

po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Rewspaper @ www.westminstervt.org Vol 20 No 2 February 2024

## WCS KIDS ON ICE - FISHING, SKATING, SINGING & MORE

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

So winter finally decided to make an appearance in our part of the world, and not a moment too soon for the winter sports program. Every Monday in January and through to the vacation break in February, the



cheering family members.

Before Christmas we reported on the implementation of the new DIBELS tests (Dynamic Indicators of Basic Elementary Literacy Skills).

We are proud to share that all students have shown growth in the skills tested and that the individual and overall results will help guide our teachers in creating academic groupings and targeted literacy

interventions during the remainder of the year. In the face of alarming drops in literacy skills at both national and local levels during and since the pandemic, this is both encouraging and extremely important to overall student achievement and success in our town.

In other academic news, our Nature-based teaching and learning coach, Liza Lowe, will make another visit to the school on January 26th to work with our staff on implementing a variety of nature-based learning strategies at all grade levels. As reported earlier, the school is deeply committed to expanding opportunities for outdoor and nature-based learning.

The school board recently approved a bid to build an outdoor pavilion behind the school to allow teachers to hold classes outdoors as appropriate. We can also report that the board is finalizing design details and costs on the solar installation planned for the gym roof and front parking lot.

The plan is to install panels capable of generating 106% of the annual electricity usage of both the main campus and the Westminster West building. We expect construction to begin in the early summer.

sports program. Every
Monday in January and
through to the vacation
break in February, the
Westminster Center School Kindergarteners and 1st graders go ice skating at
Vermont Academy while all the children in grades 2 - 6 have a choice of skiing or snowboarding at Okemo, swimming (indoors!) at Edgar May pool
in Springfield or doing outdoor winter games and activities on the
school grounds. It's been kind of warm some days and bitter
cold on others, but the show has gone on. And thank you

to the Westminster Fire Dept for setting up our very

own skating rink on our back field.

And in the midst of all this, our very own 2nd grader, Kiana

Greene (bottom photo), made an appearance in the Reformer this week displaying the massive fish she caught at the Retreat Meadows in Brattleboro last weekend. The report put the fish at 32 inch and 10 lbs, but I think someone needs to check their scales. That thing looks bigger than Kiana! Well done Kiki – and watch out fish!

On Thursday, Jan 18th, the whole school **(top photo)** participated in our Winter Concert for parents and friends. Every child stood with their class and sang songs, and many students performed solo or duet vocal and instrumental pieces between the main acts. It was an impressive performance, and the gym was packed with

## SACCARDO WINS ARTS AWARD

Compass School junior Lola Saccardo received \$500 for her creative submission to the annual Arts Awards competition held by Educate the Whole Child (ETWC), an initiative of the Myrin Foundation.

Her work was chosen first in the competition's high school category.

The announcement was made in January by Tom McGuire of the ETWC Leadership Team to Kendra Rickerby, Head of School at Compass School in Westminster.

Educate the Whole Child as an organization sees creativity and the arts as a truly important dimension for children to develop, yet in many schools, it is largely neglected. Especially when integrated into other parts of the curriculum, the arts can bring fire and enthusiasm to learning.

For more information on the Compass School see https://www.compass-school.org.

For more information on Educate the Whole Child see https://www.educatethewholechild.org/.

In photo, Junior Lola Saccardo, left, and Kendra Rickerby, Head of School.



# COMMUNITY CLOSET REOPENS FEB. 3RD

The Community Closet, located at Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St., in Bellows Falls, is set to reopen on Saturday, Feb. 3 from 9 a.m. til noon.

We are jam packed full with adult clothing from winter wear to summer wear to exercise clothing to shoes. With the closing of SEVCA's Good Buy Stores



in Springfield and Bellows Falls, SEVCA donated over 50 totes of clothing and shoes to the Community Closet. We have spent the past six weeks unpacking, sorting, organizing, and sizing all of their donations.

Our children's clothing has been donated to Busy Bees Children's Clothing Hive, located at 17 Rockingham St. in downtown Bellows Falls. The store is usually open 5 days a week and accepts donations of children's clothing.

The Community Closet and Busy Bees will be working with SEVCA and their voucher system.

We plan to expand our days to include Wednesday as well as Saturday. If anyone would like to volunteer on either day, come in and let us know! We will accept clean, gently used adult clothing on the days we are open.

## WARNING - WESTMINSTER TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT ANNUAL MEETING, MARCH 2ND

The legal voters of the Westminster Town School District are hereby warned to vote from the floor on the following articles on Saturday, March 2, 2024 at 10:00 A.M. at the Bellows Falls Union High School, Westminster, Vermont:

Article 1: To hear the report of the Westminster Town School District officers and to take action thereon.

Article 2: Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District authorize and instruct its School Directors and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, on the credit of the town school district for its current expenses in anticipation of the collection of taxes and receipt of money due from state aid and other sources.

Article 3: Shall the voters of the Westminster town school district apply the sum of \$100,000 (one hundred

thousand dollars) from the anticipated fiscal year 2023 surplus of \$265,168 (two hundred sixty-five thousand, one hundred sixty-eight dollars) to create a reserve fund to offset expenditures in the fiscal year 2026.

Article 4: Shall the voters apply the sum of \$165,168 (one hundred sixty-five thousand one hundred sixty-eight dollars) from the anticipated Westminster town school district 2023 surplus and \$292,552 (two hundred ninety-two thousand, five hundred fifty-two dollars) from the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU) 2023 assessment surplus to a reserve fund for repairs or improvements to buildings and grounds, including although not limited to enhanced security and energy efficiencies, and to authorize the Board to expend such funds.

Article 5: Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District approve the school board to expend the

sum of \$5,366,000 (five million, three hundred sixty-six thousand dollars) which is the amount the Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing year.

Article 6: Shall the voters approve an annual compensation to school directors in the amount of \$800 to each director, and an additional \$200 to the director who serves as board chair.

Article 7: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town School District meeting.

Approved by the Westminster Town School District Board on January 4, 2024.

Signed: er Town School

Cheryl Charles, Chair, Westminster Town School
e District Board of Directors

## !! Town Meeting Info!!

THE TOWN MEETING FLOOR VOTE WILL
BE ON SATURDAY, MARCH 2 AT THE
BELLOWS FALLS UNION HIGH SCHOOL
AUDITORIUM AT 10 A.M.

Australian Ballot voting will be on Tuesday, March 5 at the West-minster Fire Station on Grout Avenue from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.
This will be two elections:
Town offices and the

PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY.

## Our Monthly Community Newspaper February 2024 Vol. 20 No. 2

## Westminster Gazette

Town of Westminster PO Box 147 Westminster, VT 05158

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Westminster, VT PERMIT NO. 3

## **OUR WORKING LANDSCAPE: KEEPING US WARM**

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

Winter is firewood and logging time. We need to keep warm, and the earth should be frozen enough to allow equipment into the woods without damaging the ground or getting bogged down. Yes, it should be!

