

# GIVING THE GIFT OF SONG

The gift of music is powerful, especially on Valentine’s Day. That’s why 16 Kurn Hattin Homes singers and four chaperones loaded into three vans to deliver the gift of song to visitors, patients, and residents at four stops: Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical in Lebanon, NH; Keene State College, Keene, NH; and Cedarcrest Center for Children with Disabilities, also in Keene.

At each destination on the travelling Valentine’s Day concert tour, the Homes’ chorus performed a medley of five songs, including Let Me Call You Sweetheart, A Million Dreams, Somewhere Out There, You are the Reason, and Lean on Me to audiences in the Dartmouth Hitchcock Main Atrium and Norris Cotton Cancer Center, the Keene State College Student Union, and the Cedarcrest atrium.

Lisa Bianconi, the Homes’ Musical Director and a cancer survivor who received treatment at the Norris Cotton Center in Lenanon, beamed with pride and emotion as she recapped the day.

“Our singers performed beautifully and brought many smiles and tears of joy to the audiences they reached. This was truly a gift of kindness, relationship building, and giving back to community

that we hope to repeat every Valentine’s Day.”

While the intent was to deliver something special by performing, the singers also received something very special. Especially impactful for the singers was the stop at Cedarcrest, which is home to children with disabilities.

“After performing for the children and staff, the Kurn Hattin Homes singers were filled with emotion and realized how much their music touched and moved the non-verbal audience,” said Bianconi.

Afterward, the chorus had the opportunity to meet each of the children individually, which reinforced the importance of this experience.

“All four performance venues were very different and all were very rewarding for the singers,” Bianconi said upon reflection.

Sir Elton John once said, “Music has healing power. It has the ability to take people out of themselves for a few hours.”

He was right.

*In photos, the Kurn Hattin Homes singers.*



# TERRIER BASKETBALL SUPER SENIORS

These four Westminster girls have been dedicated basketball players year round, starting by playing together as WAYSA Vikings and now as Bellows Falls Union High School Terrier seniors.

They are celebrating a very successful senior season ranked in the top 5 of Division 3 and on top in the Southern Vermont League.

All four young women have been three sport athletes throughout their high school careers. All will be continuing their education next fall at either a university or technical college.

BFUHS would like to congratulate the athletes and thank all those that have supported their efforts over the years.

*Pictured (left to right) are Delaney Lockerby, Aliya Farmer, Tela Harty and Eryn Ross. Their parents are Jessica and the late Bill Lockerby; Mellissa Jenne and David Farmer; Shelby and Tim Harty; and Diane Ross and Sandy Smidutz.*

Photo by Kristi Lisai.



!! TOWN MEETING INFO !!

TOWN MEETING FLOOR VOTE  
SATURDAY MARCH 2, 2024 AT  
BELLOWS FALLS UNION HIGH  
SCHOOL GYMNASIUM STARTING  
AT 10 AM

(PLEASE NOTE MEETING IS IN THE  
GYMNASIUM, NOT THE AUDITORIUM)

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT VOTING  
FOR TOWN OFFICES AND  
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TUESDAY MARCH 5, 2024  
FROM 8 AM UNTIL 7 PM  
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FEE IS \$15  
CLINIC WILL BE HELD AT THE  
WESTMINSTER TOWN GARAGE

IN PRAISE OF WVF&R - THE REST OF THE STORY

By Jim Grout

Each month, like so many others, I read the column in this paper entitled - News from Westminster Volunteer Fire & Rescue.

It does a good job of describing the number of calls, the types of calls and a lot of other helpful information about WVF&R.

What it doesn’t tell you is what the dedication of these volunteers really looks like every day of the year. My family and I have lived on the corner of the street heading to the fire department for 39 years, so we have had front row seats to all that they do.

As reported in the last Gazette the number of calls from July 1 to the end of January is 267. That’s 52 more calls that there were days in the year thus far which is 215.

These calls take place at all hours of the day in all

kinds of weather. If could be 2 a.m. in freezing rain or snow and within minutes of a call they are responding to help somebody in town with a rescue or fire need.

On some days there are as many as 5 calls in one day. Remember too that all these folks are stopping their work day to respond to the needs of all of us, Westminster citizens.

And it’s not just responding to calls but these volunteers, meet and train on Sunday morning and Tuesday evenings, host a Halloween stop for kids, help organize the annual luminary display on Christmas and attend parades for July 4 and other holidays including those for winning teams at BFUHS.

The list of what they do goes on and on. My point here is that the dedication of these volunteers is second to none so when you read their monthly report in the Gazette, remember what it really takes to make all of that happen. Amazing folks doing an amazing job!

