

KURN HATTIN WELCOMES BETH ROSS AS NEW DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT

Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children is pleased to announce the appointment of Beth Ross as its new Director of Development. A seasoned non-profit executive with a deep background in education, human services, and community partnership, Ross will lead fundraising strategy and donor engagement for the organization.

“Beth has done a lot of work with children and families,” said Executive Director Sue Kessler. “She has a deep understanding and proven track record of helping organizations become better. Beth brings a great blend of child and family experience, fundraising background, and creative strategic thinking, all with a genuinely thoughtful, kind demeanor.”

Ross’s career has spanned roles in public education, university advancement, nonprofit leadership, and executive coaching. She has held senior positions at Fryeburg Academy in Maine and Stanford University’s Haas Center for Public Service, and served as Executive Director of multiple community-based nonprofits in California. She has launched numerous community schools serving primarily low-income Spanish-speaking students, helped to create teen resource and wellness centers, and forged early literacy partnerships among child care centers and schools, among other accomplishments.

“I’ve had a lengthy, rewarding career in education and human services, working with many kinds of families, including those in distress,” Ross said. “Most recently, I worked as a private coach, coaching business and nonprofit professionals, with a focus on women and wellness.”

In her new role, Ross will oversee all aspects of development at Kurn Hattin, helping to expand the school’s reach and build a stronger philanthropic community around its mission.

“Early on, as she gets to know Kurn Hattin people



and processes, Beth will focus on restructuring our development efforts, looking at both staffing and strategy,” Kessler noted. “I think the experience and vision she brings will strengthen what we do.”

Ross brings not only professional expertise, but also a personal connection to the values Kurn Hattin embodies. “I’m grounded in community. I grew up in a small, rural community in the Adirondacks a lot like Westminster, Vermont,” she said. “I’m excited to give back to the kinds of people I grew up with.”

During her campus visit as part of the interview process, Ross was struck by the compassion and care

shown by staff. “When I toured Kurn Hattin, I was impressed by how kind and compassionate people here are, connecting to the children with extraordinary caring,” she said. “I’m excited to hear people’s stories, and to learn what connects them to Kurn Hattin.”

Looking ahead, Ross is focused on building relationships with donors who share the school’s belief in opportunity and lifelong growth. “I want to introduce Kurn Hattin to a much broader audience, and encourage them to get to know and invest in our children’s success,” she said. “I wish to impress upon donors that they can have a deep, profound impact on the life of a child—one that has a ripple effect on that child’s family and community.”

Kessler added, “She has a natural ability to draw people in, making them feel heard and valued. As she connects with existing and prospective donors, she will effectively communicate how our model exemplifies what can be achieved when communities come together to support children and families.”

Ross sums up her new role with characteristic thoughtfulness and optimism: “I think about my own new beginning here, and how much I will gain by being part of this community. I love how children can gain access to all there is here while remaining engaged with their families.”

Since 1894, Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children, located in Westminster, has helped thousands of children and their families by offering a safe home and quality education in a nurturing environment. To learn more, please visit kurnhattin.org.

In photo, Beth Ross, Kurn Hattin’s new Development Director.

NEW LEADERSHIP AT MAIN STREET ARTS

Saxtons River’s Main Street Arts’ Board of Directors recently voted to promote former Program Director Ashley Storrow to Executive Director.

Board Chair Susan Still credits Ashley with transforming the organization into “the community arts center our board dreamed about. She embodies our MSA values of openness, playfulness, accessibility, and belonging. Her joyful presence is contagious! Ashley has proven herself capable of being a wise and effective executive director.”

Ashley is both an arts administrator and a musical artist herself. The Putney resident performs around the region with her husband Putnam Smith in the folk duo The Early Risers.

She is also a gifted choral director, leading MSA’s resident womens chorus, The Red Tent Singers.

The newly appointed executive director approaches the job with great enthusiasm.

“I’m so thrilled to be serving as the Executive Director of Main Street Arts,” Storrow said. “Over the past year and half I have enjoyed getting to know the people who make up Main Street Arts and design programs with their needs and interests at the core.

“I’m particularly excited about new initiatives that focus on access by getting MSA teachers out in the community working with folks who are less likely to come through our doors. We know that art has the potential to heal and to bridge divides, and now more than ever, I believe the arts are the core of ensuring everyone in our communities thrives.”

To learn more about Main Street Arts’ many programs, visit the organization’s website at www.mainstreetarts.org.



Main Street Arts new Program Director Ashley Storrow.

OLD HOME DAYS RETURN

The Great Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce is excited to announce the return of Rockingham Old Home Days, happening Saturday, Aug. 2 at 17 Depot Street in Bellows Falls. This cherished community celebration will run from noon to 8:30 p.m., closing out the day with a spectacular fireworks show at 9.

This year’s event promises a full day of entertainment and activities for all ages. The music lineup kicks off at 1:00 PM with the Milkhouse Heaters, followed by a high-energy performance by INTERCEPT at 2:30, and wrapping up with MV-19 taking the stage at 5:30. The festival atmosphere will be alive with sound, laughter, and celebration.

Food lovers will find plenty to enjoy, with local vendors offering a wide variety of mouthwatering options. Athens Pizza will be on hand to satisfy your slice cravings and is also hosting a brand-new Hoops Contest for attendees to test their skills.

