with freight cars), and the rubber rings did absorb much of the shock, though the sometimes bouncy ride probably made for some motion sickness. Another innovation; the stretchers were removable, so patients could be loaded, transported, and unloaded on the same stretcher.

The Harris rail ambulance was exported to Europe and used through the Franco-Prussian War. Harris received a bronze medal for it in Paris in 1867, and a silver medal from the Societe aux Blesses.

After the war Harris returned to New York, where he volunteered to supervise a sanitary survey of the city, served on the Metropolitan Board of Health, and was registrar of records and vital statistics. In 1869, his survey of New York tenement buildings resulted in making windows compulsory for dark bedrooms; over 50,000 windows for light and ventilation were installed in the city.

He was a prolific author on contagious disease issues, almost the Anthony Fauci of his day. Harris was also New York's first state agent for reformed convicts. On his death in 1884 one of these ex-convicts said, "I'm sorry he's gone; he was one of God's noblemen. It was his words with me that first led me to abandon a criminal life and try to live honestly."

Was it the words of a Westminster pastor that directed Harris to a life of service? Answers may possibly be found in his multi-volume Sanitary Memoir of the War, or in his archived papers. He deserves to be remembered for his contributions to health and welfare.

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 June 13 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 April: 34
- Number of calls through May 19th: 22
- Number of calls calendar year to date: 210
- Number of calls fiscal year to date: 479

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting May 2nd with President Eyvonne Martin presiding. There were 32 members present and 12 members excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department.

Emergency responses: April was another busy month with 34 total calls. And it looks like we will be well over 500 for the fiscal year ending June 30th. Here is a breakdown for the April calls: 4 mutual aid, 1 to Alstead and 3 to Putney; 20 res-

cue/medical; 2 1st alarms; 1 fuel leak; 1 brush fire; 2 motor vehicle accidents; 1 gas stove issue; 2 false alarms/ box alarms; 1 for tree on wires/power line down.

Training: The second Tuesday of each month is rescue training and the third Tuesday is regular training. Currently the two sessions are being combined to concentrate on what is called “all hazard training.” Local police, area fire departments and the school systems are participating in the program. Contact any fire department officer for more details.

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. Also when crossing a street in a crosswalk, don’t assume the driver of the vehicle coming at you will give you the right of way. They may not see you or they may be distracted or not paying attention.

You are responsible for own safety even though pedestrians have the right of way in cross walks.

Filters fans and coils: It’s the time of year for cleaning filters on air conditioners, blowing out or vacuuming fans and cleaning the coils under or on the back of refrigerators and freezers. With the warm weather approaching they will work much better and more efficiently when clean. Also if you have rain gutters they may need cleaning.

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

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

Donations in May: Bruce and Susan Wallace, Bruce Mickle, Sarah and Michael Doran.

As always, we would like to thank the members of the community for their continued support of the fire department. Check us out on our website www.westminsterfireandrescue.org

WESTMINSTER CONSERVATION COMMISSION SPONSORS SPRING EPHEMERAL WILDFLOWER WALK

By Rachael Shaw

A small but enthusiastic group of spring wildflower enthusiasts enjoyed ideal conditions for a walk on May 6. We met at the Westminster West School parking lot and carpoled to the Pinnacle Association's Holden Trail, near the end of Windmill Hill Road North.

Wandering leisurely up the first mile or less of the trail, we found a gentle wind, mild temperatures, bubbling streams, tiny leaves on the trees, and almost 20 kinds of woodland wildflowers at their peak. This perfect day followed nearly 2 weeks of wet and cold weather, so it was especially appreciated.

The varieties of ephemeral wildflowers and other special plants spotted were as follows: downy yellow violet, little leaf buttercup, blue cohosh, trout lily, white baneberry, wild oats, sweet white violet, common blue violet, purple trillium, maidenhair fern, toothwort, hepatica, rattlesnake fern, foamflower, jack in the pulpit, sedge, Canada mayflower, white rattlesnake root, and squirrel corn.

Their names are almost as enjoyable as seeing them. Each plant has a unique place and set of interrelationships with specific pollinators and within the forest's ecology, fascinating! The flowers tend to proliferate in the sweet soils of mixed deciduous woodlands. These delicate but hardy blooms appear for just a couple short weeks between snowmelt and the full shade of the forest canopy.

