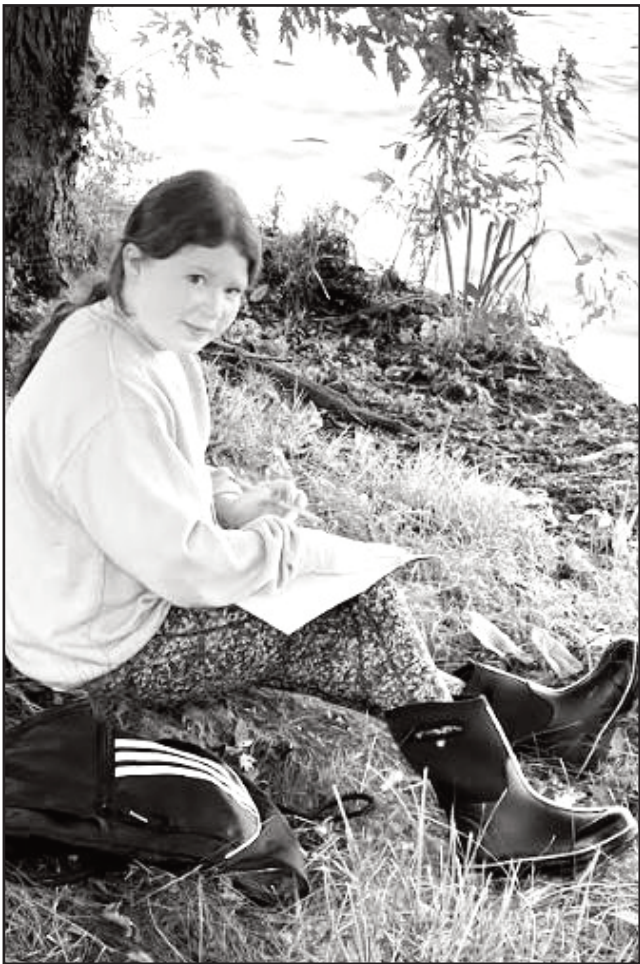
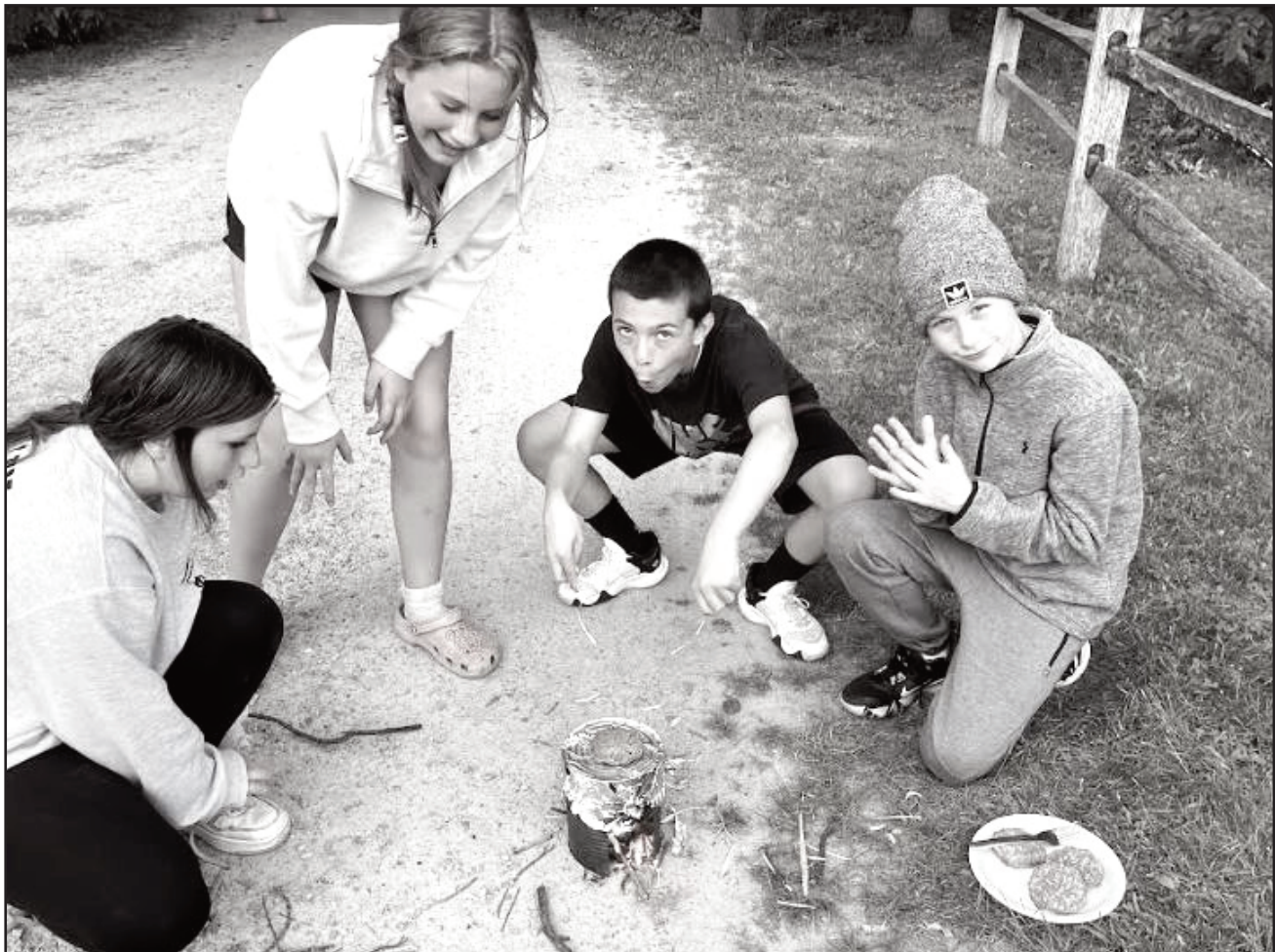


SCHOOL YEAR STARTS WITH KEEWAYDIN TRADITION



By Charlie Hutchison, Westminster School Board
Liz Harty, Principal of Westminster Center School

The new school year has gotten off to a wonderful start. Attendance at Westminster Center School was 94% in September. In the light of a nationwide post-COVID fall in school attendance, this is very good news.

