



WESTMINSTER GLOWS FOR THE HOLIDAYS



In a long-standing community tradition, on Christmas Eve volunteers gathered at the Westminster Fire Department to fill bags with sand and candles (top right photo) for the town's annual luminaries event on Christmas. Hundreds of bags with lit candles lined Route 5 on Christmas Day after the sun set. Many thanks to Allen Brothers, Bazin Brothers, and Sheldon Beebe for their donations and to everyone who helped out.

Earlier in December volunteers decorated and lit a new evergreen tree (bottom right) that had been planted earlier this year near the fire station. It is a gift to the community from Stacy and Tim Allen of Allen Brothers Farm Stand.

SAVINGS BANK OF WALPOLE NAMED A BEST BANK TO WORK FOR

For the ninth consecutive year, Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW) has been recognized by American Banker magazine as one of the Best Banks to Work For in the United States. In the 2025 rankings, SBW earned the #44 spot overall and was ranked #25 among banks with assets under \$3 billion.

"We're honored to once again be included on this list, especially because it reflects the voices and engagement of our employees," said Mark Bodin, President of Savings Bank of Walpole. "Being recognized nine years in a row is a testament to the workplace culture we've built, one rooted in trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to our community. I'm incredibly proud to lead a team that continues to make SBW such a rewarding place to work."

The Best Banks to Work For program, launched in 2013 by American Banker and the Best Companies Group, identifies and honors U.S. banks for outstanding employee satisfaction, workplace culture, and benefits. Rankings are based on a thorough evaluation of workplace policies and practices, as well as employee surveys.

SBW is one of only two New Hampshire-based banks to make this year's list, continuing to stand out for its consistent performance and deep-rooted community focus.

The full results of the 2025 rankings are available online at AmericanBanker.com and in the November issue of American Banker magazine.

With assets totaling \$825 million, the Bank offers a wide range of financial products, including services to individuals, businesses and organizations. The Bank is affiliated with NH Mutual Bancorp, further enhancing the quality products and services it provides to customers.

The Bank is a partner of the NHTrust1 brand to better serve customers by providing localized trust and wealth management products and services.



Savings Bank of Walpole is an equal housing lender, and member of the FDIC. For more information, visit www.walpolebank.com or call (603) 352-1822.

In photo, Savings Bank of Walpole employees celebrate the bank being named one of the best banks to work for in the nation for the ninth year in a row.

WINDHAM FOUNDATION FALL GRANT CYCLE BENEFITS SEVERAL LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Windham Foundation is a nonprofit based in Grafton, VT that works to enhance economic, cultural, and civic life in Vermont. The Foundation is pleased to announce the recipients of their most recent round of grants.

Thirty-four Vermont-based nonprofits received a total of \$137,100 in financial support. The Fall Grants cycle was open to projects focused on Preserving and Developing Resilient Communities, and Healthy and Vibrant

Communities. Funded projects included programs focused on family support, housing security, outdoor programming, and workforce development. The list of recipients includes these regional programs:

ARC Rutland Area, Carpenter-Carse Library, Central Vermont Council on Aging, Committee on Temporary Shelter, Dismas of Vermont, Girls on the Run, Grace Cottage Hospital, Greater Springfield Vermont Area Habitat for Humanity, Green Mountain Habitat for Humanity, National Alliance on Mental Illness of Vermont, Parks Place Community Center, Putney Community Center, Southeastern Vermont Community Action, Southeast Vermont Transit, Southeastern Vermont Economic Development Strategies, Southern Vermont Trail Association, Springfield Area Parent Child Center, Turning Point of Windham County, Turning Point Recovery Center of Springfield, Vermont Council on Rural Development, Vermont Parks Forever, Vermont Recovery Network, Vermont Works for Women, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, and Windham County Dental Center.

WESTMINSTER TOWN MEETING 2026

FLOOR VOTE

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2026
AT BELLOWS FALLS UNION HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - 10:00 AM

AUSTRALIAN BALLOT

TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026
AT THE WESTMINSTER INSTITUTE
3534 US ROUTE 5, WESTMINSTER
8:00 AM TO 7:00 PM

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026

LAST DAY TO FILE PETITIONS WITH THE TOWN CLERK

SIGNED BY AT LEAST 5% OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS (125) FOR ARTICLES TO BE INCLUDED ON TOWN MEETING WARNING

MONDAY, JANUARY 26, 2026 - 5:00PM

LAST DAY TO FILE WITH THE TOWN CLERK NOMINATING PETITIONS SIGNED BY AT LEAST 1% OF THE REGISTERED VOTERS (25) FOR TOWN OFFICES TO BE VOTED ON BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT ON TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026. CONSENT OF CANDIDATE FORM MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED.

