

AREA SCHOOLS WELCOME SPRING



By Liz Harty, Principal, Westminster Center School

Students at Westminster Center School (WCS) continue to showcase their reading and writing skills! Our most recent celebration was our annual Breakfast and Books event on Friday, March 14. We had 88% of our families attend this event in which students shared their writing pieces that completed module two of our new reading curriculum, Expeditionary Learning (EL). Families were invited into classrooms to read and enjoy breakfast with their child. What a great way to start the day!

Between March 17 and March 27 students are learning and growing their biking skills through the Local Motion bike trailer. Our PE teacher, Ms. G, covers biking skills through basic riding, bike safety, and road riding. The progress is amazing as students ride around our parking lot, across the pump track, and down School Street.

We will be hosting the Twin Falls Training Center the week of March 31 during our PE classes. Students will learn all about gymnastics and perform a culminating show for families on the afternoon of April 4th.



Spring is here and WCS is welcoming a new greenhouse! Paid for through the Healthy Meals Initiative Grant, this is a wonderful addition to our learning garden where students will learn more about the world around them and the process of growing and harvesting vegetables and flowers.

Westminster Center School is also looking for an evening custodian. If you are interested in learning more about the position, please contact Liz Harty at elizabeth.harty@wnesu.com



“ROCKINGHAM’S ACROPOLIS” FEATURED IN MONTPELIER EXHIBIT

The Vermont History Museum in Montpelier is hosting an exhibition about the Rockingham Meeting House.

The exhibit showcases the early history of Rockingham and its neighboring villages from the 1770s to the 1840s. An opening reception with refreshments was held on March 22 at the Museum, located in the Pavillion Building at 109 State Street next to the Vermont Statehouse. The exhibit runs to July 26th.

John Leppman kicked off the reception with a brief history of the meeting house, followed by architect and historian Jane Radocchia interpreting its architectural grammar and timber frame geometry. Historian and folklorist David Deacon provided a program of songs and stories from the early days of Rockingham and its villages.

The exhibit is a collaborative effort of the four museums of Rockingham: the Belows Falls Historical Society, the Saxtons River Historical Society, the Rockingham Free Public Library, and the Rockingham Meeting House Museum. Additionally, the Springfield Art and Historical Society contributed valuable artifacts. Relics from private collections further strengthen the show’s depth. The Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission led the effort.

The array of artifacts and historical materials offer insight into the daily lives, culture, and development of the region’s early settlement. This includes the newly conserved Rockingham’s First Church and Early Town Records manuscript. Among the highlights are portraits painted by 19th-century Parker Hill Village artist Aaron Dean Fletcher, which capture the likenesses of individuals from Rockingham, Saxtons River, Parker Hill, and Springfield. These portraits serve as a visual connection to the past, providing a glimpse into the people who shaped the communities of southeastern Vermont.

Architectural renditions of the meeting house in its historic array of colors are also on display, along with an overview of ongoing conservation and preservation efforts.

The Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission and its projects are made possible with funding from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the Town of Rockingham, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, the National Park Service, and by private donation.

Photo of meeting house artifacts at the exhibit courtesy Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission.



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STORY CORPS TEAM COMING TO WESTMINSTER

The Story Corps Team is coming to town on Tuesday, April 29, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. You may have heard stories on public radio of family, neighbors or friends sharing a story of how they met or shared a common experience.

Vermont Public is hoping to build story-telling and listening skills through a program they are calling "Take One Small Step." The Westminster Inclusion Committee and the Westminster Institute are working to make it happen and everyone is welcome!

This is part of our One Wonderful Westminster campaign. Come with friends and meet your neighbors.

We'll start the evening with pizza; then following the One Small Step training we will pair up attendees for short conversations to practice what you've learned. We hope you will walk away with the skills to have more productive conversations.

One Small Step brings people with different views together to record a conversation — not to debate politics — but simply to get to know each other as people. The initiative hopes to combat the polarizing effects of news and social media just by talking to each other one-on-one again. Because when we approach each other with curiosity, we realize we have more in common than we think.

Pizza and non-alcoholic drinks will be provided.



You need to either call (802) 540-6882 or sign up on the website at www.eventbrite.com/e/one-small-step-in-westminster-skills-to-bridge-the-political-divide-tickets-1264294401589?aff=oddtcreator.

In photo, Kurn Hattin girls and their housemother, Ozzie Mae Jewitt, helping with the Westminster Inclusion Committee booth on Town Meeting Day at Bellows Falls Union High School.

Long River Tai Chi Circle

TAI CHI

JOIN OUR NEW BEGINNERS' CLASS!
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 Rabies Clinic: Saturday, March 29, 2025
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 Rabies cost per animal - \$15.00
 More Information: Westminster Town Clerk
 802-722-4091/clerk@westminervt.org

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 Page 8 - approx. 2.5"x3.25" - \$200 a year

New Sections Introductory Rates:
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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.westminstervt.org

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES -

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met on March 13 at the Westminster Institute with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended in person: Vice President Pat Goodell, Vice President Pete Harrison, Treasurer Frannie Waldron, Secretary Doug Oftedahl, Don Dawson, Cindy Moses, Karen Walter (Emerita), and director Donna Dawson. Kathy Elliott attended on-line via WebEx. Nancy Dalzell was unable to attend.

Programs and Services

Meals-on-Wheels: Currently we are delivering lunch daily to 18 residents. Those in need of week-end meals received two additional frozen meals each Friday. Thanks to the creative generosity of the Women’s Fellowship of the F.C.C.W., everyone received large “Hershey’s Kisses” filled with treats on Valentine’s Day.

Transportation Program: 8 rides to medical appts. were given in February.

Friendly Visits & Assistance: In February, there was 1 friendly visit.

Medical Equipment: In February we loaned out 6 pieces of equipment; had 1 item returned and had 4 items donated to us.

SOUPer Wednesday Speakers: On Wednesday, February 26th, we hosted the SOUPer Wednesday lunch. Deputy Chief Gary Cobb from the Westminster Fire & Rescue spoke about “Storm Safety & Preparedness.” Materials from the Vermont Emergency Management were distributed and participants were able to have questions answered.

Town Mtg. Fundraisers: Westminster Cares served beverages, baked goods and lunch at Town Meeting on Saturday, March 1st. We truly appreciate all the support.

Community Nurse Program: Our Community Nurse, Kathy Shuster, held a Blood Pressure Clinic at the SOUPer Wednesday event on February 26th. Total Encounters for February: 16 [4 Home Visits;

4 In person; 8 Phone] The next clinics are scheduled for 3/26 and 4/23.

If you are a Westminster resident, 60 years or older and would like to have a phone consultation or home visit with our Community Nurse, please call the office to schedule an appointment: (802) 722-3607

Memorial & Honor Donations Received through March 2025

In Honor of:

In honor of all the Westminster Cares volunteers and board members from Doug Sherwin and Yvette Durell

Memorials:

In memory of Charlotte Kurkul from Pete and Judy Harrison

In memory of Bob Lober from Susan Lober

In memory of Governor Tom Salmon from Bill Smidutz

In memory of Joan Smidutz from Bill Smidutz

ROGER ALLBEE SPEAKS ON THE HISTORY OF VERMONT FARMING



Roger Allbee will speak about his new book, *Turning the Soil: 250 Years of Vermont Agriculture* in a free program at the Westminster Institute’s Butterfield Library in Westminster at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, April 8.

Allbee’s book is a distinguished historical book on changes in rural communities, farmers’ activities, agricultural production, and farm policies over a period of more than 250 years. It comprehensively analyzes agriculture from the perspectives of grassroots, state, national, and global levels. It’s not only a history book on Vermont’s agriculture but also a panoramic birds-eye view of the long history of cultivation and marketing farm products by Vermont farmers and how many reinvented themselves to survive. Learn the important part Westminster farmers played in this history!

Albee has a deep connection to Vermont’s agricultural heritage. Growing up in Brookline on a hilltop dairy farm, he witnessed firsthand the resilience and dedication of his ancestors who have farmed the land since 1794.

He has a comprehensive background in agricultural policies, international trade, and natural resource management. Allbee served on the U.S. House Committee on Agriculture for the late Rep. Jim Jeffords (I-VT).

He worked on the senior staff for the former Farm Credit Banks and Bank of Cooperatives. He served as the Vermont Secretary of Agriculture. He has also been the CEO of Grace Cottage Hospital in Townshend.

Light refreshments will be served.

The Westminster Institute is located at 3534 US Route 5 in Westminster.

In photo, former Vermont Secretary of Agriculture Roger Allbee, who will be giving a presentation on his new book on Vermont farming on Tuesday, April 8 at the Westminster Institute.

YA AUTHOR WEINBERG AT PUTNEY & WEST. WEST LIBRARIES



Author Emily A. Weinberg will discuss life in ancient Egypt and share readings from her debut novel, *The Feather of Truth: An Artist’s Journey in Ancient Egypt*.

This will be on Tuesday, April 29 at Putney Public Library at 6:30 p.m.

And on Wednesday, April 30, at the Westminster West Public Library at 5 p.m.

The Feather of Truth is a coming-of-age story based on actual events in Egypt in 1166 BCE. The story weaves art, history, and mythology into an exciting adventure.

Come, travel back in time. Take a trip to the Nile Valley and the deserts. Discover the feeling of being in old Egypt—the sights, sounds, and smells. Come explore the evocative world of Uli and his friends in *The Feather of Truth*.

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Nature Notes - Opossum in my Snowblower

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Just as it was getting light, I sat down in front of my slider to enjoy my morning cup of coffee. I text or face-time my two sons and daughter which is their sneaky way to be reassured I’ve made it through the night. I was talking to Glenn when Dave excitedly broke in, “I’ve got an opossum in my snowblower.” Glenn started taking pictures while Dave gave us the details.

Dave had stepped out on his deck while his two dogs watched inside the door. He startled an opossum that was eating under the bird feeder. The opossum scurried across the deck but instead of heading off the deck, ran into the snowblower parked on the other end of the deck. While my concern was to not hurt the opossum, Dave only wanted him gone because of his dogs.

With his work gloves on, Dave gave a couple small tugs on his tail with no reaction. Next he tried a few pokes with a broom handle, again with no reaction. Then he tried moving the snowblower to angle down the steps and yelling, again no reaction except to show his teeth. Then he decided to turn the snowblower on, with the blades off. This did it. With the noise and vibration, he shot out and down the steps.



Above, a mother opossum carrying its babies. Bobcat photographed by Don Clark

Picking up my now cold cup of coffee, I turned my attention back to the feeding birds when I spotted a bobcat sneaking around the greenhouse heading toward a squirrel feeding under the bird feeder.

I watched him creeping toward the squirrel. Hiding behind the maple tree, slowly one ear appeared and



then his whole face. In what seemed like several minutes but I’m sure was only seconds, he sprang grabbing the unsuspecting squirrel. With the now dead squirrel hanging out of his mouth, he looked around to be sure the coast was clear before walking across the driveway and over the snowbank to disappear behind the gazebo.

Wow, what a great way to start a day – an opossum in a snowblower and a bobcat catching breakfast!

WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: WESTMINSTER RESPONDS TO LEXINGTON & CONCORD

wereBy Jessie Haas

On April 1, 1775, a county convention was held in the bloodstained courtroom at Westminster. Having been attacked by their own government, the citizens had overturned that government, yet they went back to the democracy they knew and trusted—conventions, votes, resolutions.

They voted, item 4, "as our opinion, that the lives of those inhabitants are in the utmost hazard and imminent danger, under the present administration, Witness the malicious and horrid massacre of the night of the 13th ult." and that it was 'the duty of said inhabitants, as predicated on the eternal and immutable law of self-preservation, to wholly renounce and resist the administration of the government of New York, till such time as the lives and property of those inhabitants may be secured by it; or till such time as they can have opportunity to lay their grievances before his most gracious Majesty in Council . . . "

But on April 19, British troops marched out of Boston to destroy military supplies at Concord, Massachusetts. They were met with force, and though they succeeded in their initial mission, they were driven back to Boston in a disastrous retreat. Forty-nine Massachusetts Bay citizens and 73 British soldiers were killed.

The news reached Westminster on the evening of April 20. Early the next morning Captain Abijah Moore of Putney started south with a company of 35 militiamen, including nine from Westminster. Among them was 15-year-old William Crook, Jr, traveling with his father.

Other Westminster marchers included John Abbey, John Wells, John Sweetland, Nathaniel Doubleday, Gideon Badger, Jabez Perry, and John Wise. All these men lived in Westminster West. Wells had the present Haas farm on Patch Road, and the Crooks and Nathaniel Doubleday lived near the junction of Patch Road and Westminster West Road.

Moore's company reached Cambridge in just three and a half days, crossing the Connecticut and many smaller rivers, mostly unbridged and in full spring flood. Arriving in Cambridge, they were in on the chaotic birth of the Continental Army. Though many of the men who arrived in early April went home almost



—backbreaking labor of our founding mothers trying to keep farms going and children warm and fed. There were also some founding kids who took on the work of adults while their fathers were away.

Following Lexington and Concord, New York ratified the Articles of Association, resolving the disagreement with Cumberland County that had triggered the Massacre. Later in 1775 Cumberland County met at Westminster and voted that this action was "perfectly agreeable to the freeholders and inhabitants of

this County..."

Nevertheless they sought the advice of Congress, not New York, as to what they should do, describing the county as "at present in a very broken situation with regard to the civil authority." They also spoke of being in "an extremely defenseless state with regard to arms and ammunition . . . (w)e have many brave soldiers, but unhappily for us, we have nothing to fight with."

They can't have meant literally nothing. They had showed up fully armed the morning after the Massacre, and the town had its own supply of gunpowder, stored, oddly, in a little closet under the pulpit in the meeting house. But these were not military-scale supplies, and we have to remember, no-one knew what would happen next.

The Westminster Historical Society thanks everyone who helped make 250th anniversary of the Massacre a success. These include, but are not limited to--Greg Gay, Ray Boas and the Walpole Historical Society, Laura Trieschmann, Israel Provoncha, and the Vermont 250th Commission, Lee Ha and the Brattleboro Historical Society, Lou Bordeaux, Mildred Barry, Kelley Thayer, Pauline O'Brien, Ben Masure and his crew, Best Septic, the Westminster Fire Department, the Windham County Sheriff's Department, Jim and Lucy Matteau, Ann and Frank Kebbell, Lyanne Woodward, Mike Lisai, Bucky Adams, Susan and Rich Talbot, Amy Cann, Jenny Holan, Charlotte Gifford, and the Vermont Historical Society.

If you didn't attend, check out the video on our website, www.westminstervthistory.com.

Above, a lithograph of the Battles of Lexington and Concord, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Department holds their monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of the month and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Rescue training is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Next association meeting Tuesday, Apr. 1 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.

The Prudential Committee meets on the 3rd Sunday of every month at the Fire House on Grout Ave. at 10 a.m.

Number of calls in February: 43
Number of calls through March 23rd :28
Number of calls calendar year to date: 121
Number of calls fiscal year, July 1st to date: 371

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting Tuesday, Feb. 4th with Vice President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 21 members present and 6 members excused. Currently there are 47 members of the volunteer fire department.

Emergency responses: February turned out to be another very busy month with 43 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown for the 43 calls: 26 rescue/medical calls; 8 motor vehicle accidents; 3 Mutual Aid, 1 to Saxton River, 1 to Dummerston; 1 to Newfane; 1 for tree on wires/power line down; 2 service calls; 2 smoke investigation; 1 Public assist;

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 willing and able to make available.

Burn Permit Alert: Anyone wishing to do an outside burn must get verbal permission from one of the fire wardens before starting a fire. You must speak with one of the wardens. Leaving an answering machine message will not count as a permit.

When calling for your permit, be sure to ask what materials are acceptable and which ones are unacceptable to burn. If the Fire Department is called to respond and the fire ends up being an illegal burn, the fire will be extinguished and a fine may be imposed. In case there is a complaint from someone about the fire, the fire department is available to investigate and extinguish the fire if necessary. All burn piles should be a least 100 feet from any building.

Some of the items not allowed are: trash, building material, anything with paint on it, cardboard. Keep in mind that there may be times when permits are not given out due to sudden changes in the dryness and wind conditions. Always be aware of open dry areas and windy conditions before considering a burn.

If one of the wardens is unable to take your call, leave your name and a good phone number and one of them will call you back. Do not start a fire until you have spoken to one of the wardens and given permission.

The wardens are: Warden: Chief Cole Streeter 802-722-3178; Deputy Warden: Duty Chief Mark Lund 802-463-9355.

Flooding: Dangers of high water and flooded cellars becomes an issue this time of year. Residents should check the workability of sump pumps and drains. Be sure to keep watch of the cellar for incoming water. Water in the cellar can be very dangerous, especially if the water comes in contact with anything electrical. The Fire Department does not have the equipment to pump water that is less than 4 inches deep. Avoid driving through puddles on the road. Their depth can be deceiving. Watch the children around potentially deep water. And don't forget the pets.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR SALE: See the Chief or stop by the fire station for more information.

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. Open donations are also appreciated.

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

Donations received in March: Sharon Boccelli; Nancy Holmes Calicchio; Bruce Mickle

As always, we would like to thank the members of the community for their continued support.

Check us out on our web-site www.westminster-fireandrescue.org.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

CARE TO TALK:

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT AGING

Whether you are helping a friend, a spouse or partner or are in the position of caring for a parent, there are often times when conversations, that may not come easy, are much needed.

These conversations can be difficult to initiate, as they aren't as simple as talking about the weather or how one of the grand-kids is doing in school. The most important thing about having these conversations is to do them as early as possible.

Give yourself time to have a series of conversations. It's hard to have a conversation when you're pressured and answers are needed in that moment. No one thrives under that kind of pressure. Make time to ask questions today. Ask early - before you really need the answers. Remember to think big picture and have conversations about health, finances, and housing.

AARP recently introduced "Care to Talk" cards to assist families and caregivers to communicate effectively. The cards are free and designed to address critical, sometimes joyful, and sometimes uncomfortable topics

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

Tell me a story about you and your friends growing up. What did you do for fun?

What's something you think my generation doesn't understand about yours?

What do you love most about living in your home? Do you ever think about living somewhere else?

in gentle ways that spark meaningful conversations between you and those you care for.

There are 52 cards, so they cover a wide range of topics. They act as a guide for family members or caregivers and those they care for to deepen understanding, modify current situations, and discuss future plans.

Participants take turns drawing cards, sharing the questions aloud and encouraging each person to answer. The cards cover topic such as, "What do you love most about living in your home? How would you want to be remembered by your loved ones? If you had to sum up your life as a motto or bumper sticker, what would it say? What's the most beautiful place you've ever visited?"

The topics vary and provide caregivers and family members with engaging discussion points, that can make what might be awkward moments, into potentially insightful, poignant and hopefully meaningful conversations. There's no cost for the cards.

To download and print the cards, visit CareToTalk.AARP.org.

REMEMBRANCES

APRIL 2025:

- MALCOLM STERNBERG, 79
5/29/45 - 2/19/25
- THOMAS (TOM) GOLDSCHMID, 75
4/10/1949 - 2/28/2025
WESTMINSTER, VT
- CHARLOTTE KURKUL, 100
12/12/1924 - 3/11/2025
WESTMINSTER, VT
- JAMES (JIMMY) BROOKS
ROBINSON, 40
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FORMERLY ST. JOHNSBURY, VT

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WESTMINSTER 2025 TOWN MEETING VOTING RESULTS

March 1 voting approved all budgets and articles at the Town Meeting.

A general fund budget of \$1.4 million and a highway fund budget of \$1.77 million for fiscal year 2026 was approved. The \$364,000 Fire District No. 3 budget was also approved. A town school budget of \$6.3 million was approved by a voice vote.

In a 124-7 vote by Australian ballot, an article to eliminate the elected office of town lister was rejected.

Voters also approved a nonbinding resolution calling on Vermont Gov. Phil Scott to "reaffirm his commitment to uphold the rule of law and the Vermont Constitution amidst federal overreach," even if the state is confronted with federal threats related to funding.

THANKS FROM WF&R, PROUD OF OUR TOWNS!

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Department would like to thank community businesses, community members and friends who took time out of their busy Saturday schedule to provide food and drinks and other items during the multiple car crash on I 91 on Saturday, March 8th.

We appreciate and acknowledge all of you for your gesture of kindness. Soups, sandwiches, over 25 pizzas, and other home-made goods were among the many donations that were dropped off throughout the day. Please know that your generosity during this trying time for the Fire and Rescue team, Golden Cross attendants and other area departments has not gone unnoticed. We salute you!

GAZETTE THANKS COMMUNITY

The Westminster Gazette gives a sincere "Thank You" to the citizens of Westminster for the increased budget support at Town Meeting for our community paper.

We greatly appreciate the town's generosity and the editorial support we get through your stories, releases and photos contributed to the Gazette.

8TH ANNUAL ROCKIN' HAM 5K APRIL 5TH

Central Elementary School will be hosting its eighth annual Rockin'Ham 5K at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 5th. The 5K will begin and end at Central School at 50 School Street Extension in Bellows Falls.



Runners may register online at <https://www.active.com/bellows-falls-vt/running/distance-running/rockin-ham-5k-2025>, or paper registrations may be downloaded from the CES website [ces.wnesu.org] or picked up at Central School.

Same-day registration will begin at 9 a.m. on April 5th. The race logo was designed by CES 2nd Grade teacher Meredith Harvey and features a guitar-playing pig (the "rocking ham") and a chicken (from the Thunder Chickens running club at North Walpole School in North Walpole, NH) on a pair of running shoes.

"We are so excited to be hosting our eighth annual Rockin'Ham 5K," race co-coordinator Kerry Pickering said. "This event brings out the best in our community! So many local businesses show their support for our students and our school by sponsoring the race or by providing an item for our raffle. We would love to include every business in town, so please reach out to the school if you haven't yet joined us. This is a super fun, family-friendly event, and if you haven't come to a previous Rockin'Ham 5K, this is the year to do it!"

The raffle drawing will also be held on the same date with dozens of prizes to be given away. Raffle tickets may be purchased from any Central School student or by contacting the school at 802-463-4346.

Local sponsors for the race (to date) include:

Diamond Donors (\$500 contribution): Adams Trucking & Excavating, Chroma Technology, C&S Wholesale Grocers, and Westminster Fit Body Boot Camp.

Platinum Donors (\$400 or more of monetary or in-kind contributions): 802 Credit Union, Allen Bros Farm Stand, Best Septic, Golden Cross Ambulance, Greater Rock Fitness, Green Mountain Traffic Control, J&H

Hardware, JP Trucking & Excavating, Savings Bank of Walpole, Sonnax, and UNFI.

Gold Donors (\$300 contribution): Applied Bolting, Barrett & Valley Associates, Canam, Lisai's Market, and Edward Jones.

Silver Donors (\$200 contribution): Bellows Falls Elks BPOE #1619, Burtco Inc, China Garden, Fall Mountain Pharmacy, Fenton & Hennessey Funeral Home, Greater Falls Insurance, LenTex, Marquise & Morano, MJS Lawn Care & Landscape, Pete's Stand, Silver Forest of Vermont, Whitney Blake, The Vermont Country Store (\$250), and Village Square Booksellers.

Bronze Donors (\$100 contribution): Abenague Car Wash, Boccaccio's & Cason's Corner, Busy Bees, Cota & Cota, D&R Auto Repair, Dari Joy, Diamond Pizza, Harold & Patty Bushway, HB Energy Solutions, The Hungry Diner, John T's Appliance Repair, Killarney Irish Pub, Lawrence & Lober Electric, Morning Star Perennials, Mrs. McCants' 2024-25 Kindergarten Family & Friends, Pickering Educational Services, Salmon & Nostrand, and The Rock and Hammer.

Special Recognition: Bellows Falls Police and Fire Departments, the Bellows Falls Rotary Club, Gail Hynes Photography, LLC, and Golden Cross Ambulance have volunteered their services on the day of the parade for safety, race timing, and photography. Spot On Screen Printing will be printing the race t-shirts.

The school is still seeking sponsors, and raffle prize donations continue to be accepted as well. If you wish to provide a monetary sponsorship or donate a raffle prize, please contact Central School at 802-463-4346. All proceeds from the race benefit the Central Elementary School, and are used for programs, equipment, field trips, and residencies for Central School students.

WCC BIRD FLU UPDATE - DETECTED IN A VARIETY OF WILD SPECIES

As many Gazette readers know, avian influenza, better known as bird flu, occurs naturally in many wild bird species, especially water fowl and some shore birds. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) refers to strains of bird flu that are especially severe and likely to cause more serious illness or death. HPAI can be very contagious and can spread from wild birds to domestic poultry as well as other bird and mammal species.

According to the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept, HPAI "has now been detected in a variety of wild birds in Vermont, including bald eagles, red tailed hawks, Canada geese, wood ducks, mallards, black ducks, and turkey vultures," in all regions of Vermont. (<https://vt-fishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/wildlife-diseases/avian-influenza-wildlife-health-bulletin>). HPAI has also infected several non-commercial poultry flocks and one bobcat (associated with two dead red-tailed hawks). In other states HPAI has

infected many commercial poultry operations, cows in 17 states, and some domestic cats, primarily those associated with farms that had experienced HPAI infections of poultry or cows. HPAI has also affected harbor seals in Maine and Massachusetts, and red fox in several New England states.

The risk to humans is still considered low by the Centers for Disease Control. There have been 70 human cases so far in the U.S., but none in Vermont, and no evidence of human-to-human spread. No cases have been detected in cows in Vermont.

The Vermont Agency of Agriculture is sampling monthly at dairy farms that ship milk to be processed; they are not regularly sampling at other dairy farms, but that testing is available to farmers on a voluntary basis, at no charge.)Given this situation, the Conservation Commission wants to provide some guidelines to help reduce the risk to ourselves, poultry, and pets.

Birds may be infected with HPAI without showing

any signs of illness. Try to keep wild birds separated from domestic poultry and pets. Do not attract waterfowl or shorebirds to your properties by putting out food. Song birds appear to be less likely to be affected, but bird feeders should be placed away from any domestic poultry, and should be cleaned regularly. Bird feeders should be taken down April 1st in any case, as bears are out! Do not touch sick or dead birds, their droppings or any surface or water that might be contaminated without wearing gloves.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife department asks the public to monitor and report observations. Alert the department (email fwinformation@vermont.gov or call 802-828-1000) if you see:

- Hawks or owls: 2 or more found sick or dead, except along roadways---at roadway locations, vehicle strikes are the most probable cause of death.

(Continued on page 7)

NEWS FROM BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY: HAPPY APRIL, WESTMINSTER!

By Alison Baitz, Library Director

I wanted to extend a note of sincere gratitude to all for approving the request of additional town funding for the Butterfield Library and Westminster Institute. This show of support is so heartening — a clear signal that Westminster truly champions its community spaces and library services!

Speaking of the library, we have been busy — and we have a busy month ahead!

On Tuesday, April 8 at 5 p.m. the library will host Roger Allbee, who will discuss his new book Turning the Soil: 250 Years of Vermont Agriculture. That’s sure to be a fun and interesting event!

On Tuesday, April 29 the Institute is hosting the StoryCorps program One Small Step, co-sponsored by Compassionate Brattleboro and the Westminster Inclusion Committee. And please join us on April 1 and April 19 for our Butterfield Craft Group. The wonder-



ful Bring Your Own Book Club is every third Tuesday — this month, that’s April 15. All are welcome!

Families with little ones: please join us for weekly preschool storytime, every Monday at 10 a.m. in the children’s room of the library. We have incredibly talented volunteer readers in Colleen Grout and Jennifer Holan — you and your preschoolers are in such great hands.

I’ve also been brainstorming activities that might appeal to the slightly older, school-aged crowd, and I’m always wondering what might be fun for Westminster’s teens. If you (and/or your kids) have anything you’d like to see us offer school-aged kids and teens, please do let me know. I’ve been purchasing a lot of new materials for kids, too — from new board books to teen graphic novels — come check them out (literally!)

Last but certainly not least, we have a new printer — a lovely Brother wireless color laser printer. In its first week at the library, it has already done some scanning, lots of printing, and has even made copies utilizing the “Reduce/Enhance” feature! Please stop by and say hello to the new printer — and bring us your toughest print jobs. Printing and copying costs just ten cents a page.

See you at the library soon!

In photo, Alison Baitz.

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

Every Sunday service starts at 10 a.m. and there is a children's message. Fellowship hour follows every service. We are located at 3470 Rt. 5 in Westminster. Rev. Rich O'Donnell serves as pastor.

We extend a personal invitation to join us this Easter for services.

April 1st Women's Fellowship 10:30 in the Fellowship hall

April 2nd SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

April 2nd Lenten Series Bible Study 6:30 pm in the Fellowship hall and on Zoom

April 6th Worship at 10:00 am

April 9th SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

April 13th Palm Sunday Worship with Communion and distribution of Palms 10:00 am

April 16th SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

April 17th Maundy (Holy) Thursday Simple soup meal in the Hall at 5:00 pm. Service of the Last Supper at 6:00 pm in the Church

April 18th Good Friday Church open for privateprayer 1:00-3:00 pm. Service of the Lord's Passion at 6:00 pm in Church

April 20th Easter Sunday. 6:00 am Sunrise Service outside the Mayo Building at Kurn Hattin Homes . Easter breakfast at the church hall following the service until 9:30 am. Main Easter Service at 10:00 am in the Church with Special children's message. We also heard a special visitor with initials E.B. may be there. April 21st Standing Committee 5:30 pm on Zoom

April 23rd SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

April 27th Worship at 10:00 am

April 30th SOUPer Wednesday

April 30th Bible Study 6:30 pm in the hall and on Zoom

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

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

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

Walpole Unitarian Church

The corner of Union and Main Streets, Walpole, NH. Services begin at 10 a.m. with Rev. Elaine Bomford. www.walpoleunitarian.org. First Sunday of each month is Circle Sunday with visiting presenters.

United Church of Bellows Falls

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

May Deadline

The deadline for the May 2025 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, April 23

Publication Date Is Wed. April 30

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

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.

Putney Friends Meeting - Quakers

17 Bellows Falls Rd (Rt 5) just north of Putney Village. Sunday worship at 8:30 and 10:30, Intergenerational Singing at 10. All are Welcome! Check www.putneyfriendsmeeting.org for more information.

ACTIVITIES

Butterfield Library hours are Mon. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Tues. 3-8 p.m. and Thur. 1-6 p.m. Sat. 10:30 a.m. - 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 Monday's 10:30-11:45 a.m. at the Westminster Institute This is an all levels class with a focus on building strength, increasing range of motion and flexibility, and improving balance. All poses can be modified to be either more accessible or more challenging.

Radiance Yoga: A slow Yoga fusion class with focus on immune and nervous systems, balance, ways of breathing, deep relaxation for over all health. At Westminster West Congregational Church, 44 Church St. Thursdays, 9:30-10:45 a.m. \$15 per class or \$54 for 4 classes (paid for month). Instructor is Elizabeth Bunker, shimmerez@gmail.com. Call for further info : 603 835-2900, text 978 793-2256.

Living Strong Classes with Ronnie Friedman, Karen Walter Online - Mondays & Thursdays 722-3607

Tai Chi Class Tues. 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m. Class Tues. 11 a.m.-noon Class Thursday 6-7 p.m. Westminster Institute

Souper Wednesdays Homemade soups at Congregational Church Rt. 5 January through April 12-2 p.m. 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. 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 Tuesdays 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Planning Commission 2nd Monday at 6:30 p.m. in the Town Hall.

Conservation Commission meets every 4th Thursday at 7 p.m. alternating between Westminster West Library and the Westminster Institute. To attend via Zoom,contact westminstervtconservation@gmail.com.

Development Review Board 1st Monday of each month at 6 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 Second Thursday, 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. In-person or Zoom Contact: coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org

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

WVFD Prudential Committee meets on the 3rd Sunday of the month, at 10 a.m. at the Westminster Fire Station.

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

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WCC WINTER TRACKING PROGRAM



On Sunday, Feb. 23, the members of the Westminster Conservation Commission and seven enthusiastic guests braved thigh deep snow and a balmy 32 degrees to head up into the forest searching for animal and bird signs.

We were all wearing snowshoes which were very effective and refreshingly quiet in the couple inches of powder on top of a fairly thick crust. The weather had been extremely cold up until the day of the workshop, so the tracks from the last few days were still very fresh looking and easy to identify.

We were able to see the tracks and sign/scat of vole, squirrel, coyote, fox, bobcat, deer, raven and bluejay. We were also fortunate enough to view an entire "porcupine village" in and around a cliff formation near a stand of many hemlocks. There was evidence of several dens in the cliff area, and a maze of well-traveled tracks leading off to the hemlock trees in every direction nearby. This particular area has been populated by porcupines for at least 25 years and likely much longer.

Upon our return from the forest, we closed out the program with applesauce muffins and hot cider. Next year we hope to visit a location adjoining the Connecticut River for our winter tracking program.

Thanks very much to all who joined in, and especially to attendees Martha Mitchell and Jim Calchera for their expertise in helping us identify tracks and signs, and to Rachael Shaw for hosting.

As the snow melts and the temperatures warm, animals and birds are on the move finding food, mates, and nesting material. Slow down to save some lives! Driving the speed limit can give enough reaction time to prevent many from being killed in the roadways.

It's hard to fathom, but it is estimated that vehicles kill one million animals per day in the United States. Please be on the lookout for sunbathing snakes looking for warmth, and turtles who move so slowly and are especially vulnerable to being crushed.

Try not to drive on warm rainy nights when all the amphibians are active if you can help it, and bring the birdfeeders in and secure garbage to avoid attracting bears. Let's keep our wildlife wild and safe!



The Westminster Conservation Commission meets on the fourth Thursday of the month, alternating between the Institute in Westminster Center and the Westminster West library. The public is welcome and we can also create a Zoom link for remote attendance.

If you are interested in all things nature, please consider joining the Commission, or signing up as a volunteer for future projects.

We currently have four members, and we could use a couple more. Email us at westministervtconservation@gmail.com for more information.

In photos, the tracking group, and the entrance to a porcupine den.

BIRD FLU UPDATE CONT.

(Continued from page 5)

- Any loons or eagles found sick or dead
- Crows, jays, or ravens: 5 or more found sick or dead in the same location
- Songbirds: 5 or more found sick or dead birds in the same visual area
- Terns: more than 2 found sick or dead
- Waterfowl: 5 or more found sick or dead in the same area within 1-2 days
- Wild turkeys: 3 or more found sick or dead

In general, it's best to observe birds from a distance, but anyone handling wild birds for any reason should be sure to carefully wash hands, clothing and equipment afterwards. Wear gloves if possible, and do not eat, drink or smoke while handling wild birds.

Migrating species are on their way back. Let's rejoice in their arrival and support them by maintaining the habitat on which they depend, while keeping our domestic animals safe.

For more information on bird flu, contact the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, or the USDA at: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/avian/avian-influenza>. Interested in helping protect and steward Westminster's natural resources? Consider joining the Westminster Conservation Commission!

Contact westministervtconservation@gmail.com.

Tatiana Schreiber for the Westminster Conservation Commission



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APRIL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
WESTMINSTER ANIMAL
HOSPITAL



Westminster Animal Hospital opened in 1985 as a solo small animal hospital and has grown to a full service four doctor practice. Our patients include dogs, cats, rabbits, ferrets and various small rodents and birds.

Westminster Animal Hospital employs 14 people including the veterinarians, technicians, and animal caregivers. We take pride in providing compassionate care for our neighbors' pets.

Our resident pets are Virgil the miniature donkey and Peri the three-legged cat!

APRIL BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
HARLOW FARMSTAND



Harlow Farmstand will open for the 2025 season, our 34th, on Thursday, May 1. We'll be glad to see you, so stop by to say hello to Dan Harlow and his staff Cherie, Ethan, Emma, Hali, and Andrew.

It's been a VERY long winter, so time to start dreaming about your garden. We'll have flower, vegetable and herb bedding plants, annuals and perennials, and hanging baskets for Mother's Day, all organically grown, of course.

We also offer just about everything else you might need: fruits and veggies—mainly from Harlow Farm, dairy products, cheeses and dips, Harlow Farm eggs and frozen chickens, local meat, wine and beer, Orchard Hill Breadworks bread, and preserves such as jams and salsa.

We're open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day. Michael Lenox will open Cafe Loco as well, serving delicious breakfasts and lunches.

Outside dining as soon as the weather warms up! Please note: Cafe Loco will be closed on Tuesdays this season.

You'll find more on our website, harlowfarm.com, and please like us on Facebook.

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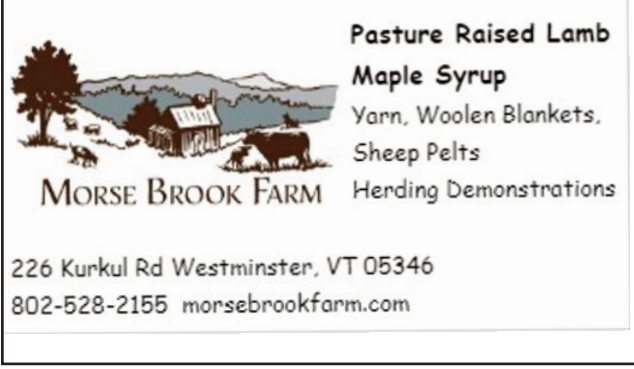
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