



## WESTMINSTER FD TEACHES FIRE SAFETY AT WCS



Westminster Center School would like to extend a big thank-you to the Westminster Fire Department for hosting an engaging and educational Fire Prevention Day on Friday, Oct. 10. Firefighters welcomed students to the station, shared important safety tips, and gave everyone a close-up look at the equipment and fire trucks used to keep our community safe. The visit sparked excitement and valuable conversations about fire safety both at school and at home. We are grateful for our local firefighters' time, dedication, and service to our town. This is one tradition that WCS values and students look forward to each year!

## ROCKINGHAM MEETING HOUSE PILGRIMAGE & OPEN HOUSE NOV. 1

Celebrate the season and your community's heritage at the Autumn Pilgrimage Open House on Saturday, Nov. 1, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the historic Rockingham Meeting House.

Enjoy a full day of history, learning, and fall fun. Discover plans for the Preservation Project kicking off construction in Spring 2026, and hear the latest updates on the building's restoration plans.

At 11 a.m. join us for A Conservation Conversation — a lively talk and Q & A session about the future of the Meeting House and how the community can get involved.

All day long, explore exhibits and tours highlighting building and site archaeology, the history of Old Rockingham Village, and the graveyard and Old Town Tomb. Warm up with mulled cider and donuts, and enter to win door prizes.

The meeting house is not heated, bring along an extra sweater.

Free admission — everyone is welcome to take part in this celebration of local history, community spirit, and autumn charm.

For details, visit [RockinghamVT.org/rmh](http://RockinghamVT.org/rmh).



### Westminster Cares, Inc. Since 1988

#### WESTMINSTER CARES DIRECTOR SEARCH

Westminster Cares, a community-based non-profit providing services for seniors and adults with disabilities, is seeking a Director.

Responsibilities include oversight of programs and services including Meals-on-Wheels, rides, healthy aging programs, volunteer coordination, and community engagement. The Director oversees fundraising activities including events, the Annual Appeal and local grants. The Director helps to ensure operational efficiency and financial sustainability in collaboration with the Board.

This is a part-time position; 25-30 hrs. per week. \$27-\$32 per hr.

For more information contact: [westminster-caresvt@gmail.com](mailto:westminster-caresvt@gmail.com)

EARLY DECEMBER DEADLINE - NOV. 12

Our Monthly Community Newspaper November 2025 Vol. 21 No. 11

### Westminster Gazette

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# “WE ARE HERE TO SELL COWS” PART III - THE AUCTION LEVI CHICKERING REMEMBERS WESTMINSTER’S CHICKERING FARM

It was Wednesday, the day before the fast-approaching auction. Livestock were arriving from far and wide: Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, as far west as Wisconsin, and from Quebec, Ontario, and eastern Canada in the north. Pickups, trucks, and tractor-trailers rolled in by the hour, kicking up dust and noise, the drivers leaning out their windows with documents, state health papers, and bills of sale. Local farmers, dealers, and long-distance haulers arrived, many with weary eyes from the day of long travel. Already, hundreds of dairy cows had made their way onto the farm. Their breath misted in the cool air, filling the pens with a steady hum of lowing and shuffling hooves.



The plan was simple but critical: have the dairy cows arrive as early as possible. Then, get them checked in and have all settled ahead of the auction. The beef cattle and calves would be scheduled to be checked in later Thursday morning and afternoon, just hours before being auctioned off.

Rob was always busy, hustling back and forth between the loading dock area and the office, tagging each animal, writing down the animal's information, and checking paperwork. He was always trying to keep the chaos in some kind of order. Inside the office, our manager had her hands full. She was busy recording the auction check-in tag numbers, sorting ownership papers, matching numbers, and making sure every document was in place. Each animal needed the right paperwork to move across state lines after the sale, and there were no shortcuts. She would record the auction tag numbers with the seller's invoice and add them to the buyer's Invoice when the animal was sold, keeping

all in order so as to have the correct documentation of the sales. The operation would continue straight through into the night, the auction yard lit up under harsh electric lights, until the very last load arrived and every cow was ready for the auction ring.

Sale Day, Thursday morning, the alarm clock was ringing in the dark, early hours. A lot of work is still ahead before the auction starts at 1 p.m. sharp.

My father was always the first one to arrive at the office, and the hired hands were already scattered across the barns and throughout the yards, performing their Thursday morning routines: cleaning out stalls, spreading fresh bedding, feeding and watering the cattle, and getting the animals ready for the big Sale Day. A few last-minute sellers were still showing up, with trucks backed up at the loading dock.

It was 1 p.m., and now, with the barns filled, the buyers arriving, and the smell of fresh hay and animals thick in the air, auction time had arrived. “Bid, buy, and sell”—the auctioneer’s voice rang out, sharp and practiced, cutting through the low hum of the crowd and the distant sound of cattle shifting in their pens. “Now, folks, we’ve got a nice line-up of cattle today, don’t

we?” As the first cow entered the ring, he yelled out, “Look at this fine lady here!”—with a comment from Albert, “she’s fresh, clean, and ready to give you plenty of milk”—then from the Auctioneer, “Who’ll start her off? Who’ll start at two hundred fifty? Two hundred fifty? I got two hundred, now two-twenty-five, now two-fifty, who’s got in? Who’s got it?” His chant was a fast-paced rhythm, like a melody that never quite stopped.

Buyers leaned forward, hands twitching on their canes for the bidding, eyes scanning the animals, looking for that perfect cow, the one that would make the day’s work worth it. My Father stood in the center of it all, directing the traffic in the ring, pulling bids from the buyers, stepping aside to let the animals pass, always reading the crowd, and always pushing the action forward. His job was to keep the pace moving; no time to rest or take a breath.