Our Monthly Community Newspaper January 2026 Vol. 22 No. 1

Westminster Gazette

Town of Westminster
PO Box 147
Westminster, VT
05158

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ANNUAL TOWN, FIRE & SCHOOL DIST. MEETING FEB 28

ANNUAL TOWN, FIRE, and SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING-
FEBRUARY 28, 2026

VOTING BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT- MARCH 3, 2026

ELECTED OFFICIALS WITH TERMS
EXPIRING MARCH 3, 2026

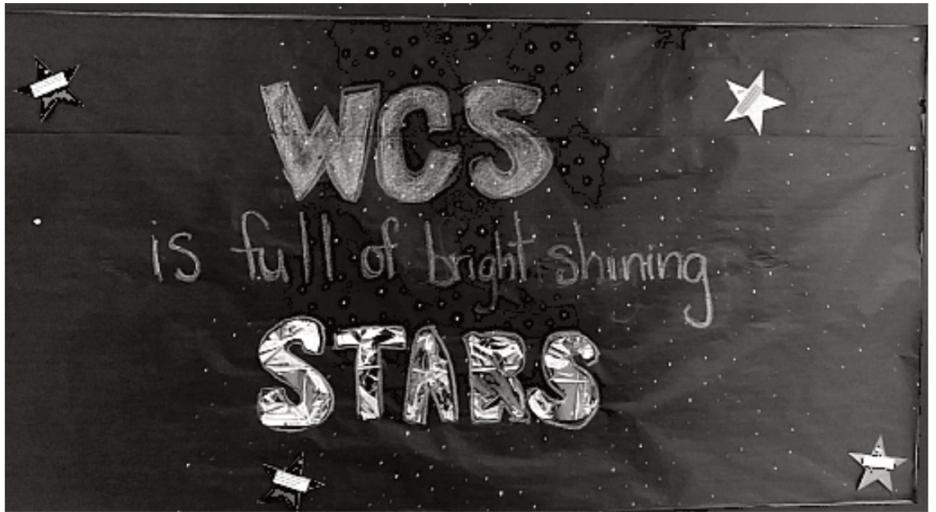
POSITION LENGTH OF TERM PRESENTLY HELD BY
TOWN MODERATOR 1 Year David Major
SCHOOL MODERATOR 1 Year David Major
FIRE DISTRICT #3 MODERATOR 1 Year David Major
SELECTBOARD 3 Years Stephen Major
SELECTBOARD 2 Years Real Bazin
LISTER 3 Years John Ewald
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND 1 Year Karen Walter

COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND 1 Year Matt Conklin
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND 1 Year Vacant
TRUSTEE, CAMPBELL FUND 3 Years Barbara Taylor
TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS 3 Years Pete Harrison
TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS 3 Years Barbara Taylor
UHSD#27 DIRECTOR 3 Years June Streeter
TOWN SCHOOL DIRECTOR 2 Years Karen Blanchard
TOWN SCHOOL DIRECTOR 3 Years Mariah Perkins
FIRE DISTRICT #3 PRUDENTIAL 3 Years Chris Harlow

Nomination Petitions may be picked up at the Town Clerk's office any week-day between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. and must be returned to the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 pm on Monday, January 26, 2026.

Petitions must contain signatures of 1% of registered voters. Anyone whose name does not appear on the voter checklist should register at the Town Clerk's office.

WINTER SOLSTICE ART SHINES AT WESTMINSTER CENTER SCHOOL



Students and staff at Westminster Center School have been busy learning, growing, and strengthening connections within our school and the wider community. Throughout the past month, classrooms have been engaged in hands-on learning, collaborative projects, and lessons that build strong academic skills as well as following our three school agreements to be kind, safe, and take care of our community.

One way we celebrate our school community is through our winter solstice art installation; WCS is Full

of Bright Shining Stars. Each student and staff member writes a positive message to another member of our school community.

These are hung in our hallway for all to see the week before December break. This adds light and love to the darkest days of winter!

We are grateful for the ongoing support of our families and community partners, whose involvement helps make Westminster Center School a vibrant place for children to learn and grow.

**WINDHAM COUNTY
2026 RABIES CLINIC**
Open to Dogs & Cats



SERVICES & FEES

- Rabies Vaccine: \$26
- Distemper with Lepto Vaccine: \$32

IMPORTANT NOTE: Prior Rabies Vaccine history is **REQUIRED** to receive a 3-year vaccine.