During the first week of October, the 6th grade class attended Keewaydin Environmental Education Center camp in Salisbury, for a week of outdoor learning and community building activities.

This is an annual tradition that goes back at least to when some of the current teachers and staff were in grade school themselves.

The program consisted of a variety of investigations of the local ecosystem - focusing on human impacts on the water cycle in local streams and ponds and marshes – as well as hiking, art projects and a gentle introduction to outdoor camping.

Also at the beginning of October, all students in grades 1 – 5 at WCS took the MAP (Measure of Academic Progress) tests for Math and English Language Arts. MAP tests allow comparison of skill and progress over time and across different schools and states.

They are not used to determine an individual student’s grade. The tests are not timed, but most students complete them in under an hour. Follow up MAP testing with take place in the spring.

Coupled with the new DIBELS assessment of all

students’ reading skills, about 5 minutes per student, the school will have valuable new data to target special instruction and craft curriculum as needed.

Farm and Field Day is coming up on October 31st, at WCS from 9 to 10:45 a.m. There will be learning stations about farming and food production, a horse drawn wagon, races and plenty of trucks and farm equipment for the kids to explore.

At 1:30 p.m. on that same day, the students will don their Halloween costumes and parade from the school up to the Town Hall and back. Please come out along the route to cheer them on.

And speaking of farming, on October 19th the 2nd and 3rd grades went on a field trip to Miller Farm in Vernon.

And from now on all milk served at WCS will be organic and sourced from the Miller farm – thus fulfilling several of the goals of the food program at WCS: that wherever possible the food served be locally and sustainably produced and of the highest quality available. And no more half full paper cartons in the waste stream. Children fill a cup with whatever amount of fresh milk they like.

Meanwhile the school board has issued a request for proposals for the construction of a new open-sided pavilion in the space behind the school.

This is part of our overall push for more students’ learning time to take place outdoors.

If you know anyone who might be interested in submitting a proposal, please contact Nicole Barnett



Nicole.barnett@wnesu.com for details.

In photos, 6th grade class students who attended Keewaydin Environmental Education Center camp for a week of outdoor learning and community building activities, early in October.

FUEL ASSISTANCE OPPORTUNITY
APPLY OCTOBER 30TH



Senior Solutions is hosting a Seasonal Fuel Assistance drop-in application opportunity in Westminster.

On Monday, Oct. 30 from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. at the Butterfield Library, in the Westminster Institute.

Be sure to bring your fuel dealer and

Green Mountain Power account numbers to complete applications.

If your household income falls within these limits, you may be eligible::

1 person household: \$2,248
2 person household: \$3,040
3 person household: \$3,833

SEVCA SEEKS BOARD MEMBERS

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Are you an elected official who has a heart for effective and accountable social services?
Are you committed to alleviating, and, ultimately, to eliminating poverty in our communities?
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Windsor or Windham counties to consider joining our Board of Directors.

Board service supports low and moderate wealth community members, and it can be an excellent way to gain professional development skills while meeting and working with others who share a commitment to social justice.

You will attend one board meeting per month & one or two committee meetings monthly or bi-monthly. Meetings are conducted primarily via Zoom.

Board Applicants must be willing to submit to criminal background checks and offender registry checks; requirements imposed by our federally-funded grants upon all of our employees, vendor contractors, and volunteers.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more, please contact SEVCA at sevca@sevca.org or 800-464-9951.

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Our Monthly Community Newspaper November 2023 Vol. 19 No. 11

Westminster Gazette

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OUR WORKING LANDSCAPE: IT ALL DEPENDS ON THE WEATHER, PART II

Westminster has many farms and businesses which work the land to create products 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.



By Mary Scherbatskoy

The Freeze and The Rain in the summer of 2023 seriously affected farmers in Westminster who grow food for people. (Oct. Gazette) We are now coming into the winter season when being able to feed livestock is very important. Summer grass and field corn are both preserved to keep over the winter in different ways, and suffered different problems from The Rain.

Farmers make dry hay, haylage or silage depending on the needs of their animals.

Dry hay is just that, grass dried in the sun to a low enough moisture content that it can be stored without molding or bursting into flames. It will! Dry hay can be made in small square bales or big round ones, and is preferred by horse owners and also for sheep because it is less likely to harbor listeria or other bacteria. Imagine waiting for the sun this summer!

Cattle which have more robust digestive systems can enjoy preserved grass or field corn. Haylage is wilted grass which is compressed into big round bales and then wrapped in plastic to keep the air out. It then ferments slightly or ‘pickles’ and will keep for several years.

Haylage has the advantage that a field can be cut

when young and nutritious; then the field can produce a second or even third or fourth cut in an average year. In case we have average years anymore. With a lot of rain, the grass grew well but the fields became too soft to support the heavy mowing and baling equipment without damage, so later cuts were often delayed or impossible.

Westminster has many acres of field corn to make silage as feed for cattle. Since the entire plant is used, this can be a tricky situation; no field is truly level, so there may be pockets of wet where the stalks got moldy or had other contamination.

Field corn is not baled but compressed into big bunker siloes in the ground which are tightly covered to keep the air out to preserve through fermenting. If moldy corn is put into a bunker silo, it can contaminate the whole thing, so farmers had to pick and choose very carefully as to what parts of



their fields to ensile.