“Two-fifty, two-fifty, now three! Three hundred, who’s got in, who’s got it? Gonna go, gonna go, at two-fifty!” The auctioneer was a blur of motion, pointing to bidders, gesturing toward the cows, keeping the energy up. Albert yelled, “Hey John, she’s your kind.” The Auctioneer said, “Sold! Two-fifty to John, the gentleman in the back! Well done, well done! Now, what about this next one?” Albert would yell, “Are you looking for a fresh one? This cow here’s fresh and fine—she’ll make a solid addition to any herd!” The bidding swelled, quick and sharp, each cow that passed through the ring was a chance for someone to buy into a better future, or to take a profit or a loss. The crowd murmured, and the sound of the auctioneer’s chant built and faded like the ebb and flow of the tides.

## CELEBRATE THE HOLIDAYS IN BELLOWS FALLS

Join local businesses and community partners for Holidays in Bellows Falls, running Nov. 28 through Dec. 13, a two-week, community-wide celebration of the season — filled with shopping, activities, and small-town festive spirit.

The fun kicks off on Flannel Friday, Thanksgiving weekend, and wraps up with the Bellows Falls Parade of Lights on Saturday, Dec. 13 at 5 p.m.

Visitors and residents alike can enjoy:

Holidays in Bellows Falls Bingo — Pick up a



bingo card and explore downtown! Support local shops, check off your squares, and enter to win prizes

donated by participating businesses.

BF Rocks Boxes — Curated themed gift packages featuring unique local finds — perfect for holiday gifting.

Plus, plenty of special offers, decorations, and festive surprises throughout downtown!

Follow Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance on Facebook and @bfdowntown on Instagram for updates and participating business announcements.



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New Sections Introductory Rates:  
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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](http://www.westminstervt.org)

## WCC HOSTS BIRDING EVENT

On a cold and cloudy morning in early October, the Westminister Conservation Commission, Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), and the Windham County Natural Resources Conservation District (NRCD) co-sponsored a birding event to celebrate a collaborative project between the three groups to investigate ways to protect and restore water quality in the adjacent Henwood Hill Marsh.

Windham NRCD will be working with SEVCA to complete initial site assessment and analysis activities in order to identify a set of potential practices for the SEVCA property which may include restoring wetland areas through native plantings and earthwork, and installation of green stormwater infrastructure such as permeable pavers. The final set of practices will be de-



veloped in consultation with SEVCA and the results of engineering studies.

The site is well known as a haven for both resident and migrating birds. Though the day started out cold, and few birds were seen, soon the sun peaked out, and Cory Ross, Executive Director of Windham NRCD,

and SEVCA Weatherization Director Victor Baisley, both with extensive bird identification expertise, helped the 10 enthusiastic participants identify 28 different species, from Chickadees and Blue Jays to several Yellow-rumped Warblers, two Belted Kingfishers, Savannah and Swamp Sparrows, Ravens and Turkey Vultures.

If you want the full list, contact the Westminister Conservation Commission at westminstervtconservation@gmail.com.

The Conservation Commission is open to additional members to help steward the natural resources of our community. If you'd like more information, send us a note at that email address.

*In photo, scanning for birds at SEVCA, Oct 3, 2025. Photo by Tatiana Schreiber.*

## RHOADES CAR DONATED TO COMMUNITY BIKE PROJECT

The Bellows Falls Community Bike Project would like to thank Hollis and Sally Ryea of Westminister West for generously donating their 4-seater pedal powered "Rhoades Car" to our organization.

For a long time, we've been talking about finding a pedal powered wagon type thing to ride in parades, and this is perfect!

The Ryea family has enjoyed the unique vehicle for many years, riding it in the Saxtons River's 4th of July parade and around their land, but were finally ready to let it



go. Since the Bike Project has no place to store it, the Rhoades Car will live at Vermont Academy, safe in a garage.

This vehicle will be a really fun way for the Bike Project to take seniors and physically challenged folks in the Bellows Falls Parade of Lights, the Alumni Parade and the Saxtons River 4th of July -it will allow us to get more creative too! In exchange for storage, Vermont Academy will get to use it as well - Mike Peller, Head of School, suggested they could have fun showing families around the campus.

The Bike Project plans to lend it out to other non-profit organizations as well, such as Westminister Cares. We feel that this arrangement of sharing fits well with Hollis and Sally's community spirit and dedication to helping others.

*Hollis Ryea, left, Mike Peller, and Community Bike Project director Bonnie Anderson, sitting in the newly donated Rhoades Car.*

## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES - FALL CLASSES STARTING

### NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminister Cares Board of Directors met Thursday, October 9th at the Westminister Institute with President Lori Larue presiding.

This was a hybrid meeting. Those attending: Donna Dawson, Director; Kathy Elliott; Pat Goodell, Vice President; Cindy Moses; Doug Oftedahl, Secretary; Don Dawson and Frannie Waldron, Treasurer. Unable to Attend: Nancy Dalzell; Pete Harrison

### Memorial Donations received through October 23rd:

In memory of Pearson "Red" Dawkins from Bill Smidutz

In memory of Hans "Peter" Parda from Pamela Brownell and Michael Parda

In memory of Henriette Swarts from Bill Smidutz

### Meals on Wheels:

If you are a Westminister resident aged 60 or older, and are unable to shop or cook, you may be eligible for home-delivered meals. Call Westminister Cares for more information: (802) 722-3607.

### Westminister's Community Nurse Makes Home Visits:

If you are a Westminister resident aged 60 or older,

you can schedule a home visit with Westminister Cares' Community Nurse by calling the office at (802) 722-3607. There is no cost for this service.

### Free Tai Chi Classes ~ Come out and try it!

Ever hear how wonderful Tai Chi is for your health & want to try it out?

Want to find out if it's fun?

Westminister Cares is offering two free classes:

Wednesday, November 19th at 11am and Wednesday, December 3rd at 11am.

Come try it out! A new class for beginners will start up in the new year.

**"Seated" Tai Chi:** If you have interest in a "seated" Tai Chi class for older adults ~ let us know. A new class is forming that will be held on Tuesday's from 12:15-1:15pm.

Senior Instructor Leslie

Lassetter of Oriental Healing Arts Association will be the instructor for these classes.

To sign up or ask questions contact Donna Dawson at Westminister Cares: (802) 722-3607 or email we-cares@sover.net. Classes held are at the Westminister Institute, 3534 U.S. Rte 5, Westminister.

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## Happy Thanksgiving

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## Nature Notes - The Strange Behavior of a Pileated Woodpecker

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

One day last week, I was enjoying the beautiful fall day when the spell was broken by a YUK, YUK, YUK and a large black bird flew onto the lawn. It was a pileated woodpecker which proceeded to hunt for insects on the ground like a northern flicker does.

A pileated woodpecker hopping along the ground? What the heck? I had never seen this behavior before so I immediately started researching.

We think of them looking for carpenter ants in standing dead trees, stumps or logs lying on the ground. I have seen them eating berries in my yard and they do like suet but carpenter ants are the favorite. My research showed foraging on the ground unusual. My thinking is that it was a young bird "learning the ropes" of finding his own food.

Pileated woodpeckers, our largest North American woodpeckers, are crow-size, 16 to 20 inches long and weigh 9 to 12 ounces. They are black with white around the red crested head, and the male has a red mustache which the female doesn't have. When they fly, white



photos by Don Clark

shows under the wings. It's the YUK, YUK, YUK that catches your attention. Then you start scanning the trees. If you see a pile of long strips of wood under a tree, you can be sure a pileated woodpecker is close by.

Pileated woodpeckers excavate a cavity for a nest. They are attentive parents, not leaving the eggs uncovered during nest exchange. The four eggs hatch after two weeks of incubation. The adults take



turns brooding but the male does three quarters of the brooding.

The male will spend each night on the nest while the female will occupy a separate hole in another tree. The family group stays together until autumn. They do not migrate and stay in their established territory year-round. They mate for life and live twelve to thirteen years.

While researching I ran across an article on pileated vs ivory-billed woodpeckers. Our forests were cut down in the 18th and 19th centuries and by the 1900's, both the ivory-billed and the pileated had nearly disappeared.

The pileated settled for second-growth trees as the forests regrew while the ivory-billed went extinct. The ivory-billed was dependent on the wood-boring beetles found under the bark of mature, dying, and dead trees while the pileated adjusted to other foods beside the favorite carpenter ants.

## WESTMINSTER SAMPLER - WESTMINSTER FAMILIES AT FORT HILL

By Jessie Haas

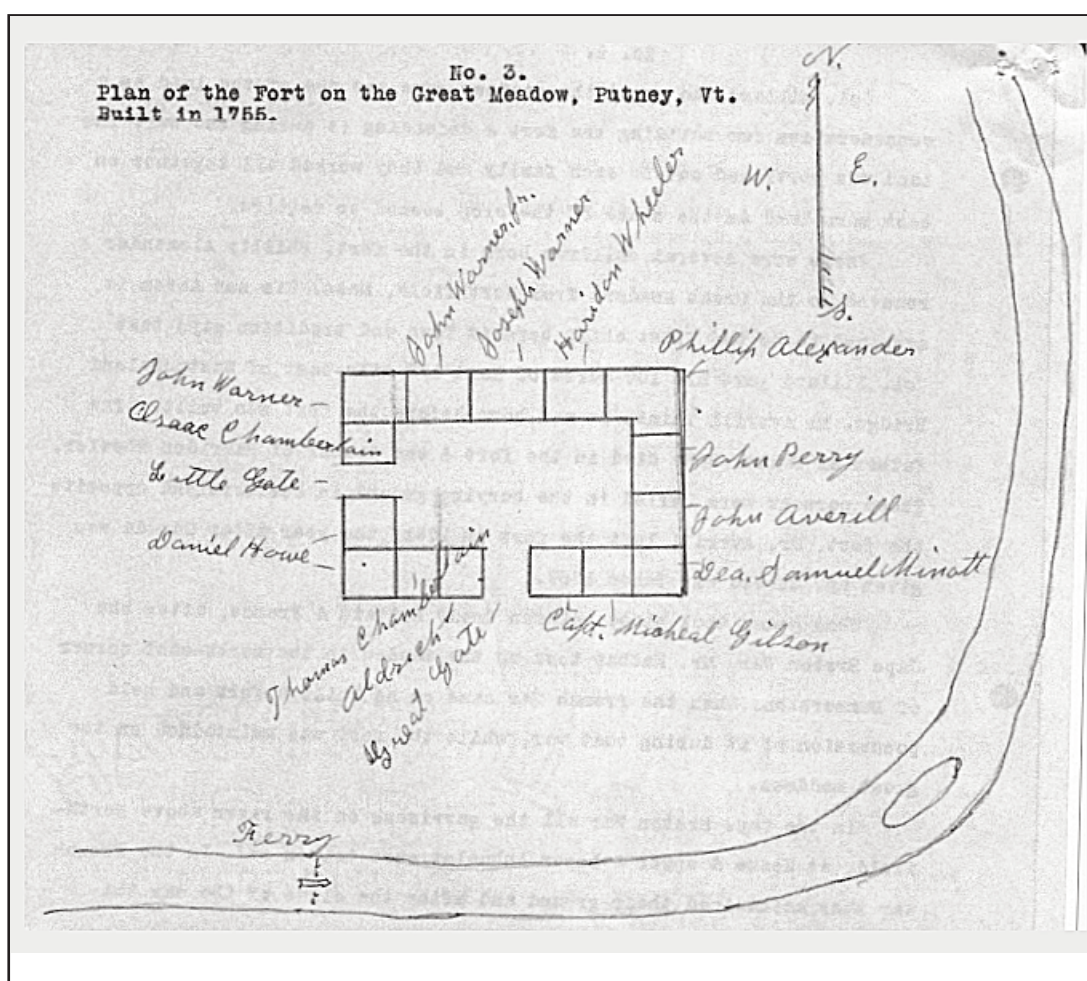
All our lives connect to the past of our town, our region, and our country. But some seem to have a special reach and resonance. Putney Historical Society in its most recent newsletter has posted the reminiscences of Asa Averill focused on his time in the fort down there in the 1750s. The Averills reach to some dark places in our history, and are still in town today.

Asa Averill was a 1751 settler of this town, a member of Azariah Wright's militia, and an ancestor to the Dascomb family, including Kathy Lisai and her children and grandchildren. But the family has deep roots in New England history, going back to Salem, Massachusetts.

Asa's great-great grandmother Anne Pudeator and his great-great aunt Sarah Averill Wildes were tried and hanged as witches there in 1692. They were remembered as having endured their trials with dignity and fortitude and were well-liked in the community—other than the one trivial detail of being executed as witches!

Asa Averill, son of John Averill and Mercy Phippen, was born in Massachusetts. Dates differ; the Putney account gives his birth as 1730, whereas online genealogies give his birth year as 1739. His parents married in 1735, and the Putney account says he was around 4 in 1744 when the family moved to Fort Number 4 in Charlestown, NH. That was during King George's War, the third of the French and Indian Wars. The dispute centered on whether Maria Theresa was the legitimate ruler of Austria; Britain was drawn into that war as an ally of Austria.

The Averills remained in the fort for about two years. After that the fort was briefly abandoned. The Averills went to Northfield, Massachusetts, and stayed there till 1751, when the family—40-year-old John, his pregnant wife, and six children--canoeed up the river to Westminster. Asa was probably 12.



The town boasted only two houses, one at the top of the hill at the south end of the village, and one at the bottom. The Averills lived at the top of the hill, and were soon joined by Mary's brother Samuel and his family.

In August 1754 Indians captured eight settlers in Charlestown, just 12 miles away. The Westminster settlers took shelter at the fortified home of Benjamin Bellows in Walpole, NH, returned in October, but in 1755 abandoned Westminster. The Averills, including teenaged Asa, and Atherton Chaffee, moved to Putney, where with a few Westmoreland and Putney families they rebuilt an old woodcutters' fort on the Great Meadows at a place called Fort Hill, just south of the Westminster line. They were the only English settlers in Putney at this time.

Families associated with Westminster at Fort Hill included those of Philip Alexander, Eleazer Harlow's brother-in-law, John Perry, and Mrs. Susannah Gilson. Averill's first-hand description of the fort, remem-

bered from a distance of 70, is vivid, and it's worth reading in the Putney Historical Society document. Of special note are the 6-inch yellow pine timbers. When the fort was dismantled the wood was recycled in nearby houses. The small older houses on Route 5 in Westminster are said to contain some of those timbers.

The families lived in the 120 x 80 foot fort for the next five years, along with a garrison of about a dozen New Hampshire soldiers during the summers. The men ventured out to the meadows to plant crops, but carried their arms to the field and kept guard. There were also watch towers on the fort. It was never attacked directly, but Indians were seen around it, and they once laid an ambush for the men who were working on an island in the river.

According to Averill the land was owned by Colonel Willard. The land was portioned out to each family, and worked cooperatively, so that all the men were together on one plot at a time.

Peace was declared in 1760, and the settlers returned to Westminster, when Asa was 20 or 21. He married Anna Chaffee, daughter of his fortmate Atherton Chaffee, in 1761.

Did five years in a tiny space under threat create deep bonds? Were people sick of the sight of each other? Or both? Asa Averill doesn't give us any hints. In any case, with the war over new settlers flooded in. The Averills and Phippens likely knew some of them, but many must have been complete strangers.

We are lucky that Asa Averill gave this account in 1825, that the Putney Congregational Church preserved it, and that the Putney Historical Society has shared it. Read the whole document and see the diagram of the fort at <https://putneyhistory.us>. Welcome to the Putney Historical Society - Putney Historical Society.

*In photo, Putney Historical Society's plan of the fort on the Great Meadows, Putney.*

## 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, Nov. 4 at 7 p.m.

The Prudential Committee normally meets once or twice a month. A warning will be posted 48 hours prior to each meeting.

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.

Next prudential meeting Nov. 16.

Number of calls in September: 37

Number of calls through October 25th: 26

Number of calls calendar year to date: 417

Number of calls fiscal year, July 1st to date: 150

**Association Meeting:** The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting Tuesday October 7, 2025, with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 28 members present and 3 excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department.

**Halloween Open House:** The fire house will be open

on Halloween Friday evening the 31st, to hand out candy, cider and popcorn from 5 p.m. until around 8. A haunted house is also planned.

**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.

**Seasonal reminder:**

It is a good time to check chimneys, smoke and Co2 detectors and clean bathroom and dryer vents.

**Emergency responses:** September turned out to be another very busy month with 37 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown. 20 rescue/medical calls; 3 motor vehicle accident; 2 lift assist; 4 false alarm/ alarm sounding; 2 Brush fires; 1 untimely; 2 Psych emergencies; 2 smoke investigations; 1 illegal burn.

**Fire prevention week:** There was a well-attended open house at the fire house on Grout Ave. Friday October 10th for fire prevention week. Thanks for all who visited and assisted with the event.

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 made in October:**

To the Westminster Congregational Church in memory of Pearson [Red] Dawkins

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

Check us out on our web-site [www.westminsterfire-andrescue.org](http://www.westminsterfire-andrescue.org).

# Aged in Vermont

## Westminster Cares, Inc.

### 11 TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS DURING THE HOLIDAYS

For some family caregivers, the holidays can be a joyful time when spirits are lighter. It feels good to care for loved ones and enjoy being together, celebrating with family traditions. But for many the holidays also bring added stress. Caregivers are already busy, and there's even more to do during the holidays. Something's gotta give!

It's OK to give yourself a bit of a break this year. Here are some tips to help you make it through the holiday season with more joy and less stress.

#### 1. Seek help

The holidays are a great time to get some extra help, even if you don't normally do so. Just a few hours of assistance can be a huge relief. A concierge or personal assistant can complete items on your holiday to-do list or handle personal things like organizing mail or running errands. Hire someone to clean the house or catch up on laundry. It may be a good time to get respite — a break from caregiving. Try community and state resources like adult day care centers, in-home or facility-based respite care, or paid home health aides/caregivers to provide direct care for your loved ones.

#### 2. Focus on what is most meaningful

As much as caregivers would like to create the perfect holiday experience, remember that perfection is not the goal. It's really about meaning and joy. There are many factors that can't be controlled when it comes to a loved ones' health and abilities, so adjust your view of a "successful" holiday. Talk with your loved ones about what makes the holidays most meaningful for them and for you, and prioritize those holiday activities. Focus on the least amount of things needed to evoke a holiday feeling and create good memories. Your grandmother's tablecloth, the family menorah, a poinsettia or some candles along with holiday music and movies may be enough.

#### 3. Simplify your holiday activities

If going all out for the holidays will push you over the edge, remember that it doesn't have to be all or nothing. If you can't put every single decoration, choose a few items that are most significant. You might ask a friend to decorate or pay someone to do so. You can always rearrange decorations once someone else puts them out. If going to all religious services feels like too much, choose the one service that means the most to you. If sending greeting cards is too time-consuming, try sending e-greetings, or just send cards to a few key people this year. Many family caregivers also adjust the location of celebrations or postpone holiday travel to accommodate loved ones in their care.

#### 4. Start new traditions

Instead of focusing on losses and what you and/or your loved ones aren't able to do, try doing something new. If those you care for have trouble getting around, drive through a holiday light display or watch a holiday concert on TV. If you can't make it to a holiday gathering, have a video chat. Start a home holiday movie night tradition, or watch old home movies and relish the memories. Are your loved ones unable to participate in decorating this year? Turn up the holiday music and invite a friend over to help and make it more festive. Your loved ones can be nearby to watch and cheer you on or be surprised with the results.

#### 5. Adjust meals

Food is a big part of many holidays, so it's especially difficult to think about changing mealtime traditions. But meals also require a lot of time, money and coordination. Over many years of caregiving, I found holiday baking and cooking so exhausting that I couldn't even enjoy the results. So rather than canceling holiday meals entirely, I've learned to make adjustments like these:

Simplify the menu. Try fewer side dishes or one dessert instead of three. Focus on the dishes that are traditional and give you that holiday feeling.

Split up the grocery shopping and cooking among other family members and guests. There's nothing wrong with a potluck.

Pay someone to cook meals at your house ahead of time or on the holiday.

Order all or part of your holiday meals to go from a local grocery store or restaurant — either fully cooked or ready for you to cook at home.

Eat at someone else's home or at a restaurant.

#### 6. Approach gift giving more efficiently

Gift giving is a part of many traditions, but it can be costly and time-consuming. Try shopping online (many online stores will also wrap gifts). You might ask a friend or relative to do your shopping and wrapping for you, or you can always fall back on gift cards. Family caregivers are often financially stressed, so it might be necessary to lower your gift-giving budget this year and scale back the number of presents. Give the gift of time or attention, like scheduling outings or helping with a project. If your family is large, draw names and exchange with just one person. Have a regifting exchange, sharing items you already have. Order a photo gift — like a photo mug, pillow or calendar — or write a meaningful letter that can be enjoyed throughout the year.

#### 7. Anticipate holiday hot buttons

Are there holiday activities or toxic relatives that trigger stress or unhappy memories? Perhaps feelings of grief or loss overcome you at certain times of day. Do unhelpful relatives arrive for the holidays and criticize your caregiving? For some families, lifelong conflicts inevitably flare up at gatherings. It may be best to

limit your exposure to — or even avoid — certain places, events, conversations or people. If you can't do that, prepare yourself. Minimize the drama, and don't try to resolve problems over the holidays. Instead, try short encounters and develop quick-exit strategies. Mentally put yourself in a protective bubble, letting negative energy bounce off without hurting, annoying or distressing you.

#### 8. Mind your mindset

Negative thinking activates your body's stress response, so steer your mind to the positives when you start down that slippery slope. Try to stay mindful, concentrating on the present moment. Think about what you can accomplish instead of what isn't getting done; celebrate what your loved ones can do rather than dwelling on what they can no longer participate in; revel in the holiday joys you experience instead of focusing on those you bypass; appreciate the help you are receiving rather than resenting people who aren't supportive.

#### 9. Keep self-care at the top of the list

As caregivers, we give and give and give, and during the holidays we give even more. And the holidays can bring heightened emotions. All that giving can leave you running on empty, with high stress levels or even full-on burnout. Beware of extreme emotional ups and downs, fatigue, foggy thinking and an inability to sit still or the opposite — feeling frozen and unable to get anything done, or the desire to run away. Seek counseling or talk to your doctor if you are feeling depressed or anxious. When we're busy it's easy to let self-care slip just as we need it most. Like our cars, we can't run on an empty, so think about what fills you up and do more of that. Get plenty of good-quality sleep, and keep moving: Walk with loved ones in a decorated shopping mall, or dance to holiday music. Enjoy holiday goodies in moderation; too many sugary treats can cause an energy crash later. Monitor yourself for unhealthy coping skills, like overeating or drinking too much. Get outside for some mood-elevating vitamin D from sunlight, or consider therapeutic lighting if you suffer from seasonal affective disorder. Relax with some holiday-scented aromatherapy to soothe and boost your mood.

#### 10. Connect with other caregivers

While non-caregivers may not understand your feelings, other caregivers are experiencing many of the same emotions you are. Connect with them to share your feelings and get tips for holiday survival. If it's difficult to get to an in-person caregiver support group due to health issues, holiday activities or weather, try online message boards or social media groups like AARP's Family Caregiver Discussion Group on Facebook.

#### 11. Create your wish list

Let friends and family know what gifts would — and wouldn't — be most helpful and meaningful to you this year. They can gift you help with your holiday preparations like decorating, wrapping presents or preparing holiday meals. Any time of year, help cleaning the house, gardening, organizing, sorting mail or spending time with your loved ones are wonderful gifts. Friends and family can also pay for help if they can't offer it themselves. If there are practical items you want that would save you time and money, ask for them. If self-care prompts are what you really need, ask for a gift card for a massage, manicure, round of golf or whatever nurtures you, body and soul. It might be that this year, you just want a listening ear; ask for a supportive phone call once a week.

Remember, you'll be happier if you can go with the flow and expect that there will be some delays, a crisis or two and maybe some disappointments. But alongside those things, there can be real joy. Our family spent Christmas in the hospital with Dad one year when he was sick. We made the most of it with decorations and music and festive headgear (hats, headbands, antlers). The hospital prepared a darn good holiday meal for us too. It was a stressful time, but we also laughed and loved each other and made new memories.

The bottom line is that this time is precious. Even if this holiday season doesn't include all of your family traditions, savor the moments and make new, meaningful memories you can cherish forever.

*Amy Goyer is AARP's family and caregiving expert and author of Juggling Life, Work and Caregiving.*

## REMEMBRANCES

### NOVEMBER 2025

**LAWRENCE "LARRY" CLARK, 74**  
11/12/1950 - 10/4/2025  
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

**JUNE (BEAM) POWERS, 76**  
12/11/1948 - 9/12/2025  
BRATTLEBORO, VT

**CORY WALKER, 41**  
D. 10/19/2025  
WESTMINSTER, VT

### HOLIDAY TREASURE SALES

Find Your Holiday Treasures in Walpole on Saturday, Nov. 22, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the following venues all located on or adjacent to the Walpole Common

1. The Great River Co-op hosts a Thanksgiving Farmers Market on The Common. Local vendors will offer a variety of food and artisanal crafts, including syrup, honey, local meat and produce, bread, treats, holiday decorations, jewelry, bath products, and other unique gifts. There will be activities to support area non-profits, as well.

2. Mistletoe Mart at the Congregational Church features crafts, food, candies, and lunch from 11:30 to 2.

3. Holiday Fair at St. John's Episcopal Church features Cookies by the Pound, Baked goods and preserves, Treasures, Cafe with single servings of sweets and free hot drinks, wreaths, birdhouses, plus a 50-50 raffle.

4. The Walpole Firefighter's Auxiliary Craft Fair will have vendors will be on both floors of the Walpole Town Hall They will serve coffee and doughnuts in the morning, and corn chowder & pig in a blanket for lunch. Walpole resident Susan Meister generously donated a quilt to be raffled off at 2 p.m. We still have a few vendor spaces available if anyone is interested, contact Brad Nash at 603-757-2027

Thank you for supporting your community.

### WESTMINSTER CARES LAUNCHES 2025-2026 ANNUAL APPEAL

For 37 years and counting, funds raised from the community, the Town of Westminster, and local businesses, in combination with fundraising events and grants, have enabled Westminster Cares to meet our budget requirements and pay for the programs and services we provide to seniors and adults with disabilities in our community.

The Annual Appeal is our primary fundraising source. Appeal cards are mailed out to all Westminster residents at Thanksgiving and our goal is to raise 30-35% of our annual budget from this mailing. Funds generated from the Appeal support programs and services such as Meals-on-Wheels; Equipment Loans; Transportation Program; a part-time Community Nurse; Shopping Assistance; Friendly Check-Ins; Healthy Aging Exercise classes; Workshops and Resource and Referral Assistance.

We hope you will consider contributing to this year's Appeal and help us raise funds so that Westminster Cares can continue to support older adults as they strive to maintain independence and adapt to the ongoing challenges of aging in place.

Gifts made in someone's honor or memory will be printed in an upcoming Gazette. Donations to the Annual Appeal can be made throughout the winter by check and mailed to Westminster Cares at: P.O. Box 312 Westminster, VT 05158. Donations can also be made on our website via Credit Card or Pay Pal: [www.westminstercares.org](http://www.westminstercares.org).

No gift is too small and every single gift is appreciated!

One of the strengths of our town of Westminster is "Neighbors Helping Neighbors." We thank you for your continued support of our work in the community.



**Temple  
Chiropractic**

**Dr. Taronté Venable**  
DC, DACNB

**Dr. Vernon R. Temple**  
DC, DABCO

633 Route 121

Bellows Falls, VT 05101

**802-463-9522**

[TheOffice@TempleChiropractic.org](mailto:TheOffice@TempleChiropractic.org)  
[www.TempleChiropractic.org](http://www.TempleChiropractic.org)

### SUPPORTING EMPLOYERS AT A CRITICAL STAGE

In Southern Vermont, many businesses are reaching the stage where the focus shifts from survival to growth. Employers who have successfully built teams and weathered early challenges often find themselves balancing new opportunities with the complexity of managing people and processes.

The Strategic Planning Working Group provides time, space, and tools for leaders to step back from daily operations and invest in long-term planning.

“Employers who are at least three years into operations and are looking to expand are in a pivotal moment. They have stable teams and emerging opportunities, but they need structured support and trusted peers to help move their businesses forward,” said Adam Grinold, Executive Director. “This Working Group is designed to meet that need by combining practical tools with confidential peer ex-

change and mentoring.”

#### Application Details for Strategic Planning Working Group

Applications are now open. Selection will prioritize employers who:

- \* Have at least four employees
- \* Have been in operation for at least three years
- \* Are committed to growing their business and workforce
- \* Have a specific project or initiative to focus on during the program

#### Program Dates: January–February 2025

Location: BDCC, Brattleboro  
Cohort Size: 8–10 businesses

For more information or to apply, visit [https://www.cognitofirms.com/BDCC1/\\_20252026StrategicPlanningGroupInquiryForm](https://www.cognitofirms.com/BDCC1/_20252026StrategicPlanningGroupInquiryForm) or contact Anthony Toscano, [atoscano@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:atoscano@brattleborodevelopment.com).

### FARM TO INSTITUTION MARKET DEVELOPMENT GRANT APPLICATION OPENS

Applications are now being accepted for the 2025 Farm to Institution Market Development (FTIMD) Grant! Farmers, food processors, producer associations, and supply chain facilitators (non-profits, food hubs, etc.) are invited to apply for projects that will:

- \* Increase sales for at least one local farm; and

\* Increase the amount of local food served at Vermont institutions, including schools, early childhood programs, hospitals, colleges, correctional facilities, etc.

Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$30,000, with a 25% match requirement. The application closes on December 31 at 1:59 p.m.

**ARE YOU A WESTMINSTER RESIDENT AND NOT GETTING THE GAZETTE IN THE MAIL, BUT WOULD LIKE TO? EMAIL US AT WESTMINSTERNEWS@GMAIL.COM WITH YOUR ADDRESS AND WE’LL ADD YOU TO OUR MAILING LIST. THANK YOU!**

# 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

Located on Rt 5 in Westminster, our Church is a very active, growing congregation and we invite you to stop by and experience all that we offer. During each Sunday service there is a Children’s message and a very well attended fellowship hour follows in the church hall.

November is Month of all Souls, located in the church is a Book of Remembrance that names of deceased loved ones can be written and remembered.

Nov. 2nd. Worship at 10 a.m.

Nov. 4th Women’s Fellowship meets at 10:30 a.m. in the Hall and Zoom. They will also meet various Tuesday mornings to make crafts for the Christmas bazaar

Nov. 5th. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Topic: The various definitions of Love. Meets in the Hall and Zoom

Nov. 9th Worship at 10 with Communion

Nov. 12th Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Topic is Gratitude. We meet in the Hall and Zoom.

Nov. 16th Worship at 10 Advent Resources and materials will be available starting this weekend

Nov. 17th Standing Committee meets at 5:30 p.m. in the Hall and Zoom.

Nov. 23rd Worship at 10 After Church materials will be available to make Advent Wreaths for home use.

Nov. 24th Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service 6 p.m. at the First Baptist Church in Bellows Falls.

Nov. 30th First Sunday of Advent Worship at 10 a.m.

During this month of November we will also focus on moments of gratitude. There will be a special focus on this at each Service.

Rev. Rich O’Donnell serves as Pastor and welcomes you to join us. You are always welcome!

### 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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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)**  
The November Contra Dance at Pierce's Hall will be on Saturday, Nov. 22

6 pm - Family Hour with Dancing for all ages -- followed by a half-hour break with snacks  
7:30 - Contra Dance (starting with instructions for beginners)  
9:30 - Last Waltz  
Family Dance is free; Contra Dance is by donation  
Stay in touch at [eputneypierceshall@gmail.com](mailto:eputneypierceshall@gmail.com)  
Due to the holidays, there will be no dance in December.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:jimmatteau@gmail.com)

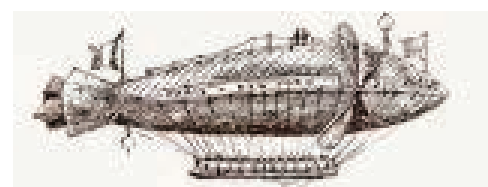
Westminster Gazette [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)  
3rd Monday, 5 p.m., Westminster Institute

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](mailto:coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org)

The Living Earth Action Group most Fridays at 5 p.m. Westminster West Congregational Church  
Contact: Caitlin Adair [pcadair@sover.net](mailto: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  
Donna Dawson  
Alma Beals - Treas.  
Joyce Sullivan - Sec.  
Mary Scherbatskoy

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Community  
[westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)

**NOTE!! VERY EARLY NOV. 12 DEADLINE FOR DECEMBER GAZETTE!!**

## December Deadline

The EARLY deadline for the Dec. 2025 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, Nov. 12  
Publication Date Is Wed. Nov. 19  
To Contact the Westminster Gazette  
E-mail: [westminsternews@gmail.com](mailto:westminsternews@gmail.com)

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

- Abigail Altabef
- 802 Credit Union
- Stacey & Tim Allen
- Kurn Hattin Homes
- Town of Westminster
- Westminster Cares
- Westminster Fire and Rescue Association
- Burtco Inc.
- The Dascomb Trust
- K Beebe Inc.
- American Wealth Administration Group

## WESTMINSTER WEST HALLOWEEN REVIVED

Rain didn't dampen spirits of ghouls or princesses on Halloween Night in Westminister West.

Local middle schoolers decorated the hall and welcomed trick or treaters to the Grange to get something healthy to eat before setting out. Community members provided soup and pizza and mac and cheese not to mention cider and butter beer (a Harry Potter beverage). Kids tried to bite donuts on a string and decorated pumpkins before the costume parade, after which all participants received prizes. Special thanks to Pete's Farm Stand for pumpkins galore!! to the Grange for the space, to the church for the use of their kitchen and to all in the community on the Westminister Inclusion Committee who donated food, fun and treats.

Trunk or treaters welcomed little ones in front of the Westminister West Library (thank you!) and the villagers were ready to offer treats at their doors.

By 6 p.m. everyone was back at the Grange and



ready to hear the very scary story of the *Cremation of Sam McGee* by Robert Service read by Stephen Major. Here's the final verse:

*There are strange things done in the midnight sun  
By the men who toil for gold;*

*The Arctic trails have their secret tales  
That would make your blood run cold;  
The Northern Lights have seen queer sights,  
But the queerest they ever did see  
Was that night on the marge of Lake Lebarge  
I cremated Sam McGee!*

## TIM & STACY ALLEN DONATE TREE TO THE COMMUNITY

An 18 foot Norway Spruce was recently donated to the town by Tim and Stacey Allen in memory of the Allen family, who served, supported, and gave graciously to the community for many years.

We hope the tree will represent the gift of giving, particularly as Christmas approaches and will be viewed by all as the town tradition of luminaries and now tree lighting continues.

A big thank you to Roger Farnsworth for delivering the tree, Luke and Diane Bazin for their time and equipment to plant the tree, and to the Westminister Fire Department for watering and caring for its growth.

Our wish is that this tree will be a symbol of community spirit and giving for years to come!

*Warm regards,  
Tim and Stacey*



### LAST PLANNING COMMISSION LISTENING SESSION SEEKS PARTICIPANTS

The final opportunity to participate in planning Westminister's future for the next 10 years will take place on zoom on Monday, Nov. 10 from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. on zoom. Check the Westminister website (westministervt.org) for the link or contact Lachlan Francis lach.francois@gmail.com or Lise Sparrow lisemsparrow@gmail.com for the link.

If you are unable to attend there is also a survey on the town website. We welcome your input!

Three in-person meetings happened in October, one at the Butterfield Institute, one at The Westminister West Library and one at the Bellows Falls High School. Each one opened with an overview of the planning process thus far, followed by questions asking what we hope to preserve as unique and special in Westminister, followed by considerations of what might make Westminister a more affordable and enjoyable place to live. All the

meetings had discussions of the need for housing for all ages and incomes and for recreation and preservation of the natural surroundings.

Participation by people of all ages, of those new to the community and from families who have lived here for generations have made for rich conversations.

For those who may not be aware, a Town Plan in Vermont is a community-driven document that guides future land use, development, conservation, and other strategic priorities for a municipality. It is not a set of enforceable laws by itself, but rather a framework that reflects the shared values, goals, and vision of the town's residents.

Once accepted by the state, a Town Plan can also help to unlock certain benefits such as eligibility for select state grants and other programs. It is an exciting opportunity and everyone is encouraged to attend.

### BULB PLANTING PARTY AT PUTNEY LIBRARY

There will be a Bulb Planting Party at Putney Public Library on Saturday, Nov. 1, noon-1 p.m.

Come to the library and help plant an array of beautiful bulbs --in the spring you can admire your handiwork when the front lawn of the library is covered in colorful flowers. All ages are welcome.

There will be trowels to borrow but please bring one labeled with your name if you can. If there is bad weather, please check the library Facebook, website calendar or call to check on the program.

Putney Public Library is located at 55 Main St. in Putney.





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**NOVEMBER BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:**  
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 We are now located in Putney, Vermont. Thank you for your consideration.  
 Sharon Boccelli

**OPEN MICS IN WESTMINSTER AND SAXTONS RIVER**  
 Open Mics are held each month in Westminster and Saxtons River, and local musicians are invited to come and play.  
 In Westminster, there is an Open Mic on Saturday, Nov. 14 from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Westminster Institute.  
 Details for the 4th Friday Open Mic in Saxtons River at Main Street Arts are on the poster below.

Calling all songwriters, fiddlers, storytellers, and creatives!  
  
**OPEN MIC NIGHT**  
 Originals & Traditionals  
 4<sup>th</sup> FRIDAY OF THE MONTH  
 7-9PM  
 SIGN UP 6:30  
 HOSTED BY PUTNAM SMITH  
 at MAIN STREET ARTS  
 35 MAIN STREET, SAXTONS RIVER, VT  
 MAINSTREETARTS.ORG  
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**BE BRIGHT AT NIGHT!**  
 Bike Safety is Cool!  
**SATURDAY, NOV. 1<sup>st</sup> 11a-2p**  
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 30 Henry St. Bellows Falls  
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