CLINIC DATES & LOCATIONS

JANUARY

- Sat, Jan 17 | 10am - 1pm | Windham County Sheriff's Office, 185 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro
- Sat, Jan 24 | 10am - 1pm | Newfane Town Office, 555 VT Route 30
- Sat, Jan 31 | 10am - 12pm | Grafton Town Hall, 117 Main Street

FEBRUARY

- Sat, Feb 28 | 10am - 1pm | Windham County Sheriff's Office, 185 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro

MARCH

- Sat, Mar 7 | 10am - 12pm | Grafton Town Hall, 117 Main Street
- Sat, Mar 21 | 10am - 1pm | Windham County Sheriff's Office, 185 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro
- Sat, Mar 28 | 10am - 12pm | Westminster Town Garage, 67 Town Garage Road



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ADVERTISE IN THE GAZETTE!

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

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

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

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

On-line at: www.westminstervt.org

SUPERLOCAL FILM FESTIVAL AT WEST WEST LIBRARY

The Westminster West Library will be showing four programs of short movies set here in Windham County. Called the SuperLocal Film Festival, we plan to show popular titles such as *Bills Lumber*, about the closing of an 86-year-old lumber mill in Wardsboro; *It's a Love of the Land*, which includes some of the Brattleboro farms now under C&S Wholesale Grocers Inc.; *Claire's Classroom*, giving a chance to see many of the local kids



COURTESY OF THERESA MAGGIC

who grew up in West West and more. These SuperLocal movies will be shown at the Westminster West Library on each Sunday afternoon in February, and at the Butterfield Library on other days. Find the schedule and details in the February Gazette and other local news sources.

In photo, a still of a sign in the local documentary *Bills Lumber*.

2026 WESTMINSTER DOG LICENSES

2026 DOG LICENSES WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE WESTMINSTER TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE MONDAY JANUARY 5TH

OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 AM TO 4 PM MON-FRI
 LICENSE FEES ARE:
 \$11.00 FOR SPAYED/NEUTERED
 \$13.00 FOR NON-SPAYED/NEUTERED

YOU WILL ALSO NEED CURRENT RABIES INFORMATION. IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO RENEW BY MAIL, PLEASE CALL THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE AT 802-722-4091 FOR INFORMATION.
ALL DOGS MUST BE REGISTERED BY APRIL 1, 2026.

VCRD FUNDS POWERWALL BATTERY IN PUTNEY

The Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) is pleased to announce recipients of the fifth competitive round of the Climate Catalyst Innovation Fund. The funding supports projects that create new approaches to challenging problems by expanding community resilience and reducing energy use. VCRD received over \$137,494 in requests and was able to fund 17 projects totaling \$60,500 to support local climate solutions in Vermont.

Projects funded this year include town, regional and statewide efforts. Some examples include emergency preparedness kits for older Vermonters, solar powered generators, and more. Locally, the Putney Public Library will install a Powerwall battery to provide electricity and internet during outages which would allow emergency communication, charging of phones/laptops/medical devices and the ability to stay open as a library and shelter during an emergency.

WINTER TRACKING PROGRAM FEB. 7

You are invited to join the Westminster Conservation Commission for a winter tracking program on Saturday, Feb. 7, from 10:30 -12:30 p.m. Weather date is Sunday, Feb.8. We plan to explore a farm field adjacent to the Connecticut River and hope for good tracking conditions on this early February weekend. During last year's event in a Westminster upland forest, the group saw sign of porcupine, fox, deer, wild turkey and bobcat, among others.



Please send an email to westminstervtconservation@gmail.com if you are potentially interested in attending this program. By registering, you will be informed of the location details, and kept updated on any weather related scheduling changes. For questions, call Rachael Shaw at

802-869-3184 or send an email to the address listed above.

GMP 1ST IN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

JD Power's annual national survey of utility customers places Green Mountain Power (GMP) first among midsize utilities in the East Region for customer satisfaction. The survey of 127,000 customers nationwide focuses on utility reliability, cost, and customer service. "Study data shows that customers expect their utilities to deliver reliable service, provide easy access to information and frequent updates on outages and planned restoration. When utilities streamline billing and digital self-service, and deliver timely outage alerts, satisfaction rises," said Mark Spalinger, director of utilities intelligence at J.D. Power.

Several recent GMP initiatives helped to improve reliability, safety and affordability for customers. Among the projects are: Saving customers \$3 million with GMP's network of stored energy in one hour energy costs during the ISO-NE regional peak. Improved targeted restoration times during severe weather events to help customers plan. Drone program to help speed up restoration times for customers and improve safety for field crews. Undergrounding power lines and storm-hardening overhead lines in rural, frequently storm-damaged areas of the state. Enhancing assistance for customer who are low income through bill discounts, debt forgiveness and rebates.