Our Monthly Community Newspaper March 2024 Vol. 20 No. 3

Westminster Gazette

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OUR WORKING LANDSCAPE - MAPLE SUGAR: IT TAKES ALL SIZES

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

Sidelands Vermont  
Maple up in the hills on West Road is the biggest maple syrup producer in Windham County; in 2023, they produced 15,600 gallons, with one of the highest sugar to tap ratios in the US.

Dan Crocker says they began sugaring in 1948, after his grandfather bought the farm in 1938. They began boiling with wood, then switched to fuel oil, then to recycled vegetable oil (in 2007, according to the New York Times, the whole place smelled like french fries) and now back to fuel oil - but with a twist!

The evaporator is heated by high pressure steam from a 100 Hp. boiler (see photo). As a high volume producer, Dan aims to have the most up-to-date, efficient equipment, from tanks to filters to the reverse osmosis system that he built with his engineering company MES.

The finished syrup is pumped into stainless steel drums, carefully coded to maintain organic traceability for shipment to the wholesaler. Organic? aren't trees organic? But how many of you remember the magic of waving a wand (discretely dipped in cream) over a wildly foaming evaporator pan, and watching the bubbles collapse? So it turns out that the 'de-foaming agent' must also be dairy-free, Kosher, and organically certified.

Dan also described their sap-collecting - when the weather is right, 100 gallons per minute from 22,000 taps may be landing in the collection tanks! The taps and lines are all monitored through a computer system, so if any leaks develop, they can be found right away.

Dan said that the biggest risk to the maple trees now



is climate change, which not only affects the temperature and seasons, but also has encouraged pests. Tent caterpillar infestations used to occur about every 20 years, but recently this has been happening every 8 years or so. This can eventually weaken, even kill the trees.

Sidelands may be the biggest, but almost every Westminster household does some sugaring. In the other photo is an example of one of the tiniest, the backyard operation of Ted and Elena Dodd, formerly of Windmill Hill but now living in Putney. In 2022, they made 4.5 gallons. Yum! Pancakes!



Pictures, left, Dan Crocker with the Sidelands steam boiler; and backyard at the Dodds.

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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



## ELIZABETH ANDERSON NAMED ELKS STUDENT OF THE MONTH

It is a pleasure to announce that Elizabeth Anderson has been named the January Elks Student of the Month for Bellows Falls Union High School. A senior, she is the daughter of Robert Anderson and Amber Malloy, and she resides in Westminster.

Elizabeth sets high standards for herself. She cares about learning for the benefit of learning rather than concentrating on “just the number grade.” She has signed up for enrichment programs in the past to pursue her special interests which speaks volumes for her academic growth. Dedicated to doing well, she sets goals and then lines up her academic schedule to meet post high school requirements for her career interests.

Always positive, Elizabeth is a pleasure to work



with. She brings positive energy and enthusiasm to class assignments, discussions and various activities. Desirous of developing her skills, she seeks constructive criticism and truly values any suggestions for improvement.

Every day is a smile and a “thank you” with Elizabeth and her attitude and drive are appreciated.

An active student who attends school every day, not only does Elizabeth eagerly attend her classes, but she asks for additional time with a teacher if there is something more that she wants to work on.

Adding to her busy academic life, community service matters to her. She is an valued member the BFUHS Environmental Club and enthusiastically and maturely led a group of younger students through special activities for Earth Day last year.

Clearly deserving of recognition, BFUHS and the Elks are proud to have Elizabeth represent us as a Student of the Month.

## NEWS FROM THE TOWN GARAGE - HOW TO ID A FROST HEAVE

Hello Neighbors,

We hope all that attended the open house had a good time. I would like to thank the Westminster Beaver Working group for the interactive and educational display of flow devices and beavers.

I also would like to thank Everett Hammond engineering for the road surface management information and being there to answer questions as well as all the road crew that came in on their day off to help show off all they have accomplished in the last few years. And

last but not least the taxpayers that make it possible.

Roads have been posted which means heavy trucks should not be on our dirt roads without permission. Anything that folks can do to help keep the traffic to a minimum during mud season will be a great help to everyone including you.

Try to go around mud if possible, try to straddle ruts, I hear if you take your EV out of traction control it will go better in mud. All these things will help get through it quicker. Coming out with equipment and trucks can just compound the problem and make it worse sometimes.

I was recently asked by someone visiting from out of state how to identify frost heaves when driving around our back roads. I replied “It is easy, you just stick the first quarter inch of your tongue out between your upper and lower teeth and drive around. When you feel a sharp pain in your tongue chances are you have hit a frost heave, this of course is assuming that you’re avoiding pot holes as you should be.”