At Holton Farm, Joel Holton runs the firewood, maple syrup, and haying side of things, depending on the season - and the weather. He joins his son Seth - the 5th generation of Holtons farming in Westminster - in the produce side. More on that come the growing season!

Joel described the firewood business: They produce about 400 - 500 cords of firewood each year. He contracts with foresters and woodlots nearby in Vermont and New Hampshire, paying 'stumpage' for the trees, resells the good logs to local mills, and processes firewood here at the farm and delivers it to local homes.

They have seven 'skidders' - the specialized tractors that haul timber out of the woods - as well as the new Timberwolf firewood 'processor' plus the old faithful one used for the really big logs. Sometimes he contracts with Long View Forest, who bring in a big automated harvester.

Joel's logging crews do the work in the woodlots, and fell the trees by hand with chainsaws. Here at the farm, the oversize logs are handled by loggers like Donald Hubbard. They buck the logs into the proper length for firewood, manhandle the sections with a peavey and roll them on to the hydraulic lift.

The processor lifts the sections, splits them, and runs them up a conveyor into a truck for delivery. The new Timberwolf automates a lot of this work. Allan Patterson has run the firewood processor for Joel for many years, controlling it so as to get the best size for your stove. Like so many other modernizations, it makes things much easier and faster, and results in fewer bad backs also.

Joel said he used to log with a team of horses until 2010 and they were the best way of working in the woods. The teams worked year-round, with logging in the winter, sugaring in the spring, and plowing and cultivating during the growing season. One year they



plowed 75 acres using three teams. He liked that way of doing things, it "was a peaceful way of working."

In photo, Joel Holton, left, with Allan Patterson and the new Timberwolf processor.



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## **ADVERTISE IN THE GAZETTE!**

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Annual Rates:

Pages 2-3 - approx. 4"x5" \$300 a year - \$30 for one month Pages 4-7 - approx. 4.7"x6.8" \$525 a year - \$80 for one month Page 8 - approx. 2.5"x3.25" - \$200 a year

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

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

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

On-line at: **www.westminstervt.org** 

## News From the Town Garage - Open House Feb. 17th

Hello Neighbors,

Just when I thought I had seen it all, a few weeks back I was out checking storm damage after one of our heavy rainstorms, when I came upon a gentleman scraping gravel off one of our dirt roads with a tractor.

I sat and watched the show for about 30 seconds. Although truthfully, it seemed to be a lifetime. I could feel the blood rushing to my ears when at that point I pulled up alongside him and rolled down my window and asked what could possibly be going through his head to think this was OK!

"Well" he said, "I was only taking the gravel off the

side to fix my driveway, it's not like I took it out of the middle! I don't know what the big deal is?"

"Well" I replied, "Taking the trim boards off the Town Hall is just as illegal as taking the clap boards."

Please folks, if you need material for your yards or driveways, give me a call at 802-722-4349. I have numbers for contractors and gravel pits that deliver. Taking it out of the road is illegal and dangerous.

Why do you pre salt? How much salt do you put out? Do we have an equipment maintenance plan? How do you decide which road gets plowed first? What's the pavement plan? All this and more will be answered at the Open House at the Town Garage on Saturday, February 17 from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m. or just get a cider donut and check out the equipment and garage and meet your crew and neighbors.

Please take a look at the Winter Maintenance Ordinance (mud season policy) on the Town's website and check us out on Facebook. There will be updates on road conditions as mud season progresses.

> Thank you as always, Chuck and Crew

## **NEWS FROM TOWN HALL - SUPPORT TOWN MEETING**

Westminster's Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for the Bellows Falls Union High School on Saturday, March 2 at 10 a.m. Since conquering my own "Town Meetingophobia" many years ago, I've come to look forward to them. Why?

In towns such as ours, the Open Town Meeting form of government is the prime opportunity for people to come together and decide what's in the best interest of the town.

Something that is hard to explain is if Town Meeting is the method for raising and appropriating, or, as a friend of mine opines, "taxing and spending", why the attendance at a meeting seldom exceeds 15% of registered voters.

When I served as a Selectboard member and only about 100 people attended a town meeting, while we had nearly 1,600 registered voters, I commented to my colleagues that, "1,500 people must think that we're never found out.

In round numbers, Westminster typically gets around 10% or so of our 2,600 registered voters. Logic dictates then that 10% of our townspeople decide how 100% of the money is spent. I wonder what the other 90% must be thinking.

Looking at it that way, I have that same difficulty in wrapping my head around over 2,000 people not participating. For those of you who look at town government the way that I used to ("Town Meeting? No thanks!") let me share a few things with you:

First, the meeting doesn't take an enormous time commitment. The meeting is warned far enough in advance that if you have to, you can (hopefully) adapt your schedule.

Second, procedurally, once you understand the moderator-driven formalities of "so moved", "second"

doing an awesome job!" Whether it was true or not, we and calling the vote, it's actually fun to participate! (OK, my idea of fun may differ from yours.)

> Third, you get to meet some really great people and have the opportunity to learn some new things about how town government works.

> Fourth, after the meeting you can take a sense of pride in the fact that you helped this town make some important decisions. You get a better understanding of where your tax dollars are to be spent. In short, you become responsible for helping Westminster grow to its full potential!

> And my friends, what could possibly be so bad about that? I look forward to seeing you at Town Meeting on Saturday March 2nd.

Thanks for all you do!

Lou Bordeaux Town Manager

## **NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES**

10 with President Lori Larue presiding. The following attended in person: Lori Larue, Pete Harrison, Pat Goodell, Nancy Dalzell, Don Dawson, Cindy Moses, Doug Oftedahl, and director Donna Dawson. Kathy Elliott attended via WebEx. Miram Lanata was unable to attend.

Westminster Cares wishes to express heartfelt gratitude for the generous support we have received to date for our 2023-2024 Annual Appeal fundraising drive. Funds from this Appeal enable us to continue serving the community. Thank you to all the individuals, families and businesses who have contributed! Our Annual Appeal will continue through the winter.

Donations Received from mid-December thru mid January 2024.

#### **Honor Donations:**

In honor of Heidi Anderson from Bonnie Anderson.

In honor of my Children & Grandchildren from Bennet Petry. Susan Clifford.

In honor of my Grandmothers Susan Clifford & from Connie, Ron and Debi Seamans. Joanne Holler from Sawyer Clark.

In honor of Barbara Greenough and all she does Betsy Beebe.

for her friends and neighbors | from Anonymous.

In honor of Pete & Judy Harrison from Lisa DiBernardo.

In honor of George Luhrmann from Tanya Luhrmann.

In honor of Bill Smidutz & in memory of Joan Smidutz from David & Mary Jo Robbin.

In honor of Sarah Waldo from Oliver Brody. In honor of my sister, Karen Walter, from Patra Attig. In honor of the Westminster Cares' volunteers, board & staff from Charmion Handy; Beth Shrader.

In honor of all Westminster Cares does in the community from Bill Smidutz; Lisa & Jim Calchera; Steve & Danielle Collins; Dan & Mary Davis.

In loving memory of Regina "Reggie" Borden who was a beloved member of the Westminster Cares Board for 15 years: Alma Beals, Don & Donna Dawson, Pat Goodell, Hugh & Betty Haggerty, Eliz-

Westminster Cares Board of Directors met Jan. abeth Harlow, Pete & Judy Harrison, Miriam Lanata, Lori Larue, Doug & Nita Oftedahl, Pat Royce and Bill Smidutz.

#### **Memorials:**

In memory of Phyllis Anderson from Ila Mitchell; Wendy & Robert Schoenemann.

In memory of Hank & Phyllis Anderson from Miriam Lanata. Don & Cindy Anderson.

In memory of Eric Anderson from Beth Latham; Bill & Sandy Burton. Anderson.

In memory of Harold Angers & Mary Brandt Dalzell. from Barbara Angers.

In memory of Jefferson Arms, Ben Bittner & & Colleen Grout; Celeste & John Majek.

Jamie Latham from Bill & Sandy Burton. In memory of Mary Ellen Bayer from Flo

In memory of Justin Beebe and the Montana

Wildland Forest Fighters from Susan & Rich Talbot. In memory of Judith Berkley from Judith &

In memory of our parents, Paul & Lillian Chaffee,

In memory of Reg Cote from Sheldon &

In memory of Rosalie Coven from Judy &

Tony Coven. In memory of Bob Davis, retired Coast Guard

Captain and a dear friend, from John Benzaia.

In memory of Joanne Duval, Caro Duval, Staci Jones-Maly and Genevieve Farnsworth from Tonia Pucci. & Lester White.

In memory of Claudia Giese from Heidi Anderson & Lee Trapeni; Ron & Michelle Bos-Lun.

In memory of Barbara & Carlton Greenwood from Allison & David Deen.

memory of Anne Fairchild from Carolyn Fairchild.

In memory of Bob Haas from Pat Haas.

In memory of Connie Harlow from Dan Harlow.

In memory of Reg & Theresa Hodgkins from Russ & Barb Hodgkins.

In memory of Pat & Walter Jennison from Betty

Miller; Cheryl Jennison; and Linda Jennison & Janet Manzolillo.

In memory of Gregory James Kelley from Gerri Mansfield & Richard Reed.

In memory of Joel T. Kmetz from John Kmetz. In memory of Larry Lanata from Reilly Clark;

In memory of Jamie Charles Latham from Alison In memory of Laura Leonard from Nancy

In memory of Lori Miller from Dick Miller; Jim

In memory of Bruce Miller from Joyce H. Miller. In memory of Donald "Buster" Newcomb from

In memory of Ernie & Phyl Norman from Wanda & Scott West.

In memory of my grandmother, Marion Nowers,

from Burt Nowers. In memory of our parents from Gary & Jean

Cobb. In memory of Margret O. Palmer from Carleton

Palmer II. In memory of Germaine Palmer and Shirley &

Stanley Farrar from Nancy & Leonard Farrar.

In memory of Dorothy Palumbo from Susan Colby.

In memory of my dad, Al Pucci, from Norma

In memory of John Ross from Don & Ethel Pike. In memory of Connie Sanderson from Joyce Sullivan.

In memory of Jim Scully from Arlene Scully.

In memory of George Shuster from Kathryn Shuster.

In memory of Sam & Fran Streeter from Phil & Jane Savoy.

In memory of Florence "Fluff" (Yates) Storey from Fred & Lorraine Yates.

In memory of Marie Wright from Norman Wright.



## Harlow Farm Winter Market

We are open Dec. 15-mid-April 9-3, Fridays and Saturdays

Shop our fresh organic produce all winter! Fresh greens, meat, eggs, root crops, Orchard Hill bread, Smokin' Bowl baked goods, and more.

Harlow Farmstand 6365 U.S. Rte 5 Westminster VT Purchase a Winter Market card on-line at: harlowfarm.com/order-form/ Or just stop in.

## CREATIVE AGING PROGRAM AT MSA

Main Street Arts in Saxtons River will offer a Creative Aging program beginning in February for seniors in the Greater Rockingham area. There will be three sessions featuring diverse artistic opportunities taught in-person by local teachers.

The first session, from Tuesday, Feb. 6 to March 26, will include An Expressive Arts Exploration with Susan-Marie Beauchemin, from 10 a.m. to noon, and Make a Family Heirloom with Annabelini Questifari, from 1 to 3 p.m. There will be an optional lunch from noon to 1 p.m. There is a one-time \$10 registration fee. Classes and lunch are free. Register at mainstreetarts.org.

Future class offerings include Start an Art Journal by Susan Rosano, Memory Book Boxes with Amber Paris, Make Your Own Mosaic Jewelry Pendant with Susan Rosano, and Cyanotype Photography with Evie Lovett. The program will culminate in an event on Saturday, June 8, from 1 to 3 p.m.



## Nature Notes - Are Northern Flickers in the Woodpecker Family?

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Many of us don't think of Northern Flickers as woodpeckers because, instead of seeing them in trees, we see them on the ground hunting ants and grubs.

They also are one of the few woodpeckers that are migratory. But if you see them on bare ground look at their toes. Flickers, like all woodpeckers, have two toes forward and two toes backward which helps them cling to trees.

They are handsome gray/brown birds with white on the rump and yellow on the undersides of the wings that show when they fly. They have a black bib and red on the back of the head, but it's their big black spots on their undersides that everyone remembers.

I see them in the Spring and only occasionally during the summer do I hear and see them. Their call is like the Piliated only faster and longer. In the Fall, as they get ready to migrate, they hang out with several others on my lawn.

Flickers are common and widespread over much of North America. While we see them eating ants and grubs, if they stayed the winter, we would see them eating berries, fruit, seeds and nuts. They might even eat suet and black oil sunflower seeds or poison ivy berries.

Northern Flickers used to be called two different species. The Red-shafted Flicker was a Rocky Mountain and western bird while the Yellow-shafted Flicker is seen in the east. Then the experts banded them together and called them Northern Flickers.

Three were seen in the Audubon Bird Count for this area in mid-December. Other woodpeckers seen were 78 Downy, 31 Hairy, 25 Red-bellied, 13 Pileated and four Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers.

Now on to the usual woodpeckers that we see at our feeders. We are all familiar with the Downy Wood-



Northern Flicker photos by Don Clark

pecker and the Hairy Woodpecker which look alike except for the larger size and longer bill of the Hairy.

The Downies outnumber the Harries probably because of the habitat. The Harries stick closer to the woods and are shyer. The Downies are found near houses and are not shy. Mine don't pay any attention when I am next to their feeder.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker has moved further north, as the weather has warmed, and for the last few years has nested in my woods. This is a bird that appears to be misnamed. You won't see a red belly, what you will see is a blush of red.

The only time I have seen the blush is when the woodpecker is hanging on the suet feeder so that I can see the underside. They are very shy, but I see them because they are so noisy.

It's hard to miss the Pileated Woodpecker which is black with a little white and a prominent red crest.



When they fly, a large white area under the wing shows. Their call is like the Northern Flicker only slower. If you don't see one, you certainly will hear it.

Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers look a lot like the Downies and Harries except for a touch of pale yellow on the belly and red on the throat and head.

They drill rows of shallow holes in tree bark. They return to drink the sap and insects that collect. There are other birds including hummingbirds that also take advantage of the sap and insects.

Are you convinced yet that Northern Flickers should belong in the woodpecker family?

## A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: WORKING OUT THE ROAD TAX

By Jessie Haas

It's the season when we worry about our roads. Will we be able to get out? If something happened to us, would help be able to get in? That's a facet of modern life, when many people work outside of their homes, and need to be able to get somewhere miles away by a certain time of day. It wasn't always that way.

Our roads were laid out in the 1700s, with the King's Highway being the oldest, a feature of the town since at least 1760. Later settlers followed trails along the brooks, probably first extablished by wild animals, and used for 10,000 years or so by ancestors of the Abenaki.

Those trails were surveyed during the 1780s, beginning with Orchard Hill to School St, and Beebe and Burnett Road to Hickory Ridge Road; both were laid out in 1787. Some of what are now back roads in Westminster West came next, followed by Morse Brook Road and Westminster Heights Roads in 1789. South Valley Road was done in 1790, and in 1793, Westminster West Road to Saxtons River, Kurkul Road, and Barnes Road to Patch Road, among many others.

These roads had all existed as farm lanes, and there was a spider web of them, as farms occupied many places that are now going back to the wild. Henwoods Hill is one of the most recent roads, laid out in 1825 in collaboration with the Walpole Bridge Corporation, other Walpole individuals, and the town of Rockingham, at no expense to Westminster.

That steep and winding shortcut was awfully important to the area 200 years ago, for reasons that aren't entirely clear.

Colonial and later state law required all landowners to put in a certain number of days working on the roads in the spring. This involved picking up rocks, and probably using them farther along the road to fill in boggy places.

The farmer and his ox-team were kept busy at a time when there was plenty of spring farm work to do as well, which may be what lies behind a narrowing of the King's Highway, also known in early days



as the Ten-Rod Highway for it's width.

A rod is a unit of measurement, 16.5 feet. The King's Highway, now Vt. Rt 5 through the center of Westminster, was 165 feet wide, and was intended to be used as a drilling ground for the militia.

In 1810, by mutual agreement, the fences on each side of the street were moved in one rod. In 1828 at the instigation of William Czar Bradley this was done again, leaving the street six rods wide and relieving the abutting landowners of that much care.

Though landowners were on the hook for a certain amount of road work, the town was considered responsible for their conditions, though it looks like they couldn't really be held to that.

In the 1830s we know that Seth Shaler Arnold brought up road conditions to the selectmen at least twice and asked for compensation for damage to his vehicles. He doesn't seem to have ever gotten it.

The spring road work was responsible for at least one death. In 1847, Bela Miller was working out his road tax, as the spring work was called, on the hill road leading up to what was most recently Libby Mills's home.

His steers were having a hard time holding back the increasing load in the dump cart, and Miller told his 10-year-old son Homer to stand in front of them to keep them from stepping along. The load got heavier and the steers became more stressed. Finally they ran, and Homer was unable or unwilling to get out of the way. The wheel ran over him and he died.

The other way people worked out their road tax was by 'breaking' roads after big storms. We have a record of a blizzard on December 15-16, 1839, in the diaries of Alvan Goodell in the West Parish, and Seth S. Arnold in the east.

Both men were out opening the roads on

December 17. Arnold wrote, "Spent nearly all day breaking roads—with two hands, oxen, and horses."

Roads needed to be cleared and packed down for sleighing and sledding; winter was often the best time for travel in early New England.

One job we don't necessarily think of was 'snowing' the bridges. Covered bridges actually needed to have snow brought in and packed down for the sleighs to run on. That must have been heavy work, especially on the long covered bridge between Westminster and Walpole.

By the late 1930s trucks and tractors were doing all Westminster's road work, and we were amassing a collection of mechanized equipment. That in turn required building a town garage, near the north end of Morse Brook Road.

We are still working with expansions of that original garage, and also maintain a public sand pile in Westminster West.

The Barnes family in the West Parish did most of the road work in the 1930s. In the 40s the Muzzy famiy dominated the road crew. Today our roads are in the hands of Chuck Lawrence and crew, tackling the new problems of climate change, and doing an excellent job.

In photo, snow rolling roads in Vermont, courtesy of the University of Vermont Library Center.

## 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 Feb 6 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 December: 38 Number of calls through January 25th: 34 Number of calls calendar year to date: 34 Number of calls fiscal year to date: 267

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting Jan. 2 with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 26 members present and 12 members excused. Currently there are 49

members of the volunteer fire department.

Emergency responses: December turned out to be another busy month with 38 calls for the month and a

whopping 503 for the year. Here is the breakdown for the 38 calls. 4 mutual aid, 1 to Rockingham, 1 to Walpole, 1 to Putney and 1 to Brattleboro; 24 rescue/medical calls; 4 motor vehicle accidents; 1 car fire; 5 lift assists; 3 box alarm; 1 false alarm.

**Driveways and Right of Ways:** Please be sure that private roads and driveways leading to your home are plowed wide enough so a large fire truck can pass through easily. Also, be sure brush and any other obstacles are not hindering an emergency vehicle from getting to a scene where they may be needed.

**Icy conditions:** Back roads, especially dirt roads and driveways tend to be icy this year. Be careful walking and driving on them. Several cases of someone falling have been reported recently.

**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 December/ January:**

Bruce Mickle, Peter Lefcort, Ruth Grandy, Robert Ross, Bruce Mickle, 2nd donation for the monthTri State Truck Center, Jeffrey Shumlin, Evelyn Lovett, Susan and Rich Talbot.

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.

## BEN PERRY NAMED BFUHS STUDENT OF MONTH

It is a pleasure to announce that Benjamin (Ben) Perry has been selected as the December Elks Student of the Month for Bellows Falls Union High School. Ben, a senior, is the son of Jason and Jennie Perry of Westminster.

Ben is top in the Class of 2024. Described as extremely gifted by one of his teachers, he is praised for strong analytical thought and insightful contributions to class discussions.

A true leader and positive role model, Ben's character unequivocally separates him from his peers. He is honest and compassionate; he always

puts the needs of others before his own, and he goes out of his way to help others.

Ben is hilarious and witty and has mastered the ability to bring humor to situations tastefully. He has a charismatic energy that others gravitate toward. A pleasure to work with, Ben is tremendously humble and



accepts praise with an utmost sense of modesty.

Dedicated to making a positive impact, Ben has been a valued member

Dedicated to making a positive impact, Ben has been a valued member of the BFUHS Student Council for four years serving as Vice President as a junior and President as a senior.

His hard work and dedication are a driving force for this group. A leader both in the classroom and in the community, Ben has been a positive representative through sports, outside activities and in his community. He has logged over 200 hours of community service giving back and helping others.

Clearly deserving of this award, the Elks and BFUHS are honored to have Ben represent us as a Student of the Month.

In photo, Ben Perry, Elks Student of the Month.

#### WESTMINSTER CENTER SCHOOL REPORT FOR TOWN MEETING

Dear Westminster Community,

This year has been one for the books as Westminster Center School (WCS) teachers and staff continue to foster growth for all students. We were fortunate to retain most of last year's educational team and started the year fully staffed.

We continue to offer traditions such as Harvest Feast, Farm and Field Day, Literacy Cafe, Winter Sports, and much, much more! We have returned to our roots by using strategies outlined through Responsive Classroom to build a school community that is safe, joyful, and engaging.

As always, we prioritize relationship building and a sense of belonging as we work to achieve learning goals throughout the year.

Our student body consists of 145 students in grades kindergarten through sixth. Our staff is a highly qualified and engaging team that teaches the whole student. WCS has 12 classroom teachers, kindergarten through 6th grade, 4 special educators, and 3 Title One teachers. Our wonderful paraprofessionals provide tremendous support, largely through federal funding.

Our 5 Essentialists provide enriching opportunities in Art, PE, Music, and Library. Studio Y continues to provide integrated arts opportunities for all students at the Westminster West building throughout the school year. Our guidance counselor, mental health clinician, and restorative practices teacher help address the social-emotional needs of our students.

Our maintenance staff continue to take pride in the buildings and grounds and our school nurse continues to play an integral role in keeping all our school community safe this year!

Our staff continues to keep track of both our preschool community of learners and our seventh and eighth graders for whom tuition support is provided. This year there are 64 Westminster 7th and 8th graders in area schools. The WNESU provides full day preschool services in the Center building 5 days a week and we offer

an after school program five days a week as well.

We continue to access ESSER funds along with reserve funds to provide professional development and conduct a variety of facilities updates. We have utilized facilities audits to prioritize our building's needs.

At this point in the year we have spent and have contracts for capital projects totaling over \$400,000. The following details the use of these funds:

Four WCS staff attended a WNESU Professional Learning Community professional development program this past July. This course, offered through Antioch University, was funded through ESSER. We focused on the facilitation of professional communities to work collaboratively through data inquiry cycles to achieve better results for the students we serve.

Participants have since been part of ongoing professional learning communities with all WCS staff. These teams have met monthly throughout the year to reflect on ways to leverage instructional strategies to get the best results.

WCS continues to use ESSER funds to conduct specific facilities security updates. This fall we installed a new camera system throughout the entire building along with an upgraded key card system to enter the building. We have plans to remodel the entryway to allow for a more secure entrance, making WCS even more safe for students and staff.

By the end of the school year, WCS will have used reserve funds to replace the roof on the gym, install solar panels on the gym roof and on parts of the parking lot, and build a pavilion to provide shelter for continued nature-based learning.

Thank you, Westminster, for consistently supporting our school. I am privileged and humbled to serve our students, parents, and the community, and to work with so many wonderful educators. I truly look forward to seeing the students come through the door each day!

Respectfully Submitted, Liz Harty, Principal

## REMEMBRANCES

FEBRUARY 2024:

REGINA "REGGIE" BORDEN, 86 2/26/1937 – 12/27/2023 SPRINGFIELD, WESTMINSTER AND BELLOWS FALLS, VT

DOROTHY M. BOUDRIEAU, 73 12/31/1949 PLATTSBURG, NY FORMERLY BELLOWS FALLS, VT

JEREMY BURRELL, 85 1/08/2024 WESTMINSTER WEST, VT

James A. Eno, 93 7/9/1930 - 12/15/2023 Westminster, VT

RUTH HELEN FRIEDMAN, 85 1/18/2024 WESTMINSTER WEST

CATHERINE HALLOCK, 9/29/1952 - 12/19/2023 GRAFTON, VT FORMERLY BELLOWS FALLS, VT

MICHAEL "TIDDY" TIDD, 75 8/21/1948 - 12/8/2023 ROCKINGHAM, VT

# WINTER TRACKING IN WESTMINSTER

Join the Westminster Conservation Commission for a winter tracking activity on Sunday, Feb.11 from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

We will meet at the Westminster West School and walk or carpool to local fields, wetlands and wooded hills to explore. Program location TBD.

Local naturalist Martha Mitchell will help to lead our explorations, and share information about the tracks we discover.

Waterproof boots are recommended. Bring tracking guides and a tape measure if you have them. In the past couple years, we have seen tracks of fox, otter, ruffed grouse, fisher, and others.

Weather date Sunday, Feb.18.

Please email westminstervtconservation@gmail.com to register. Registration limited to 12 participants.

Call Rachael Shaw at 802-869-3184 with any questions

## SCHOOL DIRECTOR'S REPORT FOR TOWN MEETING

It is a pleasure to write to you at the half-way point in our second full school year since the Westminster Town School District was officially reinstated and, coincidentally, in the second full school year since the lifting of the COVID restrictions that so dramatically impacted our schools' students, their teachers, the staff and the community.

While progress is being made in areas of students' academic achievement, social and emotional well-being, and school engagement, challenges remain. The Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU) leadership is working closely with Principal Liz Harty and the staff.

We are in the second year of Westminster's Instructional Leadership Team made up of teachers and staff at the school that helps focus everyone on specific learning outcomes and ways to measure progress. Grade level teams meet weekly, data meetings are held monthly, and each student's progress is individually monitored.

Some of the school's students struggle with managing their own emotions and behaviors so a variety of approaches are being used to help create and maintain a safe and positive school environment. In order to provide the kind of support each child needs, their regular attendance is critically important. We are happy to report that school attendance typically is 94%. We aim for 100%.

School events are well attended, with families and community members joining enthusiastically. If you have not participated in one of these events, we encourage you to do so. You can check the school website at www.wnesu.org/wcs for a calendar of events or like us on Facebook at Westminster Center School to see news about things going on at the school and upcoming events.

This year, consistent with the WNESU's overall strategic plan and priorities, the Westminster school board revisited our vision, mission and goals, and worked with the school leadership to identify ways those goals are being achieved. Those are included with this letter.

Physical Improvements at Center School and Westminster West

In her letter to townspeople, Principal Harty has outlined some of the improvements made and underway at both of our town school district's buildings. We were able to use more than \$400,000 of federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to make capital improvements including a new roof at the Westminster West school building, roof repair on the main building at the Center School, and security enhancements at both buildings.

Use of the ESSER funds makes it possible to make other improvements using the reserve funds you approved at last year's Town Meeting. The reserve funds you approved for energy savings enhancements will be used to install a solar array intended to meet the schools' electrical energy needs.

Timing for the installation was delayed when it was determined that the gymnasium roof is the only location at the Center School that meets structural engineering specifications for carrying the array. On review, since the gym roof is about 20 years old, the board decided to use other of the capital improvement and maintenance reserve funds to install a new roof in advance.

**Proposed 2024-2025 Budget and Possible Use of Surplus Funds** 

You will be asked at Town Meeting to vote on the school budget for the 2024-2025 school year and related financial items. You will also vote on proposed uses for an additional budget surplus that comes from two sources: \$292,552 returned to Westminster from the WNESU for fiscal year 2021-2022 and an estimated \$265,168 from the Westminster 2022-2023 budget.

In the materials for Town Meeting, you will see that the board is proposing use of \$100,000 of those new surplus funds to offset expenditures in the 2025-2026 budget. We propose the remaining new surplus funds be added to the existing reserve funds for repairs or enhancements to buildings and grounds, including enhanced security and energy efficiencies.

Our intent is to offset future costs. As we look ahead in anticipation of additional expenses, we want to do whatever is possible to care for these capital assets and prevent the need for something like a bond in the future.

To his credit, the superintendent of schools, Andy

Haas, commissioned building analyses for all of the school buildings within the WNESU, including both school buildings in the town of Westminster. We have reports that estimate needed repairs over the next ten years and beyond. One of the most expensive of those is the need for re-grading and re-surfacing the school parking lots. Adding these new surplus funds to the existing capital reserve fund should pay for that necessary repair.

In the meeting materials for Town Meeting, you will find the proposed budget for FY 2025. There are significant increases impacting our local budget as well as uncertainties.

The state of Vermont Commissioner of Taxes projected a possible 18.5% increase in property taxes in his December 1 letter to the legislature. The impact of the re-weighting formulas as a result of the implementation of Act 127 is uncertain. While last year there was a 12.7% increase in health insurance benefits for employees, this year there is another 16.4% increase.

The WNESU assessment to each of the member districts has increased as well, largely affected by a reduction in state grant monies and a significant increase in costs of special education. Westminster's increase is about 18%. Despite these significant increases largely out of our local control, the proposed budget is \$5,366,000. That is \$216,269 higher than the current year's budget, a 4.2% increase.

We will use the \$150,000 in surplus funds approved at Town Meeting last year to help defray the proposed FY 2025 budget costs.

As ever, we are fortunate that we have a terrific team of educators serving Westminster's students. They need your continued support. We welcome your questions and the opportunity for discussion at Town Meeting, and your support and engagement with the Westminster Community Schools throughout the coming year.

With appreciation, Westminster Town School District Directors Cheryl Charles, Chair; Charlie Hutchison, Vice Chair; Christine Biolsi, Karen Blanchard, Margie Kearns Ferry

#### LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF THE HAYWARDS' HOUSE & GARDEN

Three lectures on the history of the Hayward's house and gardens will be given in support of and presented at The Congregational Church in Westminster West.

Feb. 18 at 6:30 p.m. - We present The Old Buxton Place, It's Restoration and the Beginnings of a New

Gordon and Mary Hayward will explore the history of what is, since 1983, their house, originally built by the Ranney family ca. 1790 within the context of the early history of Westminster West Village.

First, Westminster Historian Jessie Haas will start the evening talking about the life and the buildings in the village of Westminster West around 1790.

Then, for 40 minutes or so, Gordon and Mary will use a powerpoint presentation to illustrate their talk about the history of their house; pre-1983 photos of the house; its condition in 1983 and on as they restored the house and its one remaining attached barn.

Feb. 25 at 6:30 p.m. – Using a powerpoint presentation, the Haywards will talk about three sources of inspiration as they began to develop the early stages of their new garden around their restored house. The subject of this lecture is that a living garden grows out of the lives of the gardeners as well as the place where they garden.

First, elements that remain of the original 450'x150' farmyard created by the Ranneys in the late 1700's into by WW Norton.

the early 1800's: perimeter stone walls, remaining foundations of the barns, silo and milking parlor, and viewlines from the window and doors of the house.

Second, the farms Mary and Gordon grew up on starting in the early 1940's: Mary's past in a centuriesold stone farmhouse on a 144-acre mixed farm – sheep and arable crops – in the hamlet of Hidcote Boyce outside Chipping Campden in the North Cotswold Hills of England. Gordon's past in a 1776 settler's house in New Hartford, Conn.on his family's 140 acre farm within which is a 20 acre orchard of apple, peach and pear trees which his father started planting in 1930.

Third, the Hidcote Manor Gardens (started around 1908), a world-famous garden designed by an American literally across a field from Mary's hamlet of Hidcote Boyce, a hamlet recorded in The Domesday

March 3 at 6:30 p.m. - Illustrated with a powerpoint presentation, the Haywards will walk the audience through their four-season 1 1/2 acre garden to illustrate universal garden design principles that can be employed in any number of ways by anyone in their own home gardens. This is the most useful lecture of the three for those who garden themselves. To preview some of the content of these talks, you can go the Haywards' website at HaywardGardens.com.

Or go to their book The Intimate Garden, published

#### LENTEN LABYRINTH WALK

The Congregational Church of Westminster West opens up its sanctuary on Ash Wednesday, Feb. 14 from 7 to 8 p.m., for folks who want to walk its labyrinth.

The church is fortunate to own a gorgeous labyrinth, based on the ancient design in the cathedral of Chartres, France. It is a beautiful pattern, painted purple on canvas, and it rolls out to fill the sanctuary.

Traditionally, the church has opened the labyrinth each solstice and equinox, to observe the cycles of the natural world, as well as on Ash Wednesday, to open the season of Lent.

All are welcome. Beyond the peaceful presence of the labyrinth, there is no particular program. It's very easy to walk the labyrinth: simply come with clean socks, masks are optional, and follow the path at your own pace. We encourage you to try this contemplative practice

## **OPEN MIC AT MSA**

Join Putnam Smith at the Originals & Traditionals Open Mic Night at Main Street Arts in Saxtons River on the fourth Friday of each month, from 7 to 9 p.m.

Sign-ups start at 6:30 p.m. All ages are welcome. The program is hosted by Putnam Smith.

For mor information contact Smith at putnamsmith@gmail.com.

# ESTMINSTER 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** 

The Westminster Congregational Church on Rt 5 in Westminster invites you to join us for any and all our worship services and events.

Feb. 4th Worship at 10 a.m. with Coram Deo and Soup to follow after in the Fellowship Hall. The topic is "Feeding the Five Thousand."

Feb 6th Women's Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall at 11:00

Feb 11th Worship at 10 a.m. with Communion. This is also Superbowl of Caring Sunday please bring a can of soup to be donated to local food shelf.

Feb 14th Ash Wednesday Serviced at 5:30 p.m. Feb 18th Worship at 10 a.m.

Feb 19th Standing Committee 5:30 p.m. on

Feb 25th Worship at 10 a.m.

Lenten daily readings and devotionals are available to be picked up on Sundays.

Every Wednesday is Souper Wednesday and two soups are served in the Fellowship Hall from 12:00-2 p.m. in the Fellowship hall. All are welcome to attend and we look forward to seeing you!

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 ac-

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. wwwwalpoleunitarian.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 refresh-

**Deadline:** The Deadline for

the Mar. 2024 Issue of the **Westminster Gazette is** Wednesday, Feb. 21 **Publication Date is** Wednesday, Feb. 28 To Contact the **Westminster Gazette** E-mail:

westminsternews@gmail.com

ments 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 Library Hours Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 1-6 p.m., Saturday 10-2 p.m.

**Gentle Yoga** with Lisa Nigro 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. Caroline **Contact:** 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.

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

> The Cottage by the Brook Stacey & Tim Allen **Kurn Hattin Homes** Town of Westminster Westminster Cares

Westminster Fire and Rescue Association Burtco Inc.

The Dascomb Trust K Beebe Inc.

American Wealth Adminstration Group

#### **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

## WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

Editor: Robert F. Smith

Board of Directors: Charmion Handy - Chairwoman

Donna Dawson Alma Beals - Treas. Joyce Sullivan - Sec. Mary Scherbatskoy

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## Town of Westminster Warning for Annual Meeting 2024

TRICT NUMBER 3

The legal voters of the Westminster Town, Westminster School District, and Westminster Fire District Number 3 are hereby notified and warned to meet at the Bellows Falls Union High School Auditorium in Bellows Falls, Vermont on Saturday, March 2, 2024, at ten o'clock in the morning (10:00 AM) to take action on the Articles following Article 1.

The meeting will be recessed to the Westminster Fire Station, Grout Avenue, Westminster Vermont to meet at eight o'clock in the forenoon (8:00 A.M.) on Tuesday, March 5, 2024, for the consideration of Article 1, by Australian Ballot. The polls shall remain open until seven o'clock in the evening (7:00 P.M.)

Article 1: To choose all Town Officers, Town School District Officers and Town Fire District Number 3 Officers by Australian ballot, Tuesday, March 5, 2024 from eight o'clock in the forenoon (8:00 A.M.) until seven o'clock in the evening (7:00 P.M.)

Article 2: To hear the reports of the Town Officers and to take action thereupon.

Article 3: Shall the voters of the Town of Westminster authorize total General Fund expenditures for operating expenses of \$1,278,084, of which \$976,404 shall be raised by taxes, and \$301,680 by other estimated revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

Article 4: Shall the voters of the Town of Westminster authorize total Highway Fund expenditures for operating expenses of \$1,575,215, of which \$1,408,215 shall be raised by taxes, and \$167,000 by other estimated revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025.

**Article 5:** Shall the voters of the Town of Westminster raise and appropriate the sum of \$2,600 in addition to the sum (\$5,400) included in the budget proposed by the Selectboard, making the total \$8,000 for the West-

TOWN, SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND FIRE DIS- minster Gazette to partially defray costs associated with dred sixty-eight dollars) from the anticipated Westminproduction and distribution?

> Article 6: Shall the voters of the Town of Westminster vote to adopt the following "Declaration of Inclusion":

> "The Town of Westminster welcomes all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, differing ability, socio-economic status, and education.

> The Town of Westminster commits to being a place where individuals may live freely and express their opinions without fear, where kindness and respect are valued, and where all persons feel safe and welcome.

> As a town, we condemn discrimination in all its forms and will strive to ensure that all our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this commit-

> **Article 7:** To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town of Westminster Annual Meeting.

> Article 8: To hear the report of the Westminster Town School District officers and to take thereon.

> **Article 9:** Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District authorize and instruct its School Directors and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, on the credit of the town school district for its current expenses in anticipation of the collection of taxes and receipt of money due from state aid and other sources.

> **Article 10:** Shall the voters of the Westminster town school district apply the sum of \$100,000 (one hundred thousand dollars) from the anticipated fiscal year 2023 surplus of \$265,168 (two hundred sixty-five thousand, one hundred sixty-eight dollars) to create a reserve fund to offset expenditures in the fiscal year 2026.

> Article 11: Shall the voters apply the sum of \$165,168 (one hundred sixty-five thousand one hun

ster town school district 2023 surplus and \$292,552 (two hundred ninety-two thousand, five hundred fiftytwo dollars) from the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU) 2023 assessment surplus to a reserve fund for repairs or improvements to buildings and grounds, including although not limited to enhanced security and energy efficiencies, and to authorize the Board to expend such funds.

Article 12: Shall the voters of the Westminster Town School District approve the school board to expend the sum of \$5,366,000 (five million, three hundred sixtysix thousand dollars) which is the amount the Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing year?

Article 13: Shall the voters approve an annual compensation to school directors in the amount of \$800 to each director, and an additional \$200 to the director who serves as board chair.

Article 14: To transact any other proper business to be brought before the Town School District meeting.

**Article 15:** To hear the reports of the Town Fire District Number 3 and to take action thereupon.

Article 16: To see whether Town Fire District Number 3 shall authorize and instruct its Prudential Committee and Treasurer to borrow money, if necessary, to meet current expenses, on the credit of the District, in anticipation of the collection of taxes and/or the receipt of any State or Federal Funds.

**Article 17:** To see if the voters of the Town Fire District Number 3 will raise and appropriate the sum of 321,400.00 to pay the indebtedness and other general expenses of the District for the FiscalYear beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2025.

Article 18: To transact any other business proper to be brought before the Town Fire District Number 3 meeting.

## FEBRUARY TECH TIME AT ROCKINGHAM LIBRARY

Time Tuesday classes and drop-in sessions at 2 p.m. every Tuesday during February.

Join us in the Youth Programming room for one of our upcoming tech sessions to learn more about different applications and digital library resources. Drop-in sessions are first come, first served. Providing your own personal devices is encouraged,

Feb. 6: Love your Library's resources – Come love

The Rockingham Free Public Library will host Tech your library more by learning how to access eBooks, films, and television for free through our online library resources.

> Feb. 13: Drop-In Tech Help. Drop-in Tech Help is our quick tech help option at the library. No registration is required, just walk in, and spend 5 - 15 minutes with a librarian to ask your tech questions.

Feb. 20: Tax Time Online Forms Help Need help finding and printing your tax forms? Come to the library to print the tax forms you need. Vermont does not distribute free paper forms through libraries. You can print blank forms at the Library for free.

Feb. 27: Drop-in Tech Help

**DECLARATION OF INCLUSION** 

INFORMATIONAL MEETING

For more information, email reference@rockinghamlibrary.org, call 802-463-4270, go to rockinghamlibrary.org or stop by the Library in Bellows Falls.

## **NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY**

The Westminster West Public Library invites the community to visit on Feb. 14 anytime between 1 and 6 p.m. for hot cocoa and sweet treats in celebration of Valentine's Day.

Children and adults can browse books inspired by love, spend some time at the communal table coloring hearts, and speak with Librarian Lise to learn about the meaning of Valentine's Day, including the origin of Cupid.

The library also hosts a Saturday Social with fresh-brewed coffee every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 1p.m. Just bring your own mug and enjoy the warm library environ while mingling with others in the community.

The library has many activities and events planned for 2024, from a 'zine making workshop to a series of dinners where participants can learn more about cultures from around the world.

You do not need a library card to participate, but if you would like to check out items, getting a card is super easy!

Please check our webpage for updates, or just stop by to say hello and someone will fill you in on all the opportunities your library has organized just for you. See you soon!

The Library is located at 3409 West-

minster W Road. Visit us on the web at Westminster-WestLibrary.org.

## all citizens. It reads as follows:

The Town of Westminster welcomes all persons regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, differing ability, socio-economic status, and education.

sion will be voted on at the March 2

Town Meeting as part of a statewide ef-

fort by the Governor and Chambers of

Commerce to engage municipalities in

celebrating diversity in Vermont and as

a path to policies and planning to enrich

The Town of Westminster commits to being a place where individuals may live freely and express their opinions without

The following Declaration of Inclu-fear, where kindness and respect are valued, and where all persons feel safe and welcome.

> As a town, we condemn discrimination in all its forms and will strive to ensure that all our actions, policies, and operating procedures reflect this com-

> Anyone with questions is invited to attend an Information Meeting on Saturday, Feb. 17 at 10 a.m. at the Westminster Institute. Local state representatives and Al Wakefield, one of the founding organizers, will be there along with Lise Sparrow and Sarah Waldo who are working on this locally.

> The hope is to provide a livestream option which will be found on the town website. Everyone is welcome.



> edwardjones.com | Member SIPC

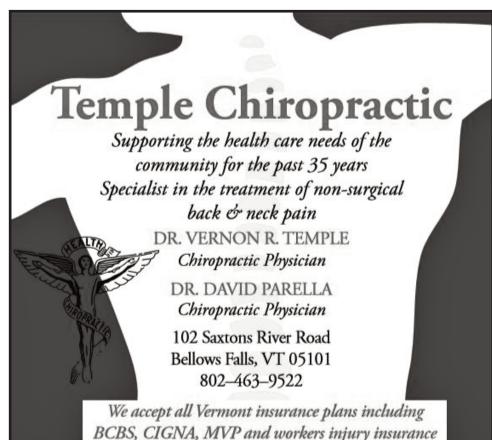


## Caring for a loved one?

We can help.



Jessica Fuller, CFP" Financial Advisor P O Box 96 Walpole, NH 03608 503-756-2513





Buying entire estates or single items. Probate appraisals

46 Canal St. Bellows Falls Vt 802-460-1190

# Streeter L.L.C.

PO Box 206, Westminster, VT 05158 (Building, Remodeling and Repairs)

Licensed Electrician

Cole Streeter (802)722-3178

Westminster, VT 05158

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#### JUDD'S AUTO REPAIRS

**6109 US ROUTE 5 WESTMINSTER, VERMONT 05158** 802-722-4200

David & Elaine Judd, owners Steve Godfrey, mechanic

**Automotive Repair Vermont State Inspection** 

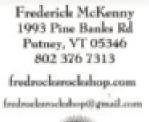


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#### **FEBRUARY BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:** JUDD'S AUTO REPAIRS

#### **JUDD'S AUTO REPAIRS**

**6109 US ROUTE 5 WESTMINSTER, VERMONT 05158** 802-722-4200

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**Automotive Repair Vermont State Inspection** 

We have officially changed our name to Judd's Auto Repairs! We are a full service automotive repair shop and Vermont State Inspection Station as well as UHaul

We would like to take this time to thank our community for your continued support. Especially those who volunteered time to help us with cleanup and repairs after the July flood. We couldn't have done it without you!

Stop by and check out some of our improvements. You can find us on Facebook and check out the before and after pictures too. Our business hours are Monday – Friday 7:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. We look forward to seeing you!

#### **ELDER TECH SUPPORT**

Once upon a time, you knew everything. You taught the kids how to turn on the newfangled television with all its features and you set up the antennae to optimize as many channels as possible. When you got the new car, you taught everyone in the household all the amazing new functions from cruise control to the search functions on the radio.

But today, the tables have turned. Now, you're finding more often than not, that your kids and your grandkids are showing you how everything works. From the new Smart Television monitor, to how the stove will turn on and off without having to touch a dial.

Everything from your lights to your security monitoring system can now be accessed by an app on your phone or tablet. Seems simple but it can be quite complicated, mostly because it's all new. But "new" doesn't have to be so scary so don't be intimidated. Get some answers to your many tech questions.

In partnership with the Westminster Institute and Butterfield Library, Westminster Cares will be sponsoring once-a-month Elder Tech Support sessions in the North Room of the Westminster Institute. On the last Saturday of most months, one of our experienced tech volunteers will be available from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. for one-on-one sessions; answering questions, specific to your devices. Any "older adult" (over 50) is eligible to participate.

Appointment times are limited so you'll need to reserve a time slot in advance. The next session is Saturday, Feb. 24. To schedule a session, call Donna in the Westminster Cares office at 802-722-3607. Each session is 30-40 minutes in length and should be specific to your device. For example, if you'd like to learn more about accessing email through your tablet, mention that when you make your appointment. Want to learn how to text your family or send photos with your smartphone? Mention that on your call.

Your "device" can be any cell phone, iPhone or iPad, or another manufacturer's smartphone or tablet. If your question is related to your laptop, you'll need to bring your laptop with you to your session. If your question is related to your desktop computer, we might not be able to assist you, as it's unlikely that you'll be able to haul your desktop computer, all the way to the institute, nor would we want you to. The library has a desktop available to patrons, but it may not be available during your session. Ask your question and we'll see if there's something we can do to support you.

For more information or to ask a question, you can call the number above or email wecares@sover.net.

## **LUMINARY EVENT THANK YOU**

The Westminster luminaries, a tradition started by Red and Doris Dawkins many years ago, continues each year as many volunteers and organizations generously give their time and donate bags, candles, and the use of trailers, trucks and space.

Thank you to everyone that helped in December, especially Stacey and Tim Allen, Allen Brothers Farm Market, the Westminster Volunteer Fire Department, Jim Debell, Westminster Highway Department and Luke and Diane Bazin.





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