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CHEERS

Happy New Year!

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Nature Notes - Winter Birds at My Feeder

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist



Winter birds at feeders, from left, Carolina Chickadee, Northern Cardinal and a White-breasted Nuthatch.

The winter night was ending as I looked through the sliding glass door toward the table on my deck. My outside thermometer read ten degrees above zero, typical Vermont weather. In the first dim light, dark-eyed juncos and American tree sparrows, followed by black-capped chickadees and tufted titmice were starting to eat the seed I had put out a few minutes earlier.

As the gray dawn brightened, a chickadee flew down from the maple tree, landed on the table, picked up a sunflower seed, and flew back to the maple tree. I watched him place the seed between his feet and hammer the edge with his sharp black bill. After a few taps, the shell split open, he scooped out the kernel, dropped the husk and flew back to the table for more.

The usual birds were there when I noticed a sparrow different from the tree sparrows. This bird had a

white throat, a little white stripe across the head, yellow in front of the bill and no spot on his breast. A white-throated sparrow. He should have migrated by now. Will he stay? He probably will because he is finding food. Many people think a bird will die from the cold, but it isn't the cold that does them in. It is the lack of food which weakens them to the point of not surviving.

As I was watching the birds on the table, out of the corner of my eye, I could observe several more juncos on the ground feeding with about ten mourning doves. I like the doves because they are so peaceful, getting along with the other birds. Even when they land on the table, the little birds keep on eating. This is such a different scene because when bluejays arrive, the little birds leave.

What kinds of food you set out makes a big dif-

ference in what birds you will draw in. I have found that the very best food that most birds like are black oil sunflower seed and cracked corn. The cracked corn is quite reasonably priced. Try to find as fine a corn as you can since I have found that if your usual birds don't eat all the bigger kernels, other birds will find it. I don't usually feed turkeys unless the ground has a thick coating of ice, but by late winter, they find the corn.

I keep suet and a little peanut butter out for the woodpeckers and small birds. Having several dead trees in the woods close by, where they are in no danger falling, encourages many woodpeckers to come to the suet. This winter I have a yellow-bellied sapsucker, the only one of our woodpeckers who doesn't migrate, that is staying. The downies, like the chickadees, are not afraid of me, landing on the feeders right next to me.

WESTMINSTER SAMPLER - PEOPLE GIVE US THINGS

By Jessie Haas

We are so grateful for the help of our volunteers, who staff the museum and law office during the summer, write thank you notes, bake goodies, and spend time geeking out at the archives.

We are ALL volunteers.

Also grateful for the support of the town, both financial and logistical. Our events this year were made safer and easier due to your efforts.

And people give us things. I'm going to list just a few items we have received recently:

A Navy dress uniform hat worn by Hank Anderson, donated by his daughter Bonnie.

The bowl of a clay pipe found in Westminster West, donated by John Foster.

Three constable badges worn by Ruth Grandy and donated by her.

A very large collection of Barber and Shattuck family records, photos, and ephemera, donated by Barbara Shattuck Greenough.

"Chronological History of the Congregational Church, Westminster West, Vermont," written by Mary Lowe Mitchell and donated by Patricia Haas.

Three extraordinary schoolgirl samplers stitched by Westminster girls in the early 1800s, donated by Richard Michelman.

Former Westminster resident Joyce Searles visited recently and donated items found in the attic of her old



house here. Joyce lived on the original Azariah Wright homestead, now owned by Greg Gay. Treasures she found in the attic include a diary of someone who farmed there in the mid-1800s, with many details of farm life. We have only had time to glance at it; that is a transcription job if anyone wants to tackle it. We have two other farm diaries of that period, so it will be interesting to compare and contrast. This farmer appears to have grown onions in a large way and spent hours hoeing, topping, and harvesting them.

We struggled to find reasons to keep a few other things Joyce brought us. Our standard questions—does

it relate to Westminster? Is it in good condition? Do we have space for it?

The farm equipment catalog from the early 1900s doesn't on the surface have a Westminster connection, though slipped between the pages was a shopping list for hoes and other items.

But it is informative. If you live on an old place and have found a what-is-it—some item you have no idea of the purpose for—you might want to visit the archives and page through the farm catalog. You'll find many strange things explained—like special shoes that were put on horses for lawn mowing, so they didn't create marks and divots.

Some of these items will take you back. Looking at the different kinds of stones used to sharpen scythes, Chris Harlow was reminded of his childhood—NOT that long ago!--when the state highway crew mowed the sides of Route 5. They would send four or five men with scythes, and the town rang, not with the sound of string trimmers, but with the music of the stone polishing and sharpening scythe blades.