Preserving feed has a long history using many different techniques to defeat the weather and get the animals safely through the winter. What we see in our fields today are modern ways that work most of the time, fortunately.

Thanks to Westminster farmers and vet for this information.

Left, making hay, Harlan Goodhue, c. 1930; and making silage, Livewater Farm, 2023.

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

New Sections Introductory Rates:
A&E Events Section \$50 a month
New & Seasonal Businesses Section \$200 for 3 months

Underwriting Support is a donation of at least \$300 annually and does not include advertising. Underwriters are listed in the box on page 6 each month.

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

On-line at: www.westministervt.org

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Nature Notes - Changing from Summer to Fall

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

It’s always with a twinge of sadness that I change from a summer of being outdoors to a fall of being indoors. Watching hummingbirds dart from their feeders to the flowers on my deck is just a pleasant memory.

My garden is pretty much “put to bed” except for asters and goldenrod left for the pollinators. Several of my shrubs have a few unexpected blossoms that I treasure seeing this late in the season.

My houseplants have moved inside after enjoying the summer in the gazebo. There are several benefits from having them in the gazebo. Spending a lot of time there, I pay attention to their care, mostly watering them when I should and checking for bugs. Bringing them back inside is easy because I don’t have to wash them off and inspect them like I do plants that have been outside on the ground.

Beside the enjoyment of my yard all summer, I also stop every morning at the marsh on my way to or from my morning walk. The Canada geese are gathering, spending the night on the water for protection from predators.

They are never still. They move slowly in a row one way and then back again. I find that very calming while I let my mind wander. Some people meditate and some use medication to find the calmness I get from geese. Maybe I should advertise my way to becoming calm!

When I arrive at the marsh, I wind the windows down and listen to them. They will murmur quietly and then start cackling, indicating some of them will lift off. Churning up the water, they are airborne. The rest will be quiet for a few minutes and then cackling starts again with a few more taking off. This keeps happening until



Buttonbush photos by Don Clark

all are gone.

I don’t usually think of pollinators in the water the same as I do on land. I recently read an article in Northern Woodlands, written by Colby Galliher, on “Buttonbush is a Boon for Wildlife” and realized that Buttonbush grows in this marsh.

Buttonbush, while a non-native, can contain up to 400 individual seeds in each seedhead. Waterbirds such as Mallards and Wood Ducks eat these seeds as the wind, or some other disturbance moves them on the water. Earlier in the summer, bumblebees, smaller native bees, and beneficial wasps are attracted to buttonbush flowers for pollen and nectar.



Buttonbush is a critical species for riparian ecosystems. The shrubs don’t just tolerate standing water, they thrive in it. They are an effective erosion-control species by stabilizing riverbanks, lake and pond shores.

Many years ago, while I was researching what shrubs to plant in my yard, I discovered Buttonbush and its requirement for moist soil. I knew I couldn’t keep the ground wet enough and I am sure that I would have been unable to keep the shrub alive.

Now that I have spent a summer and fall with this shrub in my favorite marsh, I will watch for it in the spring.

A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

By Jessie Haas

"Which side are you on, boys, which side are you on?" the old union song asks. When we look back at the American Revolution, we tend to assume 'we'--our ancestors, obviously the good guys—were the patriots, the Whigs, pro-independence for America and for Vermont. We all see ourselves on the winning side of history.

But would we have been? For many people rebelling against their own country seemed disloyal and stupid. The king might be making a lot of mistakes, but he was far away. This bunch of lunatics trying to run everything by committee? They were right here, in your face. How far were they going to carry this independence thing? It must have seemed like a lot of 'woke' nonsense to many of our forbears.

This comes home in Westminster's Old Cemetery, where the gravesones of John Norton and his family stand right beside the new flag and SAR marker installed this September. Norton emigrated from Ireland under the name McNaughten, but changed it to Norton on arriving in Westminster, and became quite angry if anyone called him McNaughten. It would be interesting to know why.

He served during the French and Indian War, and was with Azariah and Medad Wright, Joel Holton, and Benjamin Burt on a trip carrying provisions to Fort No. 4. They camped on "the meddows" down on Westminster Flats, liked what they saw, and agreed to come back and settle.

Meeting at Northfield, Mass. after the war, they canoed up-river, camped on the slight rise of ground where the Tory Tavern would one day stand, and began working their claims and marrying into each others' families. Norton married a sister of Joel Holton; Medad Wright married another Holton girl. Once his farmstead was cleared, Norton built a large house with a gambrel roof, which he established as a tavern.

Family politics was complicated. Norton was always a staunch Tory. His brother-in-law, Medad Wright, favored independence from Britain, but not New York. Medad's brother, Azariah, was a flaming radical Whig who drilled his partisan militia under the rest of the families' noses - they all lived close together on Westminster Flats. Joel Holton mostly



kept out of politics.

Norton's views were always open, and as the situation became more inflamed, his business became known as the Tory Tavern. That didn't hurt him in Westminster, where politics was very mixed. He had his family pew in the old Meeting House, took part in town and county government, and was one of those appointed to superintend the building of the Court House. As is well known, the Tory Tavern is where Sheriff Paterson's posse went to eat, or drink, their dinner before the Westminster Massacre.

Other than that, though, Norton did not participate in the Massacre and was not jailed by the Whigs. Other notable Whigs in southeast Vermont were persecuted or confined to their own farms under guard. Many eventually moved to Canada.

None of that happened in Westminster. Norton stayed in business and continued to thrive. During the time when there were two competing state governments, Vermont and New York, he was named an officer in the New York militia, though that doesn't seem to have functioned.

He remained popular with people of all political stripes. His friends included Margaret Wall and Fanny Buchanan, the widow and stepdaughter of the arch-Tory Crean Brush, as well as the famous Whigs

Stephen Rowe Bradley and Ethan Allen. By law the land of Tories was confiscated by the state and sold off, which allowed the new government to put off raising taxes. Not only was Norton not targeted; he actually acquired some of Crean Brush's forfeited land, in cahoots with Bradley and Allen. These were practical men who didn't let politics get in the way of making a buck.

Norton was among 36 prominent local citizens arrested for rescuing a farmer's cow from being confiscated by Vermont authorities. Stephen Rowe Bradley represented the prisoners in court.

Ethan Allen delivered his blustering "brimstones" speech against him: "I would have the young gentleman to know that with my logic and reasoning, from the eternal fitness of things, I can upset his Blackstones, his whitestones, his gravestones and his brimstones."

A few years later Bradley had his own large farmhouse across the road from the Tory Tavern, took in Norton's overflow guests including the beautiful Fanny Buchanan, and was present at her wedding to Ethan Allen. Norton remained in business for many years and was a respected citizen of Westminster.

So were the Willards, who had been soldiers for generations and remained loyal to Britain. Billy Willard boasted of being the one to knock down William French, and his father, William Willard, was said to have gone mad due to his role (on the 'wrong' side) in the Massacre.

They were sent to jail in Northampton and stayed out of town for awhile. Then they came back, and 20 years or so down the road, patriot and U.S. Senator Stephen Rowe Bradley married Billy Willard's daughter.

"All politics is local," Tip O'Neill said. It was then, too. Not only local; it was family. It was complicated. People who liked each other found a way to get past big grievances, then as now.

We know our friends are better than the worst words that come out of their mouths, and smarter than the dumbest thing they ever did. That was true of our ancestors as well. Remembering that helps us take a realistic, not a cartoon, view of our history.

In photo, an early picture of the historic Tory Tavern on the Westminster Flats.

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 Nov. 7 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 September: 32

Number of calls through October 21st: 21

Number of calls calendar year to date: 415

Number of calls July 1st fiscal year to date: 144

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting October 3rd with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 30 members present and 13 members excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department. .

Emergency responses: September turned out to be

another busy month with 32 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown for the 32 calls. 2 mutual aid, 1 to Rockingham, 1 to North Walpole; 15 rescue/medical calls; 3 motor vehicle accidents ; 1 CO detector sounding; 4 tree on wires; 1 tree blocking roadway; 1 smoke investigation; 1 car fire; 2 service calls; 1 welfare check; 1 for flooded basement.

Halloween Open House: The fire house will be open Halloween, Tuesday evening the 31st to hand out candy, cider and pop corn from 5 until around 7:30 p.m.

Off Road: The fire department is looking for names of anyone who has an off road vehicle that they would be willing to operate in case of an emergency requiring off road or 4 wheelers. Contact any member of the department if this is something you are able to make available.

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 or honor a loved one or a friend. Send donation to: Westminster Fire & Rescue Association PO Box 111 Westminster, 05158

Donations in September/ October:

Bruce Mickle, Jane French, Steve Thomas of Thomas And Hall 802 Builders, Wendy O’Dette/ Peter Jordan, Natalie Crocker, Kevin Hughes

BOOT DRIVE: Thanks you to those who “got caught” in our boot drive fund-raiser. Your support is appreciated. Anyone who missed it can mail a contribution to Box 111 Westminster, 05158

Check stove pipes and chimneys to be sure they are clean and free from any obstruction.

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 web-site www.westminsterfire-andrescue.org.

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IMPORTANT: SIX THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT

By Dena Bunis

If you are one of the nearly 66 million Americans who get health care through Medicare, it's time to review your options and make sure you have the medical coverage you need at the most affordable price. For most enrollees, the six-week open enrollment period between Oct. 15 and Dec. 7 is the prime opportunity to take stock of your coverage and, if necessary, make changes.

Here are six tips to help navigate this all-important annual open enrollment period.

1. Don't ignore open enrollment

Too many people let open enrollment come and go without checking to make sure their current coverage will take care of their medical needs and that they are getting the best deal financially. According to KFF, the nonprofit organization that closely tracks Medicare, in 2020 just 3 in 10 Medicare beneficiaries surveyed reported that they had compared their current coverage with other plans offered in their area.

2. Know what you can and can't change

If you are on original Medicare, it's easy to switch to a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan if you choose to do so. And if you already have a MA plan and want to switch to a different MA plan, that's also not a problem. MA plans are the private insurance alternative to original Medicare.

But if you already have a MA plan and want to switch to original Medicare, you likely will have difficulty getting an affordable supplemental — or Medigap — plan to take care of some of your out-of-pocket costs.

Why? Once you have gotten beyond your seven-month initial enrollment period, which straddles your 65th birthday, Medigap insurers in most states are allowed to charge you high premiums or even refuse to offer you a policy, especially if you have any preexisting conditions. So, check with your state insurance department to see what its Medigap rules are or reach out to your local State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for help. (See below)*

3. Look at all of your costs

There are several different out-of-pocket costs under Medicare. Depending on which option you have (original or Medicare Advantage) and whether you get your prescription drugs through a standalone Part D prescription drug plan or through your MA plan, you'll need to check to see how your various costs are changing for 2024:

Part A (covers hospital, hospice and some home care): Most people don't pay the Part A premium because they've paid enough in Medicare taxes through their working life. For those who haven't paid enough in taxes, the full Part A premium will be \$505 in 2024, down \$1 from \$506 this year. There is also a Part A deductible for each hospital visit. That deductible will be \$1,632 in 2024, an increase of \$32 from 2023. If you're on original Medicare, you'll need to check whether your Medigap plan pays that deductible. Hospital charges under Medicare Advantage plans vary, so you'll want to check with your plan if those charges are changing for 2024.

Part B (covers doctor visits and other outpatient services): All Medicare enrollees have to pay the monthly premium, which is \$174.70 in 2024, up \$9.80 from 2023. (If you are collecting Social Security retirement benefits, the Part B premium is deducted from

your monthly benefit.) Original Medicare enrollees also pay the annual deductible (\$240 in 2024) and then are subject to a 20 percent copay for doctor visits and other Part B services. Some Medigap plans pick up many of those costs. Premiums, deductibles and copays vary by Medicare Advantage plan, so be sure to check if your plan's out-of-pocket costs are changing.

Part D (covers prescription drugs): Premiums, deductibles and copays vary by plan, so check what your current plan will be charging you each month in 2024. Premium changes will vary widely by Part D plan: Some plans could hike premiums significantly next year, while other plans may actually lower monthly charges.

But that's far from the whole story. The copay or coinsurance you have to pay for each prescription is as important as your premium, so check those out. Equally important is whether the medications your doctors have prescribed are covered under the plan you select. The government does set a maximum annual deductible for Part D plans. That will be \$545 in 2024, although many plans have lower deductibles. If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, your prescription drug coverage is probably bundled together with your medical coverage. Check out your plan's benefit details to review its prescription drug coverage.

4. Check in with your doctors

As you weigh your options, talk to your doctors. If you're on original Medicare, you'll want to make sure your providers still participate in Medicare. The vast majority of doctors in the U.S. do, but it doesn't hurt to check. If you have a Medicare Advantage plan, check with your physicians to make sure they are still in your plan's network. If not, ask them what networks they do belong to. It can be expensive to go out-of-network if you have an MA plan.

If you're having trouble finding an affordable Part D plan that covers the drugs your doctors have prescribed, check with them to see if there is an alternative medicine that is covered and for less money.

5. Don't wait until the last minute

You may need some time to work through whether you want to make changes to your coverage. Take a look at the "Medicare and You" handbook that the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services publishes each year. The handbook is mailed to Medicare beneficiaries, or you can look at it online. You can also call the Medicare hot line (800-633-4227) or your local State Health Insurance Assistance (SHIP) program for help. But don't drag your feet. The closer it gets to the end of open enrollment, the busier these folks get.

6. It's not your last chance to make changes

If you don't take advantage of the annual open enrollment period, Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, there are ways you can make changes at other times during the year. If your circumstances change — you lose your job-based health insurance or move to a state where your current plan doesn't do business, for example — you can qualify for a special enrollment period. And if you are already enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan, you can change plans or switch to original Medicare during the annual Medicare Advantage open enrollment period, from Jan. 1 to March 31.

Dena Bunis is an award-winning journalist covering Medicare, health care, health policy and Congress. She also writes the Medicare Made Easy column for the AARP Bulletin. Reprinted from AARP.org

REMEMBRANCES

SYLVIA BARTON, 99
4/8/1924 - 10/11/2023
SPRINGFIELD, VT;
FORMERLY PUTNEY, VT

LAURESS JOHNSON, 62
10/16/1960 – 9/10/2023
BELLOWS FALLS, VT
AND HAGATNA, GUAM

PATRICIA ROBINSON, 84
5/21/1939 - 9/30/2023
WALPOLE, NH

LILLIAN ROUNDS, 88
10/21/1934 - 9/22/2023
BON AQUA, TN;
FORMERLY BELLOWS FALLS, VT

JENNIFER SCOTT, 57
1966 – 9/4/2023
WALPOLE, NH

ELLA WILMOT, 94
1929 - 7/21/2023
KENNETT SQUARE, PA

THE GAZETTE WELCOMES NEW UNDERWRITER: THE COTTAGE BY THE BROOK

A warm welcome to our newest underwriter, The Cottage by the Brook and thank you to owner, Bridget Stone, for your support of the Westminster Gazette.

Stone describes The Cottage by the Brook as, "Here we believe in possibility. We believe in craftsmanship and have a deep appreciation for things made by hand and with care. We believe in breathing new life into forgotten beauty. Repurposing is our passion!"

The Cottage by the Brook carries a wide assortment of items, from vintage and outdoor furniture to home and garden decor, repurposed goods, botanical prints and maps, clothing, jewelry and much more.

It is located at 5859 Route 5, next to the I-91 exit road.

Open 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily.

DANIEL LAWRENCE TURNS 80

Daniel Lawrence is Turning 80, and we are having a birthday celebration for him.

There will be an open house on Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023 from Noon to 3 p.m. at the Westminster Fire Station to celebrate this milestone.

Join Dan and his family for snacks, refreshments, and cake.

No gifts necessary - just bring yourself and maybe a scratch ticket for the birthday boy.

GAZETTE AD PRICE ADJUSTMENTS

Due to increase costs for postage, the Gazette is making cost adjustments for the first time in several years, effective in 2024.

Page 8 ads, c. 2.5 x 3.25 inches, will increase from \$175 to \$200.

Pages 2-3 c. 4 by 5 inch ads will increase from \$275 to \$300. Other ads, no changes.

MAIN STREET ARTS HOSTS WELLNESS AND YOUTH PROGRAMS

Main Street Arts (MSA) will be starting several wellness programs this autumn, including yoga, Tai Chi, and Feldenkrais workshops.

The whole body being well contributes to participating in positive life experiences, which help everyone to be more resilient. "A person's wellness impacts their ability to be creative and present in the moment," said Ashley Storrow, programs director at MSA.

Tai Chi classes with John Bohannon will be held on Tuesdays, at 11 a.m. The classes are free and comfortable clothing is recommended.

Community yoga classes will be held at MSA through Dec. 17. The fee is a \$10-20 sliding scale, cash or Venmo, but no one will be turned away for lack of funds. Drop-ins are welcome. No registration is required.

Fluid Yoga is led by Brittany Frost and will be held Wednesdays, from 8 to 9 a.m. Frost is an artist, gardener, and fermentation enthusiast living with her family in Townshend. She received certification in HEALing yoga in July 2023.

Autumn Hatha Yoga will be held on Sundays, from 5 to 6:15 p.m., with Candace Jensen. She has been practicing yoga for nearly 20 years and specializes in Hatha Flow and Yoga Nidra. She has certification in several forms of yoga.

There will be three Feldenkrais workshops with Paris Kern that are designed to help participants reduce pain and gain flexibility. The workshops will be held on Sunday, Nov. 19, from noon to 4 p.m., and Saturday, Dec. 9, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The cost is \$50 per session or \$120 for all three sessions. To register, visit mainstreetarts.org/feldenkrais.



Outburst Arts, a free monthly teen arts night at Main Street Arts, will be held on the first Friday of the month, from 7 to 9 p.m. Teens from the greater Rockingham area are invited to make art, do crafts, listen to music, eat snacks, and spend time with new and old friends.

"I'm thrilled to be partnering with Main Street Arts on this project," said Sam Howard. "As the youth services librarian at the Rockingham Free Public Library, one of my goals is to create welcoming spaces where youth can express themselves and make connections. Main Street Arts and I worked together to start the program [last year]. Outburst Arts is designed to be a youth-led place where teens can make art, launch creative projects, or just hang out."

This will be the second year the program will be offered at MSA with a few changes. Outburst Arts will now

take place on the first Friday of the month through the end of the school year. And all the art created can be submitted to an end of year exhibit, which will be open to the public, at MSA and will include vocal, written, and art pieces.

"I'm really excited to see Outburst Arts return," said Neil Allen, director of Greater Falls Connections in Bel- lows Falls and the adult lead for the program. "This is a good opportunity for the teens to meet other teens who are interested in the arts, create positive life experiences, and, hopefully, find trusted adults they can connect with outside of the usual places like school, sports, or church. These are all important aspects of substance use prevention and part of why I wanted to be part of this program."

"The program is youth-led, adult-supported. This means the adults are there to make sure the program runs, and the teens are the ones directing things," Allen continued. "There is the saying from the disabled community: 'Nothing for us without us,' and those of us in prevention believe this as well. This is the best way to allow the teens to be seen and heard. I'm excited to see what the teens want to do and work with the youth leadership group to make this a creative, fun program for them."

MSA is located at 35 Main Street in Saxtons River. The site has a ramp, elevator, and accessible bathrooms. Main Street Arts' mission is to be a catalyst for arts and community, fostering creative expression through artistic experiences, accessible to all.

For more information visit mainstreetarts.org or email info@mainstreetarts.org or neilpierceallen@gmail.com or 603-558-8549.

ELKS ANNUAL BASKETBALL HOOP SHOOT FOR LOCAL VERMONT & NEW HAMPSHIRE KIDS

Elks Lodge #1619 in Bellows Falls is sponsoring and hosting its annual Basketball Hoop Shoot Event on Saturday, Dec. 2 at the Bellows Falls Middle School from 10 a.m to noon.

This annual contest, now over 50 years old, is open to both boys and girls in separate age divisions; based on age as of April 1, 2024, ages 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13.

Kids from the Bellows Falls and Fall Mountain regions are invited to take part in this free Basketball Hoop Shoot event.

Each participant will shoot 25 free throws. Six trophies and t-shirts will be handed out to all first place finishers of each division of boys and girls.

Wear gym shoes, appropriate t-shirt, gym shorts or a team uniform.

Doors open at 9:30 a.m. for registration and practicing, with the Free Throw event starting at 10 a.m.

Shooting order will be ages 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13 year olds, no exceptions.

Elks Lodge #1619 event Chairman is Smokey Aumand.

First place players go on to the Districts competition on, Sunday, Jan. 7, then on to the State Championships, on Saturday, Jan. 27.

The Regionals will be held in Portland, Me., Thursday to Sunday, March 7-10.

First place winners go on to the Nationals in Chicago, Ill., Thursday to Sunday, April 18-21, with all reasonable expenses paid for by the Elks.

This is not a school sponsored event.

MYSTERY PHOTO



Does anyone recognize this important Westminster citizen from years past? This is a photo at the time of her retirement. The background might possibly provide some clues. Any guesses on when this was taken?

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

All are most welcome to join us for Worship at 10 a.m each Sunday. We are handicap accessible and have a coffee hour after each Sunday Service.

Nov 5th. Worship with Communion and Coram Deo after. The topic is: Teach us how to Pray. There will be soup served at this event Coram Deo is a personal time of reflection on a specific scripture topic

Nov 12 Worship

Nov 19 Worship with Advent wreath making afterwards. Come make an advent wreath for home.

Nov 21 Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service 5:30 pm at the church.

Nov 27 Worship

During November in many Christian communities is a month to remember deceased loved ones and friends. Located in the Sanctuary of the church will be a "Book of Remembrance" for individuals to write the names of those who have passed away.

Rev. Rich O'Donnell is the Pastor and warmly welcomes all to join us. Located on Route 5 in Westminster.

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. 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.

Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno 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 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

Worship service is at 10 a.m. every Sunday at 8 School Street. ALL are welcome to attend.

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 everyone.

To learn more, call us at (802) 463-4323 or visit us. Also find us on Facebook! We're always happy to meet new people and welcome them into our church family.

ACTIVITIES

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

Westminster West Lib Hours Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 1- 6 p.m., Saturday 10 - 2 p.m.

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

Accessible Yoga Class with Lisa Nigro
Monday's 10-11:15 a.m. Westminster Institute

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

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

Coffee Mornings - Coffee, Community, Conversation Westminster West Library, Saturdays from 10 to 2. All welcome, please drop in!

Zumba Fitness at Westminster Institute: Latin and world rhythm music, set to easy-to-follow choreography, with a focus on cardiovascular and muscular conditioning, flexibility, and balance. Hybrid Classes: Tuesdays & Thursdays at 4:30 p.m Pre-registration and status review is required; contact: ZIN Certified Instructor: Pauline Blake O'Brien, 802-376-5397, paulineblakeob@outlook.com.

MEETINGS

Town Clerk - 802-722-4091

Selectboard 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 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 at 6 p.m. at the Westminster Institute, provided there is content to discuss. Interested community members are encouraged to attend.
Contact pebanik@comcast.net.

The Westminster Fire and Rescue meet on the 1st Tuesday every month, at 7 p.m. and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday at the 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

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association
3rd Thurs. 7 p.m., Main St. Arts, Saxtons River
whpatrails@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 Dec. 2023 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, Nov. 22 Publication Date is Wednesday, Nov. 29 To Contact the Westminster Gazette E-mail: westminsternews@gmail.com

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ROCKINGHAM OLD HOUSE AWARDS WINNERS



The Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission hosted a reception for the town’s 2023 Old House Award winners on Sunday, Oct. 15 at the Rockingham Meeting House. The public was invited to congratulate the winners and celebrate historic preservation efforts underway throughout the town.

“Restored between 1906 and 1907 the meeting house is the birthplace of historic preservation in Rockingham, setting the pace for our region,” said John Lepman, commission chair. “It is big and bright, and a great place for the community to applaud historic preservation.”

Awards made annually by the commission are designed to recognize property owners in the town of Rockingham who maintain and restore their historic homes and commercial and industrial buildings.

Eligible properties are older homes and businesses that have received exterior restoration and conservation by their owners, typically in the past five years. Brass plaques are awarded to the winners, who are encouraged to proudly post them on their entrances to call out their efforts to keep Rockingham historic.

This year’s winners are:

Susan Saunders, Saxtons River Inn.

Symbolized by a dramatic five-story corner tower, the village’s turn-of-the-century hotel dominates its commercial core. Replacing an early nineteenth century predecessor that was demolished to clear the site, the hotel was constructed in 1903 for the Saxtons River Hotel Co.

William H. Dean, Sr., a local builder, participated in the project. The building has been only slightly altered from its original appearance and recently restored.

William Purdy, 29 School Street, Bellows Falls.

A Greek Revival brick house built c 1835 for Asa Wentworth, a prominent figure in the community serving as vice president of Bellows Falls Savings Institution. He also held interest in the flatboat company that transported merchandise up the river from southern New England to the upper valley of the Connecticut River.

Vermont Academy, Wilbur Hall.

Constructed in 1892 as the Academy’s first library. This small, asymmetrical, one-story stone building is an excellent example of the Craftsman style with Richardsonian influences. Architect William P. Went-



worth of Boston, Mass., designed the building. Wilbur Hall is located on the north side of the Long Walk across from Jones Hall.

Ronald Tompkins, 12 Main Street, Saxtons River.

The most fully developed expression of architectural style in Saxtons River village taking the form of Italianate Revival capped by a symbolic belvedere.

Constructed in 1867-68 for John Alexander, the house virtually retains its original appearance. The surrounding grounds are landscaped with mature coniferous and deciduous trees, some of which were planted at the time of the house’s completion.

The Old House Award program is made possible in part through the generosity of the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and the National Park Service.

For more information about the event or the Old House Awards contact clg@rockbf.org.

Above, left, the Alexander House on Main St. in Saxtons River, and Vermont Academy’s Wilbur Hall.

NOT DOWN THE MIDDLE - THE CONNECTICUT RIVER BOUNDARY MARKERS

By David Deen

Most waterbodies marking a boundary between two states or countries have an imaginary dotted line running down their middle. The Connecticut River does not because as everyone ‘knows’ the river belongs to New Hampshire.

However, as with all things human, the real circumstances are more complicated. The reality about river ownership started with the original land grants from England, modified during the time of the American Revolution with the present day boundary set by a US Supreme Court decision.

The English grants set the boundary between then New York and New Hampshire as the western bank of the river. Soon after Vermont declared her independence and the signing of the Declaration of Independence occurred, community leaders in 22 New Hampshire towns (Chesterfield up to Haverhill) persuaded their fellow townspeople to secede from New Hampshire.

They were convinced that the actions of the Crown were no longer the law and they wanted to eliminate the river as a jurisdictional boundary. A convention of river towns from both states met in Cornish, N.H. to consider forming a state called "New Connecticut" as many of the settlers migrated to the valley from eastern Connecticut. Instead, in 1778, the New Hampshire towns joined the Vermont Republic and the river was no longer a boundary.

New Hampshire leaders tried to appease the rebels with political appointments and support for the idea of annexing Vermont river towns into New Hampshire. When these approaches failed, New Hampshire asked the Continental Congress to settle the dispute making it clear that unless Congress returned the towns, New Hampshire would no longer contribute to the war effort.

New Hampshire then took stronger measures and threatened to send 1,000 soldiers westward to the valley, ostensibly to protect against Indians and the British but in reality to take back the towns Vermont annexed.

In 1782, prodded by a letter from George Washington critical of Vermont’s actions, Congressional actions, and the threat of a 1,000 man army headed its way; Vermont did a sudden about face. Vermont’s Assembly voted to renounce jurisdiction over all towns east of the river and any claim to jurisdiction east of the west side of the river beginning at the low-water mark. The river was a state boundary again and New Hampshire got it all.

Vermont attempted to assert a claim over half the river and invited New Hampshire to appoint commissions to settle the boundary in 1792, 1794 and 1830. New Hampshire offered no response to the first two invitations and a flat out no to the last overture.

In 1915, Vermont sued in the US Supreme Court asking to establish the boundary between the states as the thread (deepest part) of the Connecticut River. Vermont said it held title to the thread by virtue of English common law and since Vermont joined the Union as a sovereign state, her boundaries were those she self-established and the thread of the river was her eastern boundary.

The Vermont suit did not daunt New Hampshire at all. New Hampshire cross-filed with the Court to acquire jurisdiction of that narrow width of land on the Vermont shore between the low and high water mark.

The Court found that by passing the 1782 Resolution Vermont had relinquished any claim to jurisdiction east of the Vermont shore beginning at the low-water mark. The low-water mark was further defined as “the point to which the river recedes at its lowest stage without reference to extreme droughts.”

As to the New Hampshire claim on the land between the high and low water marks, the Court found that even if New Hampshire had authority over the river



there would be, “insurmountable difficulty, in attempting to draw any other line than the low-water mark.” Therefore, in 1934 the US Supreme Court decided that New Hampshire got its river and Vermont got its shore land.

A Court Master surveyed the boundary and placed 4-inch brass disk markers at the survey points. Still on the land today, they form a necklace at 112 locations from Vernon, Vt. up river to the 45th parallel where the river crosses into New Hampshire entirely. Each marker gives the distance from the marker along a compass heading to the actual low water boundary.

Vermont and New Hampshire laws require that the boundary line “shall be perambulated and markers and bounds renewed wherever necessary.” Vermont law prescribes that the perambulation take place “once in every seven years.”

The Court even foresaw power dams on the main river. Their decision said that the surveyed low water

mark would be, “unaffected by improvements on the river.” The reservoirs behind the dams have now submerged the natural low water point but the original surveyed locations remain the border although in some cases the boundary is more than 100 feet off the Vermont shore.

That is a brief history of how it is that Vermont owns any part of the Connecticut River. That history has and does create some understandable human puzzlement about jurisdiction over the river. Of course, given that rivers do not care about political jurisdictions, the Connecticut River is not puzzled at all.

David L. Deen is a member of the Connecticut River Valley chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board, and the Connecticut Atlantic Salmon River Commission. Whenever he can, David writes and lectures about and fishes the Connecticut River.

In photo, USGS Boundary Marker on the Vernon Dam.

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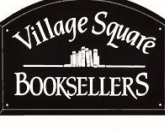
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Our service speaks for itself but the relationships we have with our customers and community is what we take pride in the most. We are dedicated to keeping costs low, while providing the highest quality services to keep our community clean.

Remember there is no job too big or too small for Ruggiero Trash Removal. Call (802) 869-2235 to talk to one of our friendly and courteous staff members.

We would like to thank all our loyal customers and the community for their support. We extend our best wishes to you and yours as the holiday season approaches.

UPCOMING OLLI/OSHER PROGRAMS

There are several upcoming OLLI/Osher Lifelong Learning Institute programs of interest to the community. Programs are held at the Nolin Murray Center next to St. Mary’s Catholic Church on Pleasant Street in Springfield, on Tuesday afternoons at 2 p.m.

Oct. 31 - Werewolves, Vampires and Zombies. Bobby Farlice-Rubio, educator will demystify the myths of monsters with science and facts.

Nov. 14 - Songs of Vermont. ‘Banjo Dan’ Lindner will perform and describe the stories behind the songs he has created.

Nov. 28 - Trendsetter: The Nature of Weather Patterns. Mark Breen will discuss where the weather gets its energy and how this creates certain patterns.

Pre-registration is highly recommended. We can no longer take any payments onsite at the door. However, if you arrive without having registered, we will not turn you away. We will hand you a form with instructions on how to make payment after the program.

There is a Membership Series Special Fee of \$35. Non-members are welcome and encouraged to attend individual programs for a single program fee of \$8.

You may view the entire semester programs by going to the website learn.uvm.edu/olli/springfield Registration can be done online at this website with a credit card.

You may also register over the phone, using your credit card by calling 1- 802-656-8407 or email non-credit@uvm.edu. You may have to wait for a return call back.

SEVCA CLOSING AREA THRIFT STORES

The Board of Directors and Staff of Southeastern Vermont Community Action, is announcing the closure of our Good Buy Thrift Stores in Springfield and Bellows Falls effective Friday, Dec. 16. All items in these two stores be will marked down 20% starting Oct. 17.

“While this decision was not an easy one, we believe it is necessary for SEVCA’s long-term growth and effectiveness,” said Kathleen Devlin, SEVCA’s Interim Executive Director. “SEVCA is grateful to the staff, volunteers, customers and donors for their many years of dedication, hard work, and commitment to providing a welcoming space to our communities. We truly appreciate the contributions made to support the success of these stores over the years.”

SEVCA has operated thrift stores in various locations in the Windsor/Window region since 1970. The stores in recent years have served two purposes, first to offer qualifying low income SEVCA client’s access to free and low-cost furniture, housewares and clothing when in need. Additionally, the stores offered an opportunity for the community to both donate and shop, providing revenue to support SEVCA programming.

SEVCA is actively working to develop new partnerships with thrift stores throughout Windham and Windsor counties to continue its voucher program to assure that qualifying SEVCA clients in need will be able to access free clothing, furniture and housewares in their neighborhoods.

Contact SEVCA at 802.875.7074 for more information or go to www.SEVCA.ORG.

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