If this article sparks your interest, mark your calendar to check out the Holden Trail around the first week of May, or join the Westminster Conservation Commission for our annual ephemeral wildflower walk



next year. Please note, apologies for advertising this year's walk as a Mother's Day weekend event in the title of the press release. It was actually the weekend before Mother's Day. Whenever you see the tiny leaves just emerging on the trees, that is when the Spring ephemeral wildflowers are blooming.

WESTMINSTER CARES GARDEN TOUR JULY 8&9



The Westminster Cares Garden Tour celebrates its 20th anniversary this year on July 8 and 9. The centerpiece of the tour is Gordon and Mary Hayward's garden in Westminster West.

In addition to the Haywards', the Westminster Center School garden, Hope Roots Flower Farm and a very special private garden in Putney will be on the tour.

The tour will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. each day. Tickets are \$16, or \$30 for two, and are good for both days of the tour.

Several special programs are planned. Eric and Ines Bass, founders of Sandglass Theater, will present two short puppetry pieces on Saturday at the Haywards' garden. At the Westminster Institute, landscape designer Julie Moir-Messervy will give a garden design

talk and workshop on Saturday, and on Sunday there will be a bee-keeping workshop by Nancy Frye. Entry to these special events is included with your ticket.

Lunch and beverages will be available for purchase in the garden café under tents at the Haywards. Morning Star Perennials & Trees will have plants for sale at the Hayward garden.

Tickets will be available online as of June 1 at www.westminstercares.org. They can also be purchased throughout the tour, at the Hayward's garden, (McKinnon Rd.) or at the Westminster Institute, (3534 U.S. Route 5).

For more information, visit www.westminstercares.org, email westminstercaresvt@gmail.com or call 802-722-3607.

LIVE CONCERT SUPPORTS WW CHURCH

Enjoy a local, outdoor concert and help support the Westminster West Church at the same time!

The Seymour Sisters: Beth Spicer, Laura & Betsy Bryant Williams and Kate Wolff, will be performing on Tuesday, July 4 from 5 to 7 p.m. at Laura and Betsy's house, 1197 Westminster West Rd, in Westminster. They will be joined by special guests, Jon and Emma Bliss.

Bring your chair, a cold beverage, a picnic and sun umbrella and enjoy an eclectic mix of Old Time, Folk, Country and Gospel music in a lovely, country setting. There will also be other edibles for sale! Suggested donation of \$10 - 25, all



proceeds to support the Westminster West Church.

For details contact Betsy or Laura at laladust@gmail.com, or (802) 387-2765.

MONTHLY CONTRADANCING IN PUTNEY

Putney Contradance meets monthly on the last Sunday of the month in the historic Pierce Hall in East Putney, teaching each dance to ages 6 - 86.

All are welcome to drop in and give it a try to live

music and a warm welcome. Many moves are the same as in Square Dancing.

For more information contact Tom Prunier at 387-5875. K95 masks required; bring your water bottle.

MEET YOUR LEGISLATORS AT RFPL

Drop by the Rockingham Free Public Library in Bellows Falls to chat with your Windham County Senators Nader Hashim and Wendy Harrison and your Windham-3 (Brookline, Rockingham and Westminster) House

Representatives Michelle Bos-Lun and Leslie Goldman the third Saturdays of the month from 10:30-11:30 a.m.

For details contact Bos Lun at mboslun@leg.state.vt.us or 802 289-2495.

REMEMBRANCES

FRANK FARNSWORTH, 74
7/15/1948 – 4/26/2023
SAXTONS RIVER, VT

CLAUDIA J. GIESE, 72
8/15/1951 - 5/9/2023
WESTMINSTER, VT

GERALDINE "GERRY" KUNKLE, 92
3/5/1931 - 3/23/2023
PUTNEY, VT

BYRON J. PARRY, 93
6/6/1929 – 4/24/2023
PERKINSVILLE, VT
FORMERLY WESTMINSTER

SUSAN R. WILKINS, 64
1959 – 4/5/2023
SAXTONS RIVER, VT

BF WOMAN'S CLUB TEA



With the excitement of the previous day's coronation of King Charles III still in the air, the Bellows Falls Woman's Club hosted an afternoon tea May 7 as a fundraiser for its Amy Searles scholarship fund.

The sold-out event at the Masonic Temple featured sweets, savories, scones, bottomless tea cups and an array of fascinators and other fancy hats.

Prizes for the hats were awarded in adult and youth categories, with Marsha Austin's butterfly headpiece (above in photo) taking first place for adults, and four youthful designers receiving prizes for their creations.

The Searles Scholarship is given by the BFWC each year to a graduating senior at Bellows Falls Union High School who plans to pursue training in nursing or another health-care-related field. Searles was hired by the BFWC in 1904 as the area's first district nurse.

The BFWC was organized in 1901 and became a member of the General Federation of Women's Clubs in 1913. Its motto is Concern, Courage, Commitment – A Better World for All. More information can be found at bellowsfallswomansclub.weebly.com or on its Facebook page.

EAST PARISH ELECTIONS

The Westminster East Parish elected Dave Murray as president and Jim Grout as vice president at its annual meeting on May 9. Tine Biolsi was re-elected clerk and Jim Matteau, treasurer.

Jim Grout was re-elected to a four-year term on the Prudential Committee. Kevin Hughes and Jim Matteau were re-elected to six-year terms as trustees.

Tim Harty and Susan Harlow are also Prudential Committee members. The Prudential Committee and the Board of Trustees form the Board of Managers for Westminster East Parish (Westminster Institute and Butterfield Library). The board also adopted an FY2024 budget.

Did you know that the Westminster Institute facilities are available to rent at reasonable rates? We have a large auditorium, great for meetings, classes, parties, dances, reunions, and other get-togethers. Our North Room is available for smaller gatherings. The kitchen downstairs can be used for food preparation.

For questions or to rent the Institute, contact Jim Matteau at jimmatteau@gmail.com.

PUTNEY COMMUNITY OUTDOOR SING ALONG

Join us for a free series of outdoor Community Sing Alongs at the Putney Public Library from 7- 8 p.m., on Thursday, June 15th, July 20th and August 17th.

These community sing-alongs will feature a printed songbook of well-known songs from many traditions: folk, golden oldies, gospel, Beatles, old pop and rock and show tunes. Participants will take turns choosing what to sing; binders with lyrics will be provided. Putney resident Rich Grumbine will lead the singing and provide guitar accompaniment.

The sing along will occur outside behind the library. Be dressed to be outdoors and bring insect repellent as needed.

For more information, please contact Rich Grumbine at richgrumbine1@gmail.com

Putney Public Library is located at 55 Main St.

Anthropogenic Climate Change Discussion at RFPL

On Thursday, May 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Rockingham Library, Professor Guy McPherson will facilitate a free discussion about anthropogenic climate change.

Included will be consideration of climate change as an existential threat, along with actions we can take as individuals and as a community.

Dr. McPherson is an internationally recognized speaker, award-winning scientist, and the world’s leading authority on abrupt climate change leading to near-term human extinction.

Professor Emeritus of conservation biology at the University of Arizona, McPherson lived off-grid for more than a decade.

His published works include more than a dozen books and hundreds of scholarly articles. Professor McPherson has been featured on television and radio and in several documentary films.

He is a blogger and cultural critic who speaks to general audiences around the globe, and to scientists, students, ed-



ucators, and not-for-profit and business leaders who seek their best available options when confronting Earth’s cataclysmic changes.

In photo, Professor Guy McPherson.

Mystery Photo

The event pictured here occurred in 1966. Who is this lady and where did she work?

Last week we wrote that “It will likely take an old time resident to identify who is driving this sleigh in this 1968 Westminster photo.” Norman Wright wrote us correctly that it was Ted King driving a pair of ponies. Norm added, “one of which, the black and white one named Prince, I bought from Ted and he became a champion ring pony.”

A few more thoughts from Mary Scherbatskoy on the recent Mystery Photo of repairs to the WW Church. “It seems that the Westerly Meeting House was in use by 1792 (per Township No.1) and became the present Westminster West Congregational church. It burnt to the ground in 1829 and was rebuilt. It was raised to add the understory with kitchen etc. in 1874. The church was mostly destroyed



by fire on Dec. 18, 1988 and, following intense community fund-raising, was rebuilt and completed in 1993, although there were not enough funds to rebuild the steeple. Westminster West Library has copies of the church history done by Mary Mitchell, and photos/clippings of the 1988 fire.”

Westminster Happenings

We’ve updated all the happenings entries. Please let us know when things change or when something should be added. Thank you!

Faith Community

The First Congregational Church of Westminster

As stated last month, the First Congregational Church has a new Pastor. We have welcomed Rev. Richard O'Donnell into the fold, and in return been regaled with wonderful, heartwarming sermons. We welcome all to come and join us in worship on Sunday mornings at 10:00. The following is a list of church events for May.

The Congregational Church of Westminster West

Worships every Sunday at 10 a.m. We are using Facebook Live to stream our weekly services. Just go on Facebook to the church's page. If you are with us in person we ask you to wear a mask when conditions warrant it. (Masks are available at the church.) We are an Open and Affirming Church and fully accessible.

On the first Sunday of every month we celebrate Holy Communion. For those watching on Facebook, please provide your own elements for Holy Communion. On the second Sunday, the congregation collects a special offering for the food shelf at Our Place in Bellows Falls. Each dollar donated buys \$10 of food for Our Place from the Vermont Food Bank.

Our Pastor is Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno. She keeps office hours (either in the office itself or by visiting parishioners) on Thursday afternoons and is available by appointment at other times. She keeps Mondays as her Sabbath observation. She can be reached at susiewt@gmail.com com or (802)579-8356.

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 a.m. with Rev. Elaine Bomford. www.walpoleunitarian.org. First Sunday of each month is Circle Sunday with visiting presenters.

United Church of Bellows Falls

Come join us at the United Church of Bellows Falls! Our worship service starts at 10 a.m. every Sunday at 8 School Street. All are welcome to attend – no matter who you are or where you come from.

Following the service, we host a time of refreshments where you can get to know other members of our community. We offer many other services throughout the week, so there’s something for all.

If you have any questions about our church or want to learn more, feel free to call us at (802) 463-4323 or come visit us. Also find us on Facebook! We’re always happy to meet new people and welcome them into our church family.

Activities

Gentle Yoga with Lisa Nigro
On line - call Westminster Cares 722-3607

Living Strong with Ronnie Friedman, Karen Walter
On line - Mondays & Thursdays 722-3607

Tai Chi new beginners’ class forming
Tuesday 11 a.m. - noon at Westminster Institute
Call Westminster Cares 802-722-3607

Souper Wednesdays
Homemade soups at Congregational Church Rt. 5
Noon - 2 p.m. By donation
For deliveries Tina 802-376-7330

Putney Contradance
Last Sunday of month at 3 p.m.
Pierce's Hall, 121 East Putney Falls Road
Vaccinations, boosters & K95 masks
contradanceputney@gmail.com

Scottish Country Dance
Not meeting at present 802-387-2601

Knitting Together
An Enjoyable Experience! Wednesdays 1- 3 p.m.
Village Square Booksellers, Bellows Falls
Bring your needles, we have yarn and casual instruction - all products donated locally.
Contact: Caroline 802-463-4653

Melody Mornings
Music for Toddlers & Parents
A Joyful Mix of singalong, rhythm & more
Thursdays 10:30-11:30 a.m. Westminster West Library
Free but parent attendance required
Contact: Sarah or Stu 443-756-1274

Meetings

Town of Westminster - 802-722-4091

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 by ZOOM every 4th Thursday at 7:15 p.m.

Development Review Board 1st Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall.

The American Rescue Plan Act Committee is scheduled to meet on the third Wednesday of each month, provided there is content to discuss. The meetings will start at 6 p.m. at the Westminster Institute. Interested community members are encouraged to attend.
Contact pebanik@comcast.net.

Butterfield Library hours are Mon., Tues. and Thur. 1 - 6 p.m. and Sat 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Westminster Fire and Rescue Dept. 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. 802-722-3178

911 Committee as needed

Westminster Cares Board 802-722-3607
1st Wed., 4:30 p.m., Westminster Institute on-line & in person

Westminster Historical Society Board
3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m. Town Hall 2nd floor

Westminster Institute Board
2nd Tues. 6:30 p.m., Westminster Institute jimmatteau@gmail.com

Westminster Gazette westminsternews@gmail.com
3rd Monday, 5 p.m., Westminster Institute

Westminster West Library Board 802-387-4682
2nd Wed. 7 p.m. at the WW Library
Lib Hours Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 1- 6 p.m., Saturday 10 - 2 p.m.

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association
3rd Thurs. 7 p.m., Main St. Arts, Saxtons River whptrails@gmail.com

The Living Earth Action Group
most Fridays at 5 p.m.
Westminster West Congregational Church
Contact: Caitlin Adair pcadair@sover.net

Deadline:

The Deadline for

the July 2023 Issue of the

Westminster Gazette is

Wednesday, June 21

Publication Date is

Wednesday, June 28

To Contact the

Westminster Gazette

E-mail:

westminsternews@gmail.com

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NATIONAL SOCIETY OF NE WOMEN VISIT KURN HATTIN

After their annual Congress in Plymouth, Massachusetts, a diverse group from The National Society of New England Women visited Kurn Hattin Homes for Children, whom they’ve supported since 1950. They were given a special musical performance by the children, dinner, and a tour of the school and campus.

The NSNEW bring women together of New England ancestry to engage in patriotic, educational, and charitable work. There are over 40 local colonies nationwide and member-at-large status is available for those who reside in areas where there is no colony.

Visiting were from New Haven Colony, CT: Lynn Alexander and Jennie Rehnberg; Deacon Jacob Roote Colony, Colorado: Heather Miller and Susan Cameron; Chicago Colony: Gayle Coan, Teri Ellen Rogers, Jane Schleinzer, Honorary President General; Jessica Schleinzer, and Lorna Wright; Sarah T. Seamans Colony: Samatha Seamans-Frizzell and Maragaret Superneau; Diamond of Arkansas Colony: Linda White and Jayne Spear; Abigail Adams Colony, Massachusetts: Marla Suter; District of Columbia Colony, Barbara Carpenter; Sarah Josepha Buell Hale Colony,



Georgia; Shannon Logue, NSNEW President General; Deacon John Tenney Colony, Texas: Pat Williams; Virginia Company Colony, Margaret Stromberg; and Wisconsin Voyageurs Colony, Karen Wills.

Kurn Hattin Homes deeply appreciates the devoted

support of all the colonies, and the many individual NSNEW members who have given generously both during their lifetime and through a bequest to the Homes.

ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE ASSOCIATION SPRING GATHERING



A Rockingham Meeting House Association Spring meet-up was held on May 21 at the Rockingham Meeting House.

Since 1911 (*photos*) the Association has worked with the town select board to steward the building that is the birthplace of the town, now a National Historic Landmark and Vermont’s oldest public building. The “old town barn” is open to the public every summer through the fall.

Both public and private events are regularly held throughout the season.

Fueled with major funding from the National Park Service Save America’s Treasures program, and matched with support from the town and from private donations, the meeting house is at the beginning of a major conservation and restoration project. A vigorous RMH Association stands at the heart of the conservation program to steward the beloved building to ensure it has more centuries of life.

The purpose of the May 21st gathering was to review the Association’s future course in advocating for and raising funds for the conservation program as well as participate in restoration decision-making and educational



programming. A new Board was elected, empowered to elect officers.

Information on the progress of the preservation project was available, but this meeting was not intended to be a detailed review of preservation plans.

Everyone who is interested in the future of this landmark should be convinced that this is a chance to step forward.

ADVANCED CARE PLANNING

Westminster Cares and Taking Steps Brattleboro will co-sponsor a presentation on Advanced Care Planning on Thursday, June 8 in the North Room of the Westminster Institute from 2:00-3:30 p.m. It will be led by a trained facilitator.

What is Advanced Care Planning? It’s a process of creating a written healthcare plan (Advanced Directive) that tells others what you would want if you couldn’t tell them yourself. The presentation will help you understand the process, map out your individual steps, and get this vital task completed.

To reserve a seat, call Donna Dawson in the office at 722-3607. Space is limited and masks will be required. Light refreshments, (coffee and cookies), will be served. There is no cost for this presentation.

If you have completed an Advanced Directive in the past and need to update it, let us know. We are planning a separate workshop for that purpose.

SURVIVALISTS’ MEMOIR DISCUSSION AT RFPL

Pick up a copy of the memoir “Educated” by Tara Westover at Rockingham Library’s front desk today. Then join the discussion on Thursday June 15 at 6 p.m. on Rockingham Library’s main floor.

Tara Westover was 17 before she set foot in a classroom. Born to survivalists in the mountains of Idaho, Tara prepared for the end of the world by stockpiling home-canned peaches and sleeping with her “head for the hills bag.”

In the summer she stewed herbs for her mother. In the winter she salvaged metal in her father’s junkyard. Throughout her childhood, Tara never saw a doctor or set foot in school.

When Tara becomes determined to expand her world through education, she wavers between her deeply ingrained principle of family loyalty and her desire for a different kind of life.

“Hard to put down” and “very powerful” are some of the comments shared by Rockingham Library’s patrons. Educated is a New York Times Bestseller.

For more information, visit rockinghamlibrary.org, email programming@rockinghamlibrary.org call the Library at (802) 463-4270 or stop by the Library at 65 Westminster St. in Bellows Falls, VT.

ATTEND A COMPASS SCHOOL SENIOR ROUNDTABLE?

We wanted to invite you to consider attending a Compass School senior roundtable meeting next week. Each senior is required to present their graduation portfolio and discuss their readiness for graduation with a gathered committee which includes, among others, an "outside community member"... in other words, someone from outside of our school who can give some outside, "real world" perspective. That is where you come in!

The roundtable meetings last about 90 minutes each, and they will be occurring on May 23, 24, 25, and 26 at 3 and 5 p.m.

If you would be interested in attending one (or more) of these meetings, please reply to alexandrin.zuser@compass-school.org to let us know your availability and we can sign you up for a slot. Also, feel free to pass this on to other potentially interested community members. These roundtable meetings tend to be highly rewarding and educationally interesting for all participants. Thank you for considering it!

Here is more detailed description of the roundtables:

The seniors at Compass School will be engaging in their culminating graduation roundtable meetings on the afternoons of May 23-26. 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 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 senior advisor alexandrin.zuser@compass-school.org.



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**JUNE BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
RAMP**



For over 25 years, The Rockingham Arts and Museum Project's (RAMP) mission has evolved: integrating artists and the arts in the long-term sustainability of the community by creating effective partnerships that support a creative economy and develop programs that encourage cultural and physical accessibility. RAMP's mantra: Art Makes a Difference! www.ramp-vt.org

The following events and projects are on RAMP's Summer Radar Screen:

Bellows Falls Garage, newly renovated. Commercial and residential space available. Art, history and affordable housing come together on Canal Street. Enjoy downtown living in this 27-unit building. Rents include heat and hot water. Affordable rental rates. Income limits apply.

Classic Film Wednesday nights at the Bellows Falls Opera House. June movies celebrating LGBTQT:

Priscilla Queen of Desert 6/7
Pride 6/14
But I'm a Cheerleader 6/21
Moonlight 6/28

Orchard Hill Breadworks Pizza Nights. Tuesdays: June through August - Pizza night is a weekly celebration of food and friendship on a beautiful hilltop farm in Alstead, NH.

Crêpe Nights at Scott Farm in Brattleboro
June 14th with The Windham County Humane Society

July 12th with RAMP (Rockingham Art and Museum Project)

August 9th with Sandglass Theater
September 20th with The Retreat Farm
Bellows Falls Festival BFF, June 10
Live music, food and drink trucks
Stage 33 Live:

6/18/23, Sunday: Pat Daddona Album Release Celebration (3:00 matinee)

FactTV Film Workshops at Bellows Falls Opera House:

June 17th, July 10-13, & July 17-19

The Falls Area Community Television Film Workshop beckons you! If you have a passion for filmmaking and are excited to dive deep into the process, we invite you to take part in our FACT TV workshop.

In photo, RAMP Founder Robert McBride stands in front of the Canal Street entrance to the nearly-completed BF Garage new housing facility, one of many community projects RAMP has supported.

EDIBLE PERENNIAL GARDENING



At Rockingham Free Public Library on Saturday June 3 at 1 p.m., landscaper and naturalist John Root will discuss how to establish and maintain a variety of trees, shrubs, vines, canes, and herbaceous perennials that can be grown in New England for bountiful harvests of fruits, nuts, and vegetables.

Participants learn how to establish and care for these plants using organic methods of cultivation. Nutritional and medicinal benefits of the plants are explained as well. Questions and comments are welcome throughout the presentation, and handouts with a list of edible perennial plant species, resources for further study, and recommended plant nurseries are distributed at the conclusion of the program.

For more information, email programming@rockinghamlibrary.org, call (802) 463-4270 or stop by the Library at 65 Westminster St., in Bellows Falls.

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