We wish everyone a happy and prosperous 2026 and hope you'll spend some of it with us.

In photo, the historical marker for the William Czar Bradley Law Office, in background, Westminster's 1858 time capsule treasure.

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, Jan. 6 at 7 p.m.

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

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 January 18

Number of calls in November: 43

Number of calls through December 25th: 34

Number of calls calendar year to date: 504 [WOW, over 500 again this year. That's a lot for a volunteer fire department.]

Number of calls fiscal year, July 1st to date: 237

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting December 2nd 2025 with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 18 members present and 6 excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department.

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.

Ashes from wood burning stoves or furnaces: When cleaning out your ashes, put them in a closed metal con-

tainer outside. If they are going to be dumped be sure to wet them down or cover them with snow if there is any. Never put them on a wooden deck or porch floor even in a metal container. Recently there was a building fire caused by coals from a wood stove being placed in a plastic pail.

Christmas Trees: Be sure to keep your Christmas tree watered, so it won't become dry and be a fire hazard. Always keep the tree away from open fires and heating appliances.

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

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

Luminaries: The Fire House was made available again this year for the annual Christmas Eve luminary display preparations. Many local volunteers gathered at the Fire House to put the sand and candles in bags Tuesday the 23rd and the afternoon of December 24th volunteers set them out in the village on Rt. 5, Grout Ave. and School St. The display attracts the attention of many people both locally and out of town. A huge thanks goes out to those who were involved with the set up and clean up. This is a very special occasion for Westminster, and many look forward to it.

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: November turned out to be another very busy month with 43 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown: 28 rescue/medical calls; 2 false alarms/ alarm sounding; 2 structure fires; 1 chimney fire; 4 mutual calls, 1 to Putney, 2 to Keene, 1 to Brookline; 1 for tree on wires/power line down; and 5 motor vehicle accidents/incidents.

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

Memorial Donations received in December

Leonard & Nancy Farrar in memory of Stanley & Shirley Farrar and Germaine Palmer

Mary Mitchell in memory of Frank Mitchell

Stanton Scott in memory of Howie and Donna Rice

Other Donations received in December:

Jim & Lisa Calchera

Jeff Shumlin/ Evelyn Lovett

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.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met Thursday December 4th at 4:30PM at the Westminster Institute with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: Vice President Pat Goodell, Vice President Pete Harrison, Treasurer Fran-nie Waldron, Secretary Doug Oftedahl, Don Dawson, Nancy Dalzell, Kathy Elliott, Cindy Moses and Director Donna Dawson.

BOARD CELEBRATION: A celebration was held in the Dascomb Room following the December board meeting to acknowledge three board members who retired from the board after many years. President Lori Larue gave a speech honoring their service. Pete Harrison, has served for 20 years and has held several officer positions including Treasurer, Vice President and President for many of those years. Kathy Elliott, has served various terms for a total of 12 years and Nancy Dalzell, has served various terms for a total of 6 years. All three retiring members have served on various board committees. Lori spoke about their significant contributions and outstanding dedication to the organization.

HOLIDAY BAGS: A generous donation from the town's Frank Miller Milk Fund, combined with funds designated by the WeCares board enabled purchases for 20 over-stuffed holiday bags. Every Meals on Wheels recipient was given stuffed holiday bags filled with shelf-stable foods plus bread, cheese, clementines, treats, homemade cookies, an ornament and a card!

Several other community members also received bags. In total, bags were distributed to twenty community members. Several board members shopped for and personally contributed to making the bags extra-special; other volunteers also donated items. The group packed the bags and Meals-on-Wheels volunteers delivered them a few days before Christmas.

ANNUAL APPEAL UPDATE: We are truly appreciative of the support received so far from individuals, families and businesses in our community. Your contributions enable us to continue to provide programs and services to older adults in our community. Every gift counts!

The list below is for donations made in someone's honor or memory.

Donations Received through December 22nd HONORARY:

In honor of Alice Caggiano from Jim & Lisa Calchera

In honor of retiring board members Pete Harrison, Kathy Elliott, Nancy Dalzell from Lori Larue

In honor of all the good work volunteers do in our community from Pete & Judy Harrison

In honor of all the Volunteers & Board Members for Westminster Cares from Kathleen Pirruccello; Charmion Handy & Jim Saunders; Mary Mitchell; Bettina & Chris Harlow

In honor of Donna Dawson from Louise Luring; from Bill Smidutz; from Colleen & Jim Grout