Smokin’ Bowls brings their signature comfort food, while the Moose Lodge will be grilling up classic burgers and hot dogs. 802 Soul Kitchen and Bumbles Birria will be serving up bold local flavors, and for those with a sweet tooth, fried dough, sno-cones, iced coffee, lemonade, and treats from Mama T’s Sweet Spot will be available throughout the day.

Beyond food and music, Old Home Days offers a packed schedule of fun and engaging activities. Festivalgoers can enjoy performances by circus artists, cheer on battling knights in armor, explore local craft vendors, and take part in interactive experiences like Capoeira demonstrations, fish ladder tours, and a hands-on Touch-A-Truck exhibit. Bubble machines, games, and prize giveaways will keep kids and families entertained all afternoon.

The Great Falls Regional Chamber of Commerce would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the many sponsors who make this event possible, including Best Septic Service, the Bellows Falls Moose Lodge, Great River Hydro, Athens Pizza, Springfield Hospital, Halladay’s Harvest Barn, James Plumbing & Heating, 802 Credit Union, Springfield Area Parent Child Center, Berkley & Veller, FACT TV, WOOL FM, and numerous local businesses and organizations who are lending their time and talents.

For more information visit gfccc.org, or check out the 2025 Rockingham Old Home Days event on Facebook.

CELEBRATION OF AGING ~
Calling All 90+ Year Olds!

On Saturday, Sept. 13, Westminster Cares will host the annual Celebration of Aging which honors our town’s eldest residents, 90 years and older. If you live in Westminster and were born in 1935 or earlier, this party is for you!

Help us locate as many 90+ residents as possible. We want everyone to be a part of the celebration. If you live in Westminster now or if you lived here for many years but moved away, let us know who you are ~ and if you know someone who may be eligible to participate, let us know who they are. Residents of our town who are 90 years of age and older will be recognized and celebrated.

For more information, contact Pete Harrison at 802-289-3776 or Donna Dawson at 802-722-3607. A rain date is set for Sunday, Sept. 14.



Our Monthly Community Newspaper

August 2025 Vol. 21 No. 8

Westminster Gazette

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NORTH STAR HEALTH OPENING NEW PHARMACIES



North Star Health is moving forward with plans to open three new community pharmacies at its health center locations in Londonderry, Springfield, and Charlestown, NH.

Construction will begin this summer, with all three pharmacies expected to have a Grand Opening in 2026.

This expansion comes at a time when many local pharmacies are closing their doors, leaving residents in rural and underserved areas with fewer options for filling prescriptions and accessing essential medication support.

North Star Health is stepping in to fill that growing void by offering convenient, affordable, and patient-centered pharmacy care within their health centers. The pharmacies will include some discount prescriptions and home delivery to help ensure that cost and transportation are not barriers to care.

What sets these pharmacies apart is their full integration into North Star Health's system. Pharmacists will work closely with North Star's medical, dental, and behavioral health teams, providing patients with a seamless, coordinated experience. This level of collaboration

strengthens continuity of care, reduces errors, and helps patients better manage chronic conditions.

"We're seeing more and more communities lose access to local pharmacies, and that loss creates real consequences for people's health," said Joshua Dufresne, MBA, CEO of North Star Health. "We want everyone to have a trusted pharmacy nearby, with a friendly, knowledgeable pharmacist who knows them and is connected to the rest of their care. That's exactly what we're building."

One goal is to reimagine how pharmacy care can work in connection with primary care—especially in rural regions where gaps in the health system are most pronounced.

The addition of these three pharmacies is directly aligned with North Star's mission to connect with and care for the community so everyone may enjoy health and wellness.

This project will thrive with community support. If you would like to contribute to North Star Health Pharmacy Project, please donate here or send a check to North Star Health Attn: Charitable Gifts 100 River Street, Springfield, VT 05616.

WESTMINSTER'S FLAGS ON THE 4TH



ANSWERS, ADVICE, & A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

...BDCC's LaunchPad Lab Hours

The Putney Library
9:00-10:15am
Second Wednesdays
August - October 2025

QUESTIONS? Anthony Toscano
atoscano@brattleborodevelopment.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION
<https://brattleborodevelopment.com/what-we-do/business-assistance/>



SEEKING PROJECT SUBMISSIONS

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and Bennington County Regional Commission (BCRC) are jointly announcing the 2025 call for project submissions for inclusion in the Southern Vermont Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and Regional Priority Project (RPP) lists.

The project intake portal opened Monday, July 21, with an initial submission deadline of September 5th for CEDS project consideration.

Details about the program can be found at <https://brattleborodevelopment.com/southern-vermont-seeks-2025-ceds-and-regional-priority-project-submissions/>.

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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.westministervt.org

SIGN UP NOW TO GET YOUR WINDOWS MEASURED FOR INSULATING INSERTS!



Summer is when many Vermonters get firewood delivered, and it’s also a great time to do something about any cold and drafty windows you may have.

If you can’t afford to pay hundreds of dollars per window for replacement windows, the Rockingham Energy Committee and other community groups are again offering a low-cost and effective way to make your windows warmer and less drafty to local residents.

WindowDressers, a nonprofit based in Maine, developed a way for volunteers to assemble affordable inside storm windows with a pine frame covered on both sides with shrink-fit clear plastic film. A gray foam gasket around the edges holds it in place and keeps out drafts.

If you order these insulating window inserts by late September, they will be built at a community workshop in Bellows Falls in early November.

Once you sign up, two volunteers will come to your home to measure your windows to ensure that the inserts will fit. The average cost of an insert is \$50 each, but if you qualify for any low- income assistance, you can get up to 10 inserts per year at no cost. Alternatively, you can get a \$100 rebate from Efficiency Vermont if you pay for your inserts. Renters can get inserts if they get landlord permission.

Most types of windows can hold the inserts if they have a lip around the inside of the window frame at least ¾” deep. The windows in older mobile homes may not be suitable for inserts.

If you don’t live near Rockingham, there will be similar workshops in Brattleboro (Oct. 23-29, contact Nancy Detra, 802-779-1006) and Windham (Nov. 13-19, contact Bruce Frauman, 802-379-6121).

For a complete list see <https://windowdressers.org/vermont-community-builds/>. Some Vermont builds have already reached capacity for 2025, such as in Bennington and Arlington.

Please contact Peter Bergstrom, the Rockingham Energy Coordinator at 802-444-1860 or rockinghamvtenergy@gmail.com to set up a measuring appointment.

You can also fill out a form at <https://windowdressers.org/sign-up-for-inserts/> and we’ll contact you to schedule the measuring.

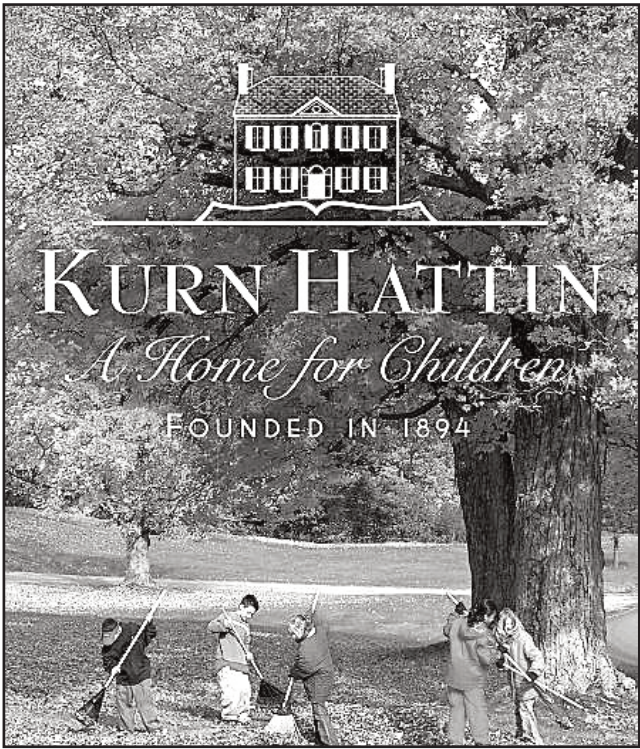
For more information see <https://windowdressers.org/insulating-inserts/>.

Workshops are October 31-November 5, workshops each day at St. Charles Parish Hall/Social Center, 25 Cherry Hill St. in Bellows Falls

Details: <https://windowdressers.org/vermont-community-builds/>

To volunteer at the workshop: visit <https://signup.com/go/NmsPQXW>.

KURN HATTIN RECEIVES HUBBARD MEMORIAL GRANT



Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children has received a \$10,000 grant from the Ira S. and Gertrude S. Hubbard Memorial Fund through the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation.

These funds will be used to continue advancing its important mission of providing children in our care with a safe, caring place where they can learn, play, grow, and experience the joy of childhood.

“We are honored to receive ongoing support from the Hubbard Memorial Fund,” said Kurn Hattin Executive Director Sue Kessler. “This generous funding will have a meaningful impact on our ability to uphold the high standards we value—in the classroom, throughout our campus, and in every aspect of our children’s experience.”

Through its comprehensive residential and educational programs, Kurn Hattin provides stability, structure, and opportunity for families facing difficult circumstances. Continued support from charitable foundations helps ensure that these life-changing services remain accessible to the children and families who need them most.

THE BELLOWS FALLS FARMERS MARKET AT HETTY GREEN PARK IS OPEN FRIDAYS FROM 4-6 PM. IT FEATURES FREE LIVE MUSIC AND RUNS THROUGH SEPT. 19.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES - CELEBRATION OF AGING!

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors does not hold full board meetings in July or August; however, committees continue to meet monthly.

Memorial & Honor Donations through July 22nd:

Honor:
In honor of Lori Larue, and her good work on behalf of Westminster Cares, from Beth Stickney

Memorial:
In memory of our parents, Harold & Alice Shattuck and Almon Flagg, from Barbara Greenough and Ken Flagg

In memory of Bruce Miller from Kay Miller

In memory of Ruth and Richard Morse from Diane & Chip O’Brien

In memory of Peter Parda from Barbara Sherrod & Mark Steinhardt

See details about our Celebration of Aging event on page 1.

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Nature Notes - Adult Birds Feeding Their Fledglings

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

Now is the time to observe birds feeding their fledglings. The bears missed me this spring (knock on wood), so I have been able to keep suet out. Each morning, I supply a new no-melt cake which is gone by evening. Most of the birds have a hard time holding onto the suet cage, not like the woodpeckers whose toes allow them to stay and eat as long as they want.

Both the male and female, Red-bellied Woodpeckers visit daily but what a thrill when they started feeding a baby. An adult would pick a mouthful of suet and fly up in the tree overhead and feed the baby. Eventually the baby figured out how to get the mouthful by itself. The baby was lighter than the adults with just a touch of red on the head. I never was sure if each time I saw a baby if it was another baby or just the same one.

Another time, I watched a male, Red-breasted Grosbeak feeding two males and one female hiding in the bushes near the suet. He would grab a mouthful, dash to the bushes and be back in seconds for more. The male fledglings looked like him, but the female was brown like an overgrown sparrow. Since then, I have



photos by Don Clark

seen the colorful males but not the female. I hope I'm just missing her and that she has survived.

The Gray Catbirds were on the suet constantly. They came so often that I wasn't sure how many were fledglings and how many were adults. I suspected there were two families with multiple babies. I miss them now that one only stops a couple times a day.

The Tufted Titmice had at least four babies, and



with the parents, were continually there. They all look alike with their gray backs and tufted heads, so I never did figure them out.

Soon the fledglings will be on their own and the woodpeckers will be the only ones visiting the suet.

WESTMINSTER SAMPLER - BARNES SISTERS TRAGEDY

by Jessie Haas

Eighty years ago, July 23, 1945, Westminster was shocked by a tragic accidental shooting that claimed the lives of Margaret and Dorothy Barnes, teenaged daughters of Albert Barnes who lived on Barnes Road, just off Patch Road, on the farm presently owned by Randy Major.

Dorothy had just graduated from Bellows Falls High School; Margaret was still a student there. Both were at the top of their classes academically, were popular with their peers, and were strong help to their parents, as their mother, Mabel (Nichols) had been in poor health for several years. Dorothy was newly engaged to Herbert W. Hall, though the engagement hadn't been announced yet.

On the evening of July 23 Hall, Francis Nowers, and Edwin Rathburn, all in their late teens, visited the Barnes family. Mr. Barnes had gotten permission from the game warden to shoot a deer that was damaging his crops. A little after nine in the evening, the boys went down to the melon patch near the road. As they afterward told the sheriff, they soon saw something move 50 or 75 feet away, in a meadow across a small brook. All three fired, but when they went to where they had seen the supposed deer fall, they found Dorothy and Margaret, both shot in the chest.

Two of the boys carried their friends to the road, while the third ran up to the house for a car. Without even telling the family what had happened, they drove off to Rockingham hospital. Dorothy died soon after arrival. Margaret lived about 24 hours; neither girl was able to speak to explain what they had been thinking when they followed the boys down to the melon patch. Sheriff Pat O'Keefe arrested the boys and put them

in Newfane jail. The following day they were charged with manslaughter. All three pleaded innocent and were released on \$1,000 bail. According to the *Brattleboro Reformer*, eight or ten Westminster youth waited outside the room in the hall during the bail proceedings. Mr. & Mrs. Harlow provided bail for Hall. Other Westminster residents chipped in for the others--Albert F Chickering for Rathburn, and Mr. & Mrs. Ralph Edson for Nowers.

The sisters were buried side by side in the family plot in the Westminster West cemetery. Their pallbearers were schoolmates; 250 people attended the funeral. Mrs. Barnes was not among them. She was in Rockingham Hospital suffering from nervous collapse.

On July 31 the chief game warden sent a clarification to district warden R.E. Pratt, making clear that no person other than the landowner, a member of his family, or a wage-earning employee was entitled to shoot deer damaging crops. None of the three boys met that description.

A grand jury indicted Francis Nowers on August 21, setting bail at \$1,500, again provided by the Edsons. After trial was twice postponed, a grand jury met on October 23, hurriedly assembled, and Nowers was absolved of the death of Dorothy Barnes. The count regarding Margaret stood.

Expert witnesses seem to have concluded that a bullet from Herbert Hall's gun killed his fiancée, Dorothy Barnes. He was tried in late October. Evidence was brought showing that the girls were shot at relatively close range, less than 41 feet, that one of the girls had on a bright dress, and that it was a clear moonlit night. The defense pointed out that the melon patch was in a dark hollow where the moon would not have been shining, as it was four hours later when

the sheriff visited the scene.

The judge in his charge to the jury mentioned the "contributory negligence of the deceased" as being no defense in a case of involuntary manslaughter, but added, "When the death of a human being is the result of accident or misadventure, in the true meaning of the term, no criminal responsibility attaches to the act of the slayer. When it appears that a killing was unintentional, that the perpetrator acted with no wrongful purpose in doing the homicidal act, that it was done while he was engaged in a lawful enterprise, and that it was not the result of negligence—the homicide will be excused on the score of accident."

The jurors asked to have this paragraph reread, and later came back to the courthouse to hear it a third time. In the end they acquitted Hall, after deliberating less than four hours. Charges against Francis Nowers were immediately dropped; Rathburn had never been indicted.

Public opinion was squarely behind the boys, with the press describing the deaths as an accident and a tragedy. Nearly 20 character witnesses testified for Hall, and it appeared that most people in some degree blamed the victims for their reckless act in following the boys down to the melon patch. Why they did it—and such smart, sensible girls, too--remains a mystery.

A giddy summer night; a touch of romance and mischief? Impossible to say, as Dorothy and Margaret didn't live to speak a word about their motives. Ruth Grandy remembers that her older brother was to have been with the group who went out to the Barnes farm that night. Her mother had some inkling that some kind of hazardous fun was afoot and refused to let him go.

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, Aug. 5 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.

Unless otherwise called for a special 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 June: 39

Number of calls through July 25th : 35

Number of calls calendar year to date: 303

Number of calls fiscal year, July 1st to date: 35

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting Tuesday July 1st with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 24 members present and 7 members excused. Currently there are 47 members of the volunteer fire department. The voting for captain, lieutenants and association officers and trustees took place at the June 3rd meeting. The results were as follows: Captain Roy Williams, Lieutenant Nick Streeter, Rescue Captain Wanda West, Resue Lieutenant Jon Parker, Association President J.T. Tabolt, Association Vice President Ryan Struthers, Secretary / Treasurer Pete Harrison, First Trustee Josh Stillerman, 2nd Trustee Tessa Ellis, 3rd Trustee Tanner Ells

Training: On July 22, more than 50 First responders gathered at the Bellows Falls Union High School to train

for the unthinkable, an active shooter situation with casualties. Westminster Fire Department, Bellows Falls Fire Department, Walpole Fire Department, Windham County Sheriff's Department, Bellows Falls Police and Vermont State Police trained at the Union High School to evacuate casualties after an active shooter event. This is a new role that the fire department has taken on. In the past, standard protocol would be to wait to enter a building until the scene was considered safe. Now, if there is ever an emergency that requires responders, we will be able to enter the scene, escorted by police wearing tactical gear, and begin to administer life-saving interventions as soon as possible. Many thanks to the students and community members that volunteered to participate as victims. Also, we would like to thank the staff at the Bellows Falls Union High school for helping make this training a success.

Continuing Education: Since 2013 the Westminster Fire Department Association has given out over \$20,000 to deserving students from the senior class of the BFUHS, The income is derived from memorial and honorary donations received by the fire department: The scholarship committee met June 1st to review applications for scholarships from 2025 graduates from Bellows Fall Union High School. This year 3 applicants were awarded \$1,000 each. The awards went to Josh Streeter, Josh Martin and Calli Sprague.

Emergency off- road: The 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.

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.

Emergency responses: June turned out to be another very busy month with 39 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown for the 39 calls: 29 rescue/medical calls; 4 motor vehicle accidents; 2 for tree on wires/power line down; 1 service call; 1 brush fire; 2 false alarms.

The Fire & Rescue Association welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember or honor a loved one or a friend. Unless otherwise designated, all memorial and honorary 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 July:

Kevin Hughes
Katherine Miller
David and Claudia Allbee in memory of Peter Parda
Karen Stenson in memory of Mary Lou Fogg
Mary Lafayette in memory of Mary Lou Fogg

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.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

FORWARD LOOKING

by Helen Neswald

Maybe it’s only my selective attention, but it seems to me that the subject of death — or rather, the process of dying — appears more often in the literature I read. Or maybe it’s the literature I’ve chosen, morbidly, to read. In any case it’s an age-related subject of interest.

Turning 80 — a mere 3 years ago — filled me with foreboding, due mostly to my family history of that decade’s being an end game. Despite the absence of smoking or alcohol consumption, not one of my known ancestors who had entered that revolving door, emerged, or if somehow they did, they were unrecognizable. I attempted to assuage my fears by immersing myself in wholesome, life-affirming members of my age group, whom, by the way, were easy to find in this age-blessed area.

While acknowledging the erosions of the flesh we are all heir to — sensory and motor losses, mental fog-giness, especially concerning names, chronological confusions — the gains of philosophical overview, and an acceptance of human foibles seemed to raise consolation over grief. After all, every school child knows that living things are begotten, born, and die, and though this knowledge seems only remotely applicable to most, it paints our windshield and is always in our field of view as we age.

I tried being celebratory and to think of the petty distresses we are freed from. We can enjoy our lineage without getting up at night to change a diaper, nor to assure ourselves our teenagers are safely home in bed! No one’s dinner needs be planned by us, our incomes are hopefully secured, our wants minimal. The mira-

cles of life are available to us for free, assuming our health remains good, our homes and communities safe and secure.

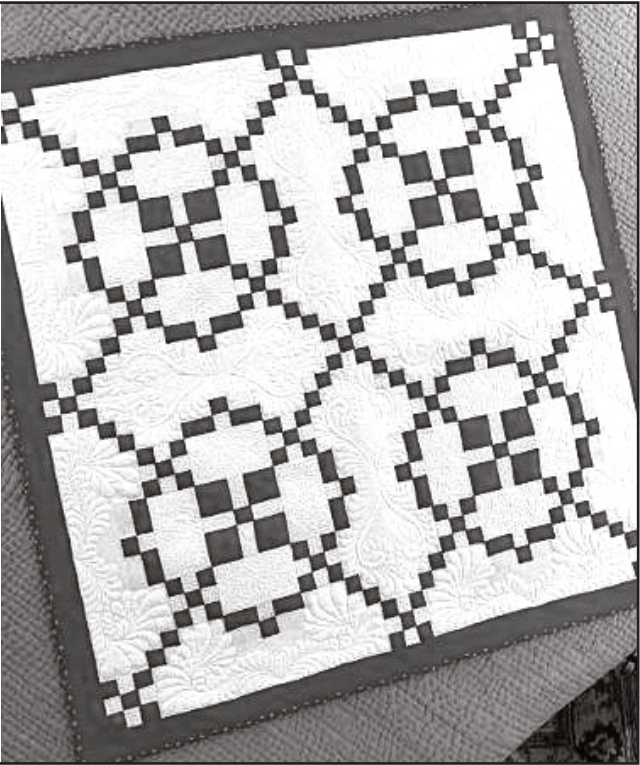
But despite this affirmative philosophy I remained prone to passing attacks of anxiety. Was my misplacing of an important possession a sign that the familial dementia had struck? My tiredness after a standard activity an indication of cardiac dysfunction? But, no, I was exhibiting normal aging alterations, according to the Alzheimer’s organization’s descriptive reassurances. I was in better shape than the standard American woman my age and made up my mind to aim for living up to age 96 — a good, round number, I thought.

Then, suddenly, or rather in consequence of my readings of studies of centenarians globally, I reentered my dying calendar to 110 years! Preposterous and unlikely, you may say? But as nobody but me had any such expectation I saw no harm in maintaining it as my goal, even while recognizing the unpredictability of such guesswork.

Were I to enter my deathbed tomorrow (not tonight, because I have other plans!) I would admit to having been wrong, without feeling compelled to apologize. On the other hand, just admitting that gaudy possibility, presents me with the possibility of 27 more glorious years to explore myself, the world, the universe. Twenty-seven years to take up new interests, new relationships, new understandings of our common albeit currently sullied perspective on the human species and to hope for its amelioration.

Wow! Pass me a slice of birthday cake! It’s going to be a good rest-of-my-life!

ROCKINGHAM HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION LAUNCHES QUILT AUCTION TO SUPPORT HISTORIC MURAL RESTORATION



To support conservation of two Revolutionary War-themed murals, the Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission proudly announces a fundraiser featuring a handmade lap quilt.

Burgoyne Surrounded” was pieced by Karen Engdahl, quilted by Linda Diak, and donated by them to support the Commission’s efforts to restore two important Stephen J. Belaski murals. The quilt pattern was widely popular on both sides of the Hudson River Valley in the 1790’s and early 1800’s to commemorate the surrender of British General John Burgoyne to American General Horatio Gates on October 17, 1777 at the Battle of Saratoga.

The Battle of Saratoga was one of the most decisive military victories of the American Revolution, effectively ending Burgoyne’s campaign to control the Hudson River Valley and proved to the French that the American forces were capable of defeating the British Army. This historic victory led to France’s formal alliance with the American colonies that turned the tide of the war.

The quilt is on display at the historic Rockingham Meeting House, open seven days a week from 11 a.m.



to 5 p.m. Raffle tickets for the quilt are available for \$5 each or three for \$10, and may be purchased at the Meeting House or at Rockingham Town Hall.

All proceeds from the raffle will go toward the conservation of two WPA-era murals by Bellows Falls native son and Vermont artist Stephen J. Belaski. These murals, painted by Belaski in his studio on the third floor of Rockingham Town Hall in the early 1940’s, were installed at Fort Ethan Allen. They were recently repatriated to Rockingham and are being restored for public exhibition. One of the murals depicts Burgoyne’s surrender, making the Burgoyne Surrounded quilt especially meaningful as the town prepares to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the event on October 17, 2027.

The winning ticket will be drawn on the 248th anniversary of Burgoyne’s surrender, October 17, 2025 at the Rockingham Meeting House.

This unique blend of craft, regional history, and national heritage is a powerful reminder of the importance of historic preservation. Don’t miss your chance to own a piece of history while supporting the continued celebration of Rockingham’s cultural legacy.

In photos, left, raffle quilt, and one of the Belaski murals that will be restored.

REMEMBRANCES

AUGUST 2025:

ELIZABETH “BETSY” BASHAW, 84
8/28/1940 - 6/23/2025
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

MARY LOU FOGG, 74
9/22/1950 - 7/3/2025
WESTMINSTER, VT

DAVID JUDD, 61
10/23/1963 - 6/30/2025
WESTMINSTER, VT

BERNARD LAWRENCE JR., 83
D. 7/7/2025
DUMMERSTON, VT

HANS PETER PARDA, 75
D. 6/8/2025
BRATTLEBORO, FORMERLY
WESTMINSTER, VT

ELIZA RIEGELMAN, 38
5/31/1987 – 6/24/2025
BURLINGTON, FORMERLY
SAXTONS RIVER, VT

PRISCILLA RODGERS, 82
1/10/1943 - 6/7/2025
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

PAUL SULLIVAN, 90
1934 - 6/18/2025
RUTLAND, FORMERLY
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

IRENE TOUSSAINT, 97
D. 7/11/2025
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

CHRIS WILDER, 48
3/26/1977 – 7/3/2025
GRAFTON, FORMERLY
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

DAVID JUDD CELEBRATION OF LIFE

A Celebration of Life for David Judd is planned for Saturday, Aug. 23rd 1 p.m. the Polish Picnic Ground, on Darby Hill Road in Rockingham.

WILD GOOSE PLAYERS PRESENT “GRUESOME PLAYGROUND INJURIES”



Gruesome Playground Injuries” is a brilliant dark comedy by Rajiv Joseph, a finalist for the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for Drama for his play *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo*, and winner of an Obie Award for Best New American Play for his play *Describe the Night*.

GPI tells the story of Kayleen and Doug, two friends whose lives connect around a series of injuries. Spanning ages 8 to 38, the play follows their relationship as they navigate life’s challenges, often reaching for each other’s support, and sometimes pulling away..


Its non-chronological structure allows the audience to piece together their attraction and experience how injuries can map a lifetime. Joseph highlights the complexity and messiness of life, reminding us that it becomes a bit easier with someone by our side.

Moving between the tragic and hysterically funny, this show is not to be missed.

Performances of Gruesome Playground Injuries will be from Aug. 1st to Aug. 10th

Evening shows at 7:30 and matinees at 2:00. Shows will take place at the Wild Goose Storefront, 7 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls. Running time is roughly 1.5 hours with no intermission.

Tickets are available on the Wild Goose website, wildgooseplayers.com.



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GREEN MOUNTAIN CAMP FOR GIRLS LAUNCHES ENDOWMENT

In 1917, two young women, Sarah Bradley and her friend Grace Holbrook, founded a summer camp in the green hills of Dummerston. Inspired by public health data showing rural children were underserved and under-resourced, Sarah and Grace launched Green Mountain Camp for Girls to offer girls in the area something revolutionary: fresh air, physical movement, creative learning, and the freedom to simply be themselves.

Current board member and grandson of Sarah Bradley, Richard Epstein, adds, “The founders felt it important to offer a setting where girls could interact without the pressure of boys. At the time there was a boys camp in the area, so having an all girls camp was both part of their vision and logical.”

Sarah’s younger sister, Edith Bradley, later stepped in to lead the camp after Sarah married. Edith never married or had children of her own, but poured her energy into the camp’s leadership for years, shaping its direction and spirit.

Over a century later, Sarah and Edith’s vision still lives and thrives—now supported by a powerful new gift. Green Mountain Camp for Girls is launching the Sarah Bradley and Edith Bradley Memorial Endowment (SBEBME), a fund made possible by a transformative legacy donation from Judy Kahrl, GMC camper and staff alumna and Sarah’s daughter and Edith’s niece.

Just before her passing in January of 2025, Judy made the lead gift to establish the fund and set in motion a \$250,000 matching gift challenge—if the camp raises \$125,000 by Dec. 2026, Judy’s estate will match it two-to-one, unlocking a powerful financial engine to support staff recruitment, compensation, and retention for generations to come.



“As a parent, I’ve watched the staff at GMC help my daughter grow into a braver, more confident version of herself. They lead with heart, humor, and intention—and it’s those relationships that make camp transformative. This endowment ensures that future campers will have the same chance to be seen, supported, and inspired.”

—Melanie Brubaker, GMC parent and board member

For over 100 years, Green Mountain Camp has provided a joyful, rustic, and nurturing space for girls to play, explore, create, and grow together. Today, the camp serves approximately 300 campers each summer, offering immersive programs in arts, nature, leadership, sports, and community-building—many echoing the original camp values of physical movement, creative learning, and practical skills. The camp also distributes about \$20,000 annually in scholarships, ensuring access for families with financial need.

The SBEBME is the first named endowment in Green Mountain Camp’s history—and it reflects not just nostalgia but strategy.

Endowment funds will be professionally managed while being overseen by a GMC board-appointed committee. Annual distributions will support:

- Competitive, market-based staff salaries
- Retention and return bonuses for key counselors
- Recruitment strategies to attract diverse and inspiring role models

With over \$1,000 already raised and a first goal of \$10,000 by Sept. 2025, the campaign is off to a hopeful start. Donors can contribute online, by check, or via stock gift. Visit www.greenmountaincamp.com/support-gmc for details.

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
First Congregational Church of Westminster on Rt 5 welcomes you to join us on Sunday. We have a children's message each week and fellowship hour in the hall after.

Aug. 3rd Worship at 10 a.m.
Aug. 5th Women's Fellowship at 10:30 in the hall and Zoom
Aug. 10th. Worship with Communion 10 a.m.
Aug. 17th Worship 10 a.m.
Aug. 18th. Standing Committee 5:30 p.m. on Zoom
Aug .20th. Bible study. Topic Miracles 6:30 pm in the hall and on Zoom
Aug. 24th. Worship at 10 a.m.
Aug. 27th. Bible study Topic is Miracles 6:30 p.m. in the hall and Zoom
Aug. 31st. Worship at 10 a.m.

We look forward to seeing you and hope you will join us for Church or any program or activity. Rev. Richard ODonnell serves as Pastor

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.

Our pastor for more than 20 years, the Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, has moved on to follow another call in her faith journey. As we seek a settled pastor through our search and call process, we will not be able to offer office hours as usual, but the Deacons (Karen Blanchard, Charlotte Gifford, Ray Huessy, Adrienne Major and Sue Venman) are available to support the congregation.

You can leave a message on the church number (802-387-1175) or you can contact a deacon directly. For all questions of church building use, please contact Tom Griffith (tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org)

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

United Church of Bellows Falls
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.

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

East Putney Contradance at Pierce's Hall - 121 East Putney Falls Road off Rt. 5 (look for the signs)
May' s Contradance was the last one until the dances resume again on the last Saturday of every month beginning on September 27. Stay in touch at: eputneypierceshall@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.

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

Editor: Robert F. Smith

Board of Directors:
Charmion Handy - Chairwoman
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Alma Beals - Treas.
Joyce Sullivan - Sec.
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Sept. Deadline

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Westminster Cares

Westminster Fire and Rescue Association

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ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL GARDEN TOUR RAISES FUNDS FOR WESTMINSTER CARES



Westminster Cares held its 22nd Garden Tour on July 5th and 6th. After many weeks of rainy weekends, the sun shined for both Saturday and Sunday.

The gardens on display offered shady spaces, warm breezes and an eyeful of colorful blooms. People enjoyed strolling through the lovely gardens; taking photos; gathering ideas; listening to the strains of violin and recorder; having lunch at the garden café; and listening to the special event talk and presentation.

Attendance was strong with about 400 tickets purchased and distributed before and during the weekend. Many attendees were residents of Westminster and surrounding towns who support the event each year; many were garden club members and visitors from out of state including from around New England, New York and even Florida.

Westminster Cares’ board members and President Lori Larue wishes to thank everyone who came out and attended the event.

“We were thrilled to have such a wonderful turnout,” she said. “This fundraising event would not be possible without the help of those who support us: our garden hosts, sponsors, local businesses, advertisers, prize donors, volunteers, board members, committee members, and our director, Donna Dawson.

“This small community has such a big heart. We are truly grateful to everyone who made this event successful and we thank you for supporting our mission.”

Sincere appreciation goes to Gordon and Mary Hayward for 22 years of support; without them this event would not be possible. We estimate that over the many years of Garden Tours, the event has raised over \$180,000 to support Westminster Cares’ programs and services.

Every year several community members open their private gardens to the public. In addition to the Haywards, special thanks go out to this year’s hosts, Cyndy Fine of Genius Loci Ecological Design, (Kismet); Alice & Josh Laughlin, (Laughlin Family Garden); and Mandy and Emily Lisai, the Westminster Center School’s Garden. Special events included a talk and power point presentation by local landscape designer Julie Moir Messervy, whose was titled, “Landscaping Ideas That Work.”

Special thanks go to all the volunteers and board members who worked tirelessly throughout the week-



end, served on the garden tour committee and donated their energy, time and effort in planning and executing this year’s Garden Tour.

Proceeds from the tour support the services and programs of Westminster Cares, a volunteer organization whose mission is to create opportunities for seniors and adults with disabilities to live with independence and dignity in the community.

The following individuals and businesses contributed to the success of the event:

- **Sponsors:** Our sponsors provide key financial support so that all of the funds raised at the event can go directly to programs and services: Chroma Technology Corp., Silver Forest, 802 Credit Union, Allen Bros. Farms, Savings Bank of Walpole, Brattleboro Bowl, Mascoma Bank and Cota & Cota.
- **Donations of equipment and services:** Best Septic Services (portable toilet), Ruth Grandy (safety vests), Doug & Tina Smith (large tent), Bellows Falls Opera House (publicity), The Westminster Institute (tables and building use), the Congregational Church of Westminster West (chairs).
- **Printing and Graphic Design:** Amie Walter of Amie Walter Design for designing all promotional materials; C & S Wholesale Grocers Print Shop for printing all event materials.
- **Music:** Amy Cann, violin; and recorder, Jenny Holan
- **Photography:** Ira Wilner, Tim Elliott, and Lori Larue
- **Plant Sales and Flower Arrangements:** Morning Star Perennials (Laurie & Scott Bolotin); Judi Petry and Melinda Underwood for flowers and table arrangements.
- **Ad Program:** All the local individuals, businesses and organizations who purchased ads in the Garden Tour program.
- **Raffle Prizes ~ Donations and Winners:** Ann Ashcroft for creating and donating the handmade floral quilt ~ won by Pat Haas of Westminster West; Overnight stay including breakfast for two donated by the historic Grafton Inn ~ won by of Madeline Ullrich;



Set of Adirondack Chairs with Pillows & Table donated anonymously ~ won by Heidi Bernier; Flowering Crabapple tree donated by Matt Conklin in Claudia Giese’s memory ~ won by Amanda Cordano of CT; Framed Poster of VT Red Clover & Glass Goldfinch donated by Cindy Moses and Sherwin Art Glass ~ won by Linda Devlin of N.H.; Stained Glass Panel and decorative batik hanger made and donated by Maple Leaf Designs ~ won by Susan Talbot of Westminster West; Large ceramic planter donated anonymously ~ won by Sue Rondeau of Claremont; Café Loco Gift Certificate & Half-Gallon of Maple Syrup donated by Michael Lenox & Marty Collins Tree Farm ~ won by Johanne Mangi; Morning Star Perennials Gift Certificate & Fiskars Pruning Tool Set donated by Laurie & Scott Bolotin & anonymous ~ won by Susan Harlow of Westminster; Genius Loci garden design consultation & Gardening Cart with Goodies donated by Cyndy Fine & Elise Manning Sterling ~ won by Heidi Bernier; Halladay’s Flowers & Gifts gift certificate & Halladay’s Harvest Barn BBQ Box Set donated by Marsha Austin & Kathleen Govotski ~ won by Don Guyon of Saxtons River; Johnson’s Greenhouse gift certificate donated by John Johnson & Pair of Hand-Forged Plant Hangars donated by Fred McKenney ~ won by David Wypis of Westminster West; Gift Certificate from River Artisans & Two Hand Painted Wine Glasses donated by Dellamano Glassware ~ won by Tracy Barnard of Washington, D.C.; Harlow Farm Stand gift certificate donated by Dan Harlow ~ won by Lee Trapeni of Saxtons River; The Hungry Diner gift certificate & Quart of Maple Syrup ~ won by Vikki Butynski; Ceramic Bird Bath & Cast Iron Bird Feeder donated by anonymous ~ won by Holly H.; Framed photograph taken and donated by Tim Elliott & Decorative Batik Hangar donated by Maple Leaf Designs ~ won by Melanie Finigan.

For more information and photos visit www.westminstercares.org and “Like” us on Facebook.

In photos, clockwise from left, Cyndy Fine and volunteer Amy; tour volunteers Joyce Sullivan and Alma Beals; Emily and Mandy Lisai at the WCS garden; and tour music provided by Amy Cana. Photos by Ira Wiulner and Lori Larue.



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