*Thank you for your support,  
Chuck and Crew*

## NEWS FROM TOWN HALL - SPRING IS IN THE AIR

Now that major league baseballs and bats are out in Florida and Arizona, it’s a sure sign that spring is right around the corner.

After a long, cold winter it’s nice to see short sleeves and green grass again. This, from someone who spends the better part of his free time all year long in hockey rinks!

In reality, the winter hasn’t been bad at all. Some of us have had two or three mini mud seasons under our belts already, but other than that, not too bad. On the other hand, it would be naive to think that we’ve seen the last of Old Man Winter. It seems that there’s always one more storm to come our way. It’s Mother Nature’s

way of reminding us all just who’s the boss!

The town website continues to evolve. Thanks to those of you who have offered suggestions and shared content with me to help improve the platform. If you have any suggestions or comments, I’d love to hear them!

Elsewhere, we’re still looking for new members for the Planning Commission. If you want to be part of helping the Town to be all that it can be, don’t hesitate to contact me. My office phone number is 802-722-4255 and my email address is [manager@westministervt.org](mailto:manager@westministervt.org).

March is going to be a busy time as we’ll have Town Meeting and voting in our rear view mirrors. After that,

we’ll be looking forward to improvement projects around town.

Finally this month, with the town elections behind us, I’d like to thank Kevin Hughes for his leadership over the past six years on the Selectboard.

Being a member of a Selectboard is never easy and it’s often a thankless task. In the short time that I’ve had the opportunity to work with Kevin, I’ve come to appreciate his professionalism and attention to detail.

Thank you Kevin!

*Lou Bordeaux  
Town Manager*

## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met February 7th in person and via WebEx with President Lori Larue presiding.

The following attended in person: Lori Larue, Pete Harrison, Pat Goodell, Cindy Moses, Nancy Dalzell, Frannie Waldron, Doug Oftedahl and director Donna Dawson. Those attending via WebEx were Don Dawson and Miriam Lanata. Kathy Elliott was unable to attend.

**Programs & Services Provided in January 2024:**

**Meals-on-Wheels:** During January we had 3 meals recipients hospitalized and several who will be unable to return home to receive meals. A couple was added to the list temporarily and another couple was re-started after an absence.

Volunteers delivered meals five days a week to 21 different people. Those in need of weekend meals received two frozen meals each Friday.

**Transportation Program:** In January, 4 rides

were given to medical appts. Healthy Aging Programs: Both of our Strong Living exercise classes, (Karen W. and Ronnie F.; instructors), are happening two times per week on Zoom.

An accessible Yoga class is being held Monday’s online for the winter while the instructor is out of the country. The Tai Chi class is happening in-person, on Tuesdays at the Institute.

**Assistance and Referrals:** In January, volunteers picked up and delivered pet food (1x); dropped off a piece of equipment (1x); and delivered soups to someone who was sick. Volunteers also dropped off monthly pet food to 6 residents participating in the Foxy Fund program through Senior Solutions.

**Medical Equipment:** In January we loaned out 12 pieces of equipment; received 3 items returned and accepted donations of 8 items in addition to disposable supplies.

Community Nurse Program: WeCares Community Nurse has retired. We are in the process of hir-

ing and fundraising in order to hire a new nurse.

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

**Donations received from mid-January thru February 2024:**

**Honorary:**  
In honor of Sarah Waldo from Oliver Brody

**Memorial:**  
In memory of Pat Barrows from Jane French  
In memory of Judith Berkley from Judi and Ben-net Petry  
In memory of Ruth Friedman from Jane French  
In memory of Laura Leonard from Nancy Dalzell  
In memory of Rebecca McKenny from Fred & Lorraine Yates  
In memory of Lori Miller from Doug Sherwin & Yvette Durell  
In memory of Margret O. Palmer from Carleton Palmer II

## NEWS FROM THE WESTMINSTER INSTITUTE: NEW LIFT APPROVED

After obtaining a design for a new lift and following a lengthy permitting process, the Institute’s Board of Managers finally has the necessary variance and permits for the lift. We’re very happy about this news!

As many of you know, the elevator at the Institute has been inoperable for a couple of years. We’ve been unable to host elections or provide space for activities

that require accessibility for all and that make the Institute a true community center.

We are now working with our architect and contractor to finalize cost estimates and establish details on the purchase of the lift and construction schedule.

Demolition and installation of the lift will take approximately six weeks, according to early estimates.

While there will be some temporary inconvenience to the Institute and Butterfield Library patrons, we plan to be able to maintain the usual functions for Westminster Cares and the Westminster Historical Society, and expect that the usual activities in the gym can go on uninterrupted.

Access to the library may be affected or closed during construction and

some activities may need to be canceled, due primarily to safety concerns, when elevator work is underway.

The current estimate for the project is \$130,000. That will be finalized when final construction details are known, by late February.

We have received some generous donations from the Dascomb Fund, the Town of Westminster, Together We Can charities, and local residents, but we will have to raise more money.

Would you like to help? We accept any and all donations (tax deductible) to help us to achieve our goal.

Donations can be made to the Westminster Institute at PO Box 93 Westminster Vt. 05158.

We will have more information in the April Gazette on construction details, timelines, final costs, and how activities and access to the Institute and Library will be impacted.

*Thank you for your patience,  
Westminster Board of Managers*

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# Nature Notes - Hibernate, Migrate or Adapt?

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

In Vermont, our critters hibernate, migrate or adapt. We think of bats, woodchucks, and bears as true hibernators and racoons, skunks and chipmunks as partial hibernators. The partial hibernators wake occasionally to eat, forage and wander around.

Last week I received a call from the Rockingham Library that a bat had been found alive just outside the library. The staff knows I am not afraid of bats, but I am cautious not to touch them because of the chance of rabies. By then someone had opened the door and frightened the bat off.

Being a true hibernator, if one is disturbed and comes out of hibernation, it's chance of survival is slim because there is nothing to eat, and they need a temperature above forty-five degrees.

A few bats migrate to southern climates for the winter, but the little brown bat and the big brown bat, that we are apt to see, hibernate in caves or old buildings. So many people panic if a bat shows up in a building and their first thought is to kill it. This makes me so sad. Remember last summer when the mosquitoes were so bad? One bat can consume over 1500 mosquitoes a night.

We have always thought of bears as true hibernators but as the climate warms, will they continue to sleep all winter or wake up the same as the partial hibernators do? A bear's metabolism is lowered to a point that it doesn't eat or drink or eliminate waste. Bears sleep soundly when snow is deep but in a winter of little snow bears are exposed and awaken early.

A female bear gives birth to her young by mid-February. She can have one to five cubs, but usually has



Skunk and bear photos by Don Clark

two. The cubs are tiny, blind, almost hairless, nine inches long, and weigh half a pound. They are totally dependent on their mother for food and warmth. Most dens are exposed to the cold air, so the mother breathes on them to keep them warm. The cubs don't hibernate but nap frequently.

During the warm weather in early January, my son discovered a skunk, partially covered with leaves, snoozing in a window well. Had he been there all winter, or had he been out wandering?

I often see holes in my lawn in warm weather where they dig for grubs. On moonlit nights, I would see my cat and a skunk fairly close together paying no attention to each other. Cats rarely get sprayed, but the story is different between dogs and skunks.



When it snows I have quite a few birds at my feeder, but on the open days I have very few. Last week two large flocks of Canada geese were spotted flying north. What birds continue to migrate?

I have to end this with bobcats which adapt to our climate. I apparently live close to the route that bobcats take every night looking for food. Twice in the last two weeks a male bobcat has caught a squirrel in front of my house.

I say male because he is larger than the ones I have had in the past. This morning I started watching just as it was getting light. A bobcat visited and went after a squirrel. This time he missed as the squirrel dashed up a tree.

Hibernate, migrate or adapt.

## A WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: WHAT'S OLD?

By Jessie Haas

Recently two of us spent a couple of hours with Gail Golec, an archaeologist working on the petroglyph project in Bellows Falls—or in an older language, the Kchi Pôtégok Project. Gail has found stone artifacts in Walpole, and was curious to see the ones in our care.

We looked at a range of stone points, some made from local material, some from material from other places. Unfortunately, we don't know where they were found, so it's impossible to pin them to Westminster.

However, we do have two larger stone tools, a pestle used for grinding food like corn and nuts, and a hand axe, that were documented to have been found here.

It's impossible to know exactly how long ago those stones were shaped and used in everyday life, but it could have been more than 10,000 years ago, and they could have been used over a long period of time. It was fascinating to handle them, and feel how perfectly they nest into a human palm.

They were crafted to be comfortable and to do their jobs superbly well. It's frustrating not to know who did that and what their stories were. Those tools are the very oldest artifacts we have. The stone they are made of is literally older than dirt.

Our next oldest artifact is 265 years old—quite a difference! It's a schoolgirl sampler stitched in 1761 by Ann Ruggles, then of Roxbury, MA, at age 11. In contrast to the stone tools, which have not been touched by time, this sampler looks ancient. It has been on display for many years, the fabric is discolored, and the stitching is barely visible.

We know a lot about Ann Ruggles. She was born in 1751, one of nine children. She married Joseph Dorr, brother to Ebenezer Dorr, one of the riders who went out the same night as Paul Revere to let patriots know the British were coming.

Ann and Joseph Dorr had seven children. He died in Boston in 1780. In 1782 Ann married Mark Richards, 10 years younger than herself. He was learning to walk the year she was stitching her sampler.

At age 16 Mark had climbed out the window of his parents' house in Connecticut to join the American army as a teenager; he served at the Battle of Red Bank, the 1777-78 encampment at Valley Forge, and the Bat



tle of Stony Point. He moved to Boston after the war and became a manufacturer of wool and cotton cards.

Ann and Mark had seven more children. The youngest four died between 1788 and 1796. Later that year the family moved to Westminster with daughters Sarah, Harriet, and Fanny. They lived on the corner of Grout Avenue, diagonally opposite the Bradley house. Sarah married William Czar Bradley.

Mark Richards became a prominent citizen, a storekeeper, and a member of the US House from 1817 to 1821, succeeding his own son-in-law. He was the 9th Lt. Governor of Vermont.

In 1811 Ann and Mark adopted Harriet Holton, their three-year-old granddaughter, after her mother died. Harriet lived with "Ma" and "Pa" Richards for the next 20 years, until she fell in love with the Putney Perfectionist John Humphrey Noyes. Mark Richards disapproved; he'd heard bad things about Noyes, and besides, Harriet was needed at home.

Harriet wrote to a cousin that Ann, now 88, "requires the care of a mother for a little child, and I have enjoyed giving her that attention." But a housekeeper offered to act as Ann's nurse.

Harriet and Noyes were wed in 1838, the day Queen Victoria was crowned, and by 1846 were pioneering

Free Love on West Hill in Putney. Ann and Mark didn't live to see it. She died in 1841, he in 1844. Both are buried in the Old Cemetery in the Bradley tomb.

The sampler Ann stitched at age 11 was one of those photographed and cataloged by the Schoolgirl Sampler project last summer. Local conservator Michelle Pagan plans to incorporate it into a talk she has proposed for the prestigious Dublin Seminar this summer.

She will also do some work to conserve the sampler, including making it possible to view the back side—the working side. Experienced needleworkers always flip a piece over to see how it was made. In this case, it will also let us see the original colors, which have not faded.

A stone tool can lay on a river bank for millennia, unchanged, but 10 or 20 years of even filtered indoor light will turn a fiber artifact into a rag that tells us nothing.

If you have an interest in old things of whatever age, contact us through our website, [www.westminstervthistory.org](http://www.westminstervthistory.org). Join, set up a time to research at the archives, even volunteer. We do have a lot of fun!

*In photo, Native petroglyphs in Bellows Falls. Photo by Robert F. Smith.*

## 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 March 4 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 January: 47

Number of calls through February 22th: 34

Number of calls calendar year to date: 81

Number of calls fiscal year to date: 314

**Association Meeting:** The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting February 6th with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 24 members present and 11 members excused. Currently there are 50 members of the volunteer fire department.

The fire department welcomed Noah Cobb as a new Jr member. He will become a full member when he turns 18.

**Emergency responses:** January turned out to be an

other busy month with 47 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown for the 47 calls.:4 mutual aid, 1 to Springfield, 1 to Brattleboro, 2 to Putney; 31 rescue/medical calls; 2 motor vehicle accidents; 1 electrical issue; 1 welfare check; 4 box alarm/false alarm; 2 for tree on wires/power line down; 1 untimely; 1 co alarm.

**Mud Season:** Although the worst of mud season is yet to come, it is always a good idea to limit travel on muddy roads as much as possible, giving them a chance to dry out.

If using a muddy road is unavoidable, be sure to drive toward the center when possible. The shoulders are apt to be very soft adding to the chances of getting stuck or tipping over.

**Lifeline:** The winter vacations are upon us, and it is a time when many people travel. If you have a Lifeline or a Lifeline type system in your home, it is a good idea to contact the provider to let them know if you are going to be away from home. There should be a telephone number listed for contacting them.

If there is an accidental trip of the alarm, the provider will know if the residence is unoccupied or not. This will

save the responding agencies from going out for a false alarm.

**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 an 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. All memorial donations go into our scholarship fund to be given out at graduation.

Send donation to: Westminster Fire & Rescue Association PO Box 111 Westminster, 05158

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](http://www.westminsterfire-andrescue.org).



# Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

## CARE - HEARD OF IT YET?

Emergencies can take many forms, as we’ve all seen via our computers, tablets, phones, TV Screens and unfortunately, our own backyards. Ice storms, hurricanes, unrelenting rain, floods, fires, major traffic accidents, and similar events can cause power outages, isolate individuals, or prompt the need for evacuation.

If prolonged, these events may become life threatening for people with certain disabilities or other circumstances.

The Citizens Assistance Registry for Emergencies (CARE) program was created to help emergency responders identify Vermonters who might need additional assistance in case of a wide-scale event.

Think about a neighbor or a family member that has a need that requires uninterrupted power service; or uses oxygen tanks; or must get to the hospital weekly for important medical treatment. There are many different types of needs in our community and CARE can assist emergency responders to identify Vermonters who might need that additional assistance in case of a wide-scale emergency.

So, what can I do, you ask? Well, if you know some-

one or if you ARE someone who would fit this need, go to the following website and register yourself (or someone else) – E911.Vermont.GOV/CARE and register. While registering doesn’t guarantee your safety, it does help local emergency responders with the knowledge that you have specific needs.

CARE allows individuals to self-identify their needs and report it to E911. E911 then follows up with individuals on a regular basis to ensure the information is accurate.

If you are an older resident of Westminster or a resident with a disability, and DO NOT have access to a computer, Westminster Cares can assist you through the registration process. Please contact the office at (802) 722-3607.

*NOTE – You still need to call 911 in a medical or other emergency. CARE is designed to help Fire and Rescue teams with identifying who might need help, in the event of a wide-spread emergency. Be sure to read the instructions on the website, so you have a full understanding of what “registering” with CARE means.*

## CREATIVE AGING PROGRAM AT MSA

Main Street Arts (MSA) to 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, 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](http://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.



Still, chair of the MSA board. “Our new mission statement focuses on the social-emotional wellbeing for community members of all ages. This program achieves this by expressing creativity and making social connections for seniors, which is good for your health.”

Thom Simmons, Nutrition/Wellness director at Senior Solutions, agrees.

“Senior Solutions recognizes creative aging as an integral part of healthy aging. Humans have an innate desire for expression and creation. Arts projects help us communicate the human experience in fun, meaningful, and impactful ways.

“Sharing our creative work is a great way to connect with others and build new connections. The arts can also help people achieve a sense of purpose and personal growth and can have a positive impact on social, emotional, mental, and physical health,” he continued.

Instructor Evie Lovett is excited about the collaboration between the participants and herself. “I can share a visual language — cyanotype-making, photography, collage — that can be a platform for older adults to excavate a richly lived life for meaning and imagery and learn skills in the process. I believe we can all be artists, we are all artists.

“I take delight in supporting the unfurling of crushed artistic attempts earlier in life and banishing the phrase “I’m not an artist” from the room,” she continued. “Working in community gives us the opportunity to build our artmaking skills while seeing ourselves as threads in a communal tapestry.”

MSA is ADA accessible with a concrete, covered ramp to the front door near an accessible parking place. For full class descriptions and to register, please visit [mainstreetarts.org](http://mainstreetarts.org) or email [info@mainstreetarts.org](mailto:info@mainstreetarts.org).

*In photo, participants in Annabelini Questifari’s class make a family heirloom.*

## REMEMBRANCES

- MARCH 2024:**

**PATRICIA BARROWS, 86**  
**NO. WESTMINSTER, VT**  
**11/2/1937 - 2/4/2024**
- LOUIS CORBETT, 77**  
**SEATTLE, WA**  
**FORMERLY WESTMINSTER, VT**  
**D. 1/22/2024**
- LOIS DOWLING, 91**  
**1/30/1933 - 2/1/2024**  
**WESTMORELAND, NH**  
**FORMERLY SAXTONS RIVER, VT**
- NORTON “NORTY” GARBER, 84**  
**1/13/2024**  
**WESTMINSTER WEST, VT**
- SUSANNE ILLINGWORTH, 82**  
**BELLOWS FALLS, VT**  
**9/11/1941 – 1/23/2024**
- REBECCA MCKENNY, 84**  
**WESTMINSTER, VT**  
**12/15/1938 - 12/2/2023**
- JOSHUA MOSHER, 45**  
**12/29/1978 - 2/10/2024**  
**BELLOWS FALLS, VT**
- ROBERT “BOB” PERKINS, 91**  
**6/14/1932 - 12/29/2023**  
**HINSDALE, NH**  
**FORMERLY BELLOWS FALLS, VT**

## SOUPER WEDNESDAYS

Souper Wednesdays continue throughout the winter with a variety of delicious soups served every Wednesday from 12-2 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Westminster on Route 5. Come out for good food and great conversation.

On the third Wednesday of the month, Westminster Cares' volunteers will be making soup and hosting a speaker during lunch. In February, Mark Boutwell, the Executive Director of Senior Solutions spoke about the programs and services available to older adults in Windham County.

On March 20th, Elliott Greenblott, AARP Vermont Fraud Watch Coordinator will be speaking about various scams targeted at seniors and Vermonters; and ways to protect yourself.

## GARDEN TOUR IN JULY

This summers' Westminster Garden Tour will be held on the weekend of July 6th and 7th.

## TECH SUPPORT FOR OLDER ADULTS



In partnership with the Westminster Institute and Butterfield Library, Westminster Cares is 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. to 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, March 30. 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; the library has a desktop computer 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 schedule an appointment, you can call the number above or email [wecares@sover.net](mailto:wecares@sover.net).

## WESTMINSTER COMMUNITY FESTIVAL SEPT. 14TH



The Westminster Community Festival is a one-day event on Saturday, Sept. 14, 2024, (Sept. 15 rain date), organized to bring together Westminster residents and showcase our town.

Admission is free. Several organizations will participate, including the Westminster Institute, Westminster Cares, the Historical Society, the First Congregational Church, and Westminster Center School. Others are welcome!

The festival will be centered in the village, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Among the events, the Westminster Institute plans to hold a ceremony celebrating the 100th

anniversary of its dedication. The Congregational Church will unveil the refurbishment of its stained-glass windows.

All Westminster residents are invited to participate in a Westminster Arts and Crafts Display inside the Institute. Visual arts, crafts, written word, and creative trades are all welcome to feature the creative diversity of our town. Contact Kathy Traugott at [Kathy.Traugott@comcast.net](mailto:Kathy.Traugott@comcast.net) with questions or your interest.

We’ll have food, crafts, and other vendors; live music, and entertainment and educational events set up on Institute grounds and inside the building, at the church, the Westminster Fire Department, and the Historical Society.

There will be plenty of fun for kids. It’s a great fundraising opportunity for local nonprofits.

This is a free event for townspeople and anyone else who’d like to come. Everyone is welcome!

If you would like to have a booth as a vendor or demonstrator on the Institute grounds, please contact Jason Perry at [perryfamilymapleworks@gmail.com](mailto:perryfamilymapleworks@gmail.com).

Would you like to volunteer for the festival? Contact Beth Shrader [bethshrader514@gmail.com](mailto:bethshrader514@gmail.com).

If you’d like to join in our planning, the next meeting of the Community Festival is at 5:30 p.m., Monday, March 11, in the North Room of the Institute.



# Mystery Photo



We didn't have room for a Mystery Photo in the February Gazette, but this month's photo is courtesy of Highway Department Road Foreman Chuck Lawrence. Does anyone recognize this sawmill and remember where it was located? Email us and let us know. Thanks!

## SEVCA FREE TAX PREP

Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is once again offering free tax assistance via the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program (VITA). This year in-person services will be provided at eight locations in Windsor and Windham counties. New and revived VITA locations include sites at the Old Firehouse in Wilmington, the Winston Prouty campus in Brattleboro, the Springfield Town Library, the Ludlow Community Center, Townshend Town Hall and St Paul's Episcopal Church in White River Junction. Appointments and drop-off services can also be found at SEVCA's main office in Westminster, the Springfield Library and the Windsor Resource Center.

SEVCA's efforts are led by Emily Strasser, VITA Program Coordinator, who was a VITA volunteer last year when all the returns were prepared remotely. "I am glad we are able to return to meeting with people in person and that we can do it in new locations that make it easy for people to find us. It is important to me that everyone understands their taxes and then can make informed decisions about things like how much is being withheld from each paycheck.

In-person services are preferred by people using VITA and are preferred by volunteer preparers. Strasser reports. VITA services are available to people who generally make \$64,000 or less; persons with disabilities; and limited English-speaking taxpayers.

# WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

WE'RE ALWAYS UPDATING THE HAPPENINGS ENTRIES. PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN THINGS CHANGE OR WHEN SOMETHING SHOULD BE ADDED OR REMOVED. THANK YOU!

## FAITH COMMUNITY

### The First Congregational Church of Westminster

The Westminster Congregational Church on Route 5 in Westminster invites you to join us for any and all our worship services and even

March 3rd Worship at 10 a.m. with welcoming of several new members. Coram Deo will follow after in the fellowship hall with soup.

March 5th Women's Fellowship

March 10th Worship at 10 a.m. with Communion

March 17th Worship at 10 a.m. Special Irish themed coffee hour to follow.

March 18th Standing Committee 5:30 on Zoom

March 24 Palm Sunday with blessing of Palms at 10 a.m.

March 28th Holy Thursday. A soup meal at 5:00 p.m. and a Service at 6

March 29th Good Friday Service at 6 p.m.

March 31st Easter Sunday Sunrise service at 6:30 a.m. on KHH grounds. Breakfast to follow at church starts at 7:15 a.m. Service at 10 in the Church. All are very welcome!

Every Wednesday from 12-2 p.m. is Souper Wednesday come enjoy different soups and great conversation.

### 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 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 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.  
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 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 Apr. 2024 Issue of the  
Westminster Gazette is  
Wednesday, Mar. 20  
Publication Date is  
Wednesday, Mar. 27  
To Contact the  
Westminster Gazette  
E-mail:  
westminsternews@gmail.com

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## WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

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westminsternews@gmail.com



# HAYWARD’S FINAL GARDENING LECTURE ON MARCH 3RD



Gordon and Mary Hayward will give the third in a series of three talks illustrated with a powerpoint presentation at the Congregational Church of Westminster West on Sunday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m.

The talks are a fundraiser for the Church.

In this final talk, 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.

To preview some of the content of these talks, you can go the Haywards’ website at [www.HaywardGardens.com](http://www.HaywardGardens.com).

*In photos, clockwise from top left, folks plowing a field at the Ranney Farm in Westminster West looking towards what is now the Haywards' property. The early or mid 1990's of the home's transition under the Hayward's ownership. Their son Nate is on the ladder. The Old Buxton Place on McKinnon Road in Westminster West.*



## NEWS FROM THE WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY

The Westminster West Public Library thanks everyone who came out for hot chocolate on Valentine’s Day. The event was a lovely success with happy hearts and hearty cookies!

The library continues to host a Saturday Social with fresh-brewed coffee every Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Just bring your own mug and enjoy the warm library environ while mingling with others in the community.

On April 13, the library will host a ‘zine-Making Workshop from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

What’s a ‘zine?

We’re glad you asked! A ‘zine is a tiny book made from a single piece of paper. A ‘zine is a way to share, through drawing or words or both, a mini-story. And



here’s the best part: you do not need to know how to draw or write well to create a ‘zine. ‘Zines are one of the most egalitarian mediums for communication! The workshop is free, includes all supplies, and is open to all ages.

### Library Lesson on Cupid

Did you know that your library is part of the Catamount Library System? This means that even if we do not have the book you want to read on our shelves, we can get it for you! Contact your librarian, Lise, to get set up. Now that you have your library card and access to the Catamount Library System, here are some recommended reads for March:

Enough by Cassidy Hutchinson ~ This memoir centers on Hutchinson’s time as assistant to Mark Meadows, White House Chief of Staff, during the Trump presidency.

The Fraud by Zadie Smith ~ Named one of the New York Times 10 Best Books of the Year, this a historical novel based on a celebrated 19th century criminal trial.

The Eyes of the Impossible by Dave Eggers and Shawn Harris: A Newbery Medal Winner, this graphic novel tells the story of Johannes, an all-seeing free and fast dog.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

The Westminster West Public Library is located at 3409 Westminster W Rd, Putney, VT 05346.

Visit us on the web! [WestminsterWestLibrary.org](http://WestminsterWestLibrary.org)

## ROCKINGHAM AWARDED \$360,000 GRANT FOR MEETING HOUSE



The Town of Rockingham has been awarded a \$360,000 Save America’s Treasures grant from the National Historic Preservation Fund, administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Together with a matching sum from the town, the grant will partly fund Phase I of the Rockingham Meeting House Preservation Project.

The purpose of the project is to make sure the meeting house stands proudly for future generations. Built in 1787 and declared a National Historic Landmark in 2000, it is recognized as the largest intact 18th public building remaining in Vermont still in its original material form and in active use.

The last major preservation of the building was done in 1906 and 1907.

The project has been divided into three phases. The first focuses on drainage, stabilizing the foundation, window restoration, and roof repair. Current estimated cost of this stage is \$980,000.

In addition to the SAT grant and town match, Phase I construction is made possible

with funding from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and a generous donation from BF Trades.

Building condition assessment and pre-construction planning has been underway since 2022.

Preliminary construction work is slated to begin in late summer and fall 2024 and continue through 2025.

Phase II will focus on plaster and exterior woodwork conservation.

Phase III will focus on restoration of the box pews, a fundamental defining characteristic of an 18th century meeting house, as well as life safety and ADA compliance. Current estimates for this work is \$1.1m, yet to be raised.

Questions and comments about the Save America’s Treasures grant, the preservation project, and continued fundraising may be directed to the Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission, Rockingham Town Hall, POB 370, Bellows Falls, VT 05101 or by email at [clg@rockbf.org](mailto:clg@rockbf.org).

Updates can be found at the Municipal Projects webpage at [www.rockinghamvt.org/](http://www.rockinghamvt.org/).



HEALTHY

CHIROPRACTIC

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DR. DAVID PARELLA  
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102 Saxtons River Road  
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BCBS, CIGNA, MVP and workers injury insurance