In honor of Lucille Donovan from Susan Harlow

In honor of Pete Harrison & Donna Dawson from Wanda & Scott West

In honor of Lori Larue from Anonymous Donor

In honor of Bill Smidutz from Catherine Baldarelli; from Jim Kamel

In honor of Karen Walter from Heidi Anderson & Lee Trapeni

In honor of Karen Walter & Lori Larue from Bill Stevens & Marty Gallagher

In honor of Wanda West from Judy & Pete Harrison

In honor of Westminster Cares from Paul & Leslie Smith; from Lonnie & Obe Lisai

MEMORIALS:

In memory of Walter Allbee from Priscilla Allbee

In memory of Sandra Anderson from Arvi Anderson

In memory of my parents, Evelyn & Ralph Aubuchont from Judy Harrison

In memory of Justin Beebe (Montana Hot Shot) & in honor of Montana Wildland Forest Fire Fighters

In memory of Mary Brandt from Anonymous Donor

In memory of Ralph & Signa Buck from Nancy Adams

In memory of Nana Joanne Cordano from Donald Cordano

In memory of Sally Davis from Howard Davis

In memory of Bob Davis from John Benzaia

In memory of Eileen B. Deutsch from Ira Wilner

In memory of Stanley & Shirley Farrar from Leonard & Nancy Farrar

In memory of Nick Grout from Bill Smidutz

In memory of Bob Haas from Pat Haas

In memory of Jay & Larry Hammond from Marty Hammond

In memory of Adam Harrison from Pete & Judy Harrison

In memory of Marcia Hunker from her family

In memory of Walter & Pat Jennison from Cheryl Jennison; from Linda Jennison & Janet Manzolillo

In memory of Charlotte Kurkul from Stanley Shum-ski

In memory of Christopher Kurkul from Catherine Kurkul

In memory of Larry Lanata from Miriam Lanata

In memory of Jamie Latham, Ben Bittner & Jefferson Arms from Bill & Sandra Burton

In memory of Duane & Madeline Law from Phil & Donna Simoneau

In memory of Linda Lowe from Ed Lowe

In memory of Donna Manning from Elise Manning

Sterling & Bruce Sterling



In memory of Jeff Michaud from Irene Michaud

In memory of Libby Mills from Kelli Moran; & Anonymous Donor

In memory of the Murray & Solomon Families from Bruce Murray

In memory of Bud Muzzey from Karleen & Gary McKenney

In memory of my siblings: William, Walter, Well-man, Charlotte & Connie from Warren Muzzey

In memory of Donald "Buster" Newcomb from Diana Brown

In memory of Bill & Michael O'Connor from Marlene O'Connor

In memory of Germaine Palmer from Leonard & Nancy Farrar

In memory of Peter Parda from Shirley & Frank Aiken

In memory of Howie Rice from Susan Colby

In memory of Jim Scully from Arlene Scully

In memory of Alice & Harold Shattuck from Barbara Greenough

In memory of Marie & Chrissy Wright from Anonymous Donor

In memory of Fred Yates from Lorraine Yates

In photos, top from left, retiring board members Kathy Elliott, Pete Harrison, and Nancy Dalzell; and the Westminster Cares Board of Directors.

REMEMBRANCES

DECEMBER 2025

STEVE BELCZAK, 75
D. 11/7/2025
WESTMINSTER WEST, VT

PETER CHAMBERLAIN, 89
8/30/1935 – 12/2025
AMELIA ISLAND, FL FORMERLY
WESTMINSTER, VT

DAVID E. ROHN, 91
10/29/1934 - 12/11/2025
PUTNEY, VT

RONALD WETHERBY, 78
8/6/1947 - 12/12/2025
LEEDS, MA
FORMERLY BELLOWS FALLS, VT

TAI CHI CLASSES OFFERED

Beginner Tai Chi starts on Jan. 20, every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. at the Westminster Institute at 3534 Route US 5.

Where did these particular classes originate? Imagine an award-winning martial artist, a lifelong Qigong master, now aging, posing the question: how can I be of service to the older adult? Now imagine he survives a nasty motorcycle accident. He still teaches but no longer competes.

Approaching his best student, he says: will you join me in a venture to bring high quality Tai Chi to the older adult? The answer is yes, so they begin training teachers and offering classes in New Hampshire and Massachusetts. In 2016, classes make it to the Westminster Institute under the auspices of Westminster Cares.

This is a thumbnail origin story of Oriental Healing Arts Association (OHAA) and founders Gene Gaudreau and Jim Winner. Tai Chi is slow, mindful movement with a host of health benefits. Sometimes called meditation in motion, it is gentle but powerful, perfect for the 50 and over adult.

The beginner class starts on Jan. 20 taught by senior instructor Leslie Lassetter, co-sponsored by OHAA and Westminster Cares. Join Jan. 20 through Feb. 14.

For those who cannot stand for an hour, seated Tai Chi meets Tuesdays at 12:15 p.m. Enrollment for the seated class is open any time. Cost: \$10-20 sliding scale. Beginner class cost is \$10-20 sliding scale. Contact: 802-722-3607 or WeCares@sover.net. First class is free.

Wear comfortable, loose clothing and clean, non gripping, indoor shoes. Google "Tai Chi with Leslie" on YouTube for a foretaste.

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www.TempleChiropractic.org

SAVINGS BANK OF WALPOLE WELCOMES TWO NEW DIRECTORS

Savings Bank of Walpole is pleased to announce the addition of Elana Baron and Jonathan Wildes to its Board of Directors. The appointments further strengthen the Bank's commitment to local leadership and deep community roots as the region's premier mutual savings bank.

"We're thrilled to welcome both Elana and Jonathan to the board," said Mark Bodin, President of Savings Bank of Walpole. "Each brings unique professional expertise and a passion for the communities we serve."

Baron is a partner at Bragdon, Baron & Kossayda in Keene, NH and serves as counsel with Shaheen & Gordon, P.A. She has over two decades of legal experience in real estate, probate and elder law, civil litigation, and corporate law. She is licensed to practice law in New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts, and is a Certified Estate Planner.

Elana is deeply involved in the community, having served on the boards of organizations including the Monadnock Center for Violence Prevention, Monadnock Humane Society, and the Keene Family YMCA. Fluent in English and French, she also serves a wide range of clients throughout northern New England and Canada.

Jonathan Wildes currently serves as a Finance Trans-



formation and Enterprise Performance Management Leader at PwC, where he advises CFOs of leading companies on improving finance operations and driving value through process reengineering and technology enablement. With over 20 years of experience in financial process optimization, analytics, and strategy, Jonathan helps organi-

zations adopt best practices that lead to lasting competitive advantage. He brings both deep financial expertise and a strong understanding of the needs of local businesses and communities.

Jason Houston, Chair of the Savings Bank of Walpole Board of Directors, commended Baron and Wildes upon their addition to the Board, saying, "Their insight and experience will be invaluable as we continue our work supporting individuals, families, and businesses throughout the Monadnock Region."

With assets totaling \$825 million, the Bank offers a wide range of financial products, including services to individuals, businesses, and organizations. The Bank is affiliated with NH Mutual Bancorp, and is a partner of the NHTrust1 brand, providing localized trust and wealth management products and services. Savings Bank of Walpole is an equal housing lender and a member of the FDIC. For more information, visit www.walpolebank.com or call 603-352-1822.

In photo, Jonathan Wildes and Elana Baron.

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

Jan 4th. Sunday service at 10:00

Jan 6th. Women's Fellowship meets 10:30 am in the Hall and Zoom

Jan 7th. SOUPer Wednesday starts 12:00-2:00

Jan 7th Bible study 6:30 pm. Hall and Zoom

Jan 11th. Sunday service at 10:00. New members will be welcomed at this Service. As well as Communion Sunday

Jan 14th SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

Jan 14th. Bible study 6:30 pm. Zoom and Hall

Jan 18th. Sunday service 10:00 am.

Jan 19th Standing Committee 5:30pm. Hall and Zoom

Jan 21st. SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

Jan 25th. Sunday service at 10:00 am

Jan 25th. Annual Meeting. Following the Church Service

Jan. 28th SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

Jan 28th Bible study 6:30 pm. Hall and Zoom

The First Congregational Church of Westminster is located on Rt 5 in Westminster. Rev. Rich O'Donnell serves as Pastor.

During the middle of January the upper church will be renovated and services will be held in the Hall for 2 weeks. No programs or scheduled events will be interrupted.

The First Congregational Church of Westminster is a growing congregation and we welcome all to join us There is a children's message at each service and fellowship hour that follows in the Hall. We hope to see you this New year!

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 Seated Class Tues. 12:15-1:15pm

Intermediate Classes Tues. 11-12 and 6-7pm

New Beginner Class forming soon.

At the Westminster Institute

Souper Wednesdays

Homemade soups at Congregational Church Rt. 5

January through April 12-2 p.m.

For deliveries Tina 802-376-7330

The East Putney Contradance Comes to the Westminster West Church! Sat. January 31

Same great live music and dancing, no partner required. By donation.

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

To continue the fun, come to the February 31 Contra Dance back at Pierce's Hall.

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

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.

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

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February Deadline

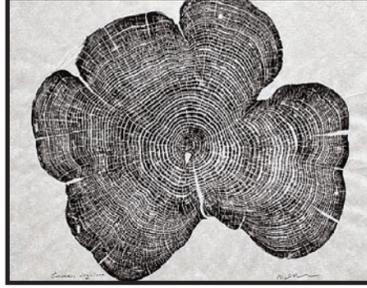
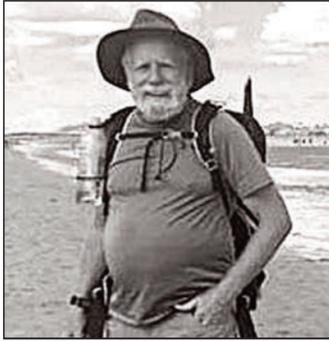
The deadline for the Feb. 2026 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, Jan. 21
Publication Date Is Wed. Jan. 28
To Contact the Westminster Gazette
E-mail: westminsternews@gmail.com

PROGRAMS COMING TO THE PUTNEY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Walking the Voie de Vezelay with Howie Peterson

Howie Peterson is a 77-year-old resident of Putney who loves to travel and explore, so far visiting 6 continents and 44 countries. He will present a program on walking the Voie de Vezelay on Thursday, Jan. 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Putney Library

This fall Howie, **in photo**, walked about 434 miles on the Voie de Vezelay, one of the Camino de Santiago routes through France. He hiked through lovely rolling countryside, stopping in quaint villages and impressive cities along the way. He'll be sharing his photos and stories from the adventure at Putney Public Library on Thursday, Jan. 8 at 6:30 p.m. Howie's previous library presentations about his walking treks were exciting, engaging and enjoyed by all.



Chronicles in Wood: an exhibition of prints of tree ring cross sections by Abigail Littlefield will be on view at The Putney Public Library, Dec. 1 - Feb. 28.

There will be an Artist's Reception on Thursday, Jan. 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Littlefield is an artist and longtime science educator whose work bridges botanical study and environmental observation. For more than 30 years, she was a science professor, cultivating a personal fascination with the structures and life histories of plants. A significant head injury reshaped her life, leading her to incorpo-

rate art into her rehabilitation process.

During recovery, she began creating illustrated field guides to local trees and plants - watercolor was a means to rebuild.

What began as therapy evolved into a dedicated artistic practice. Littlefield's early field guide studies developed into highly detailed botanical watercolors that reflect both scientific precision and a renewed intimacy with the natural world.

Most recently, she has begun printing tree rings, **see photo**, a process that merges her background in science with her artistic sensibilities. By translating the temporal records embedded in wood into visual form, she continues to explore the complex stories that trees carry - and the ways art can illuminate them.

Abigail lives in Westminster West with her partner, four labrador retrievers, a cat, several ducks, a flock of chickens and lots of honey bees.

The show will be open during library hours: Monday-Friday 10:30am-6pm and Saturdays

Putney Public Library is located at 55 Main St.

Chronicles in Wood: an exhibition of prints of tree ring cross sections by Abigail Littlefield

Long River Tai Chi Circle

TAI CHI

JOIN OUR NEW BEGINNERS' CLASS!
Starting January 8th:
Registration for new students is open through January 29th
Weekly Tai Chi class - Thursdays 9-10 am
Hastings House (past the WUUC): 14 Union St, Walpole, NH



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JAN. 24 COMMUNITY OPEN MIC AT KH

East will meet West and North Westminster on Saturday, Jan. 24, at the new Kurn Hattin Gymnasium for an evening of entertainment from 7 to 9 p.m.

Anyone and everyone is welcome to come sing, juggle, tell jokes or offer any merriment or talent to send the blues away. The Westminster Inclusion Committee will provide refreshments. Kurn Hattin will show off its new sound system and all are welcome to come and enjoy each other's company.

For details call Lise Sparrow at 802-345-3982.



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**JANUARY BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:
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Cota & Cota, a third-generation family business, is proudly celebrating 85 years of serving the community. For eight and a half decades, the company has delivered warmth and home comfort through high-quality fuels, expert HVAC and plumbing services, compassionate customer care, and a strong commitment to giving back.

Today, siblings Casey Cota and Kelley Cota Tully continue the family legacy, carrying forward the values and traditions established by their grandparents, Ken and Helen Cota. They firmly believed that helping your neighbors was essential to building a strong and thriving community, a philosophy that remains at the heart of the business.

"We truly pride ourselves on taking care of our customers like family," said Cota. "When you call us, you reach a kind, local voice who listens and works to fully address your questions or concerns. Our goal has always been to provide the 24/7 quality service our customers deserve."

Cota & Cota credits its longevity to its dedicated team of highly trained service technicians, master plumbers, delivery drivers, and customer service representatives. Many employees have spent decades with the company, offering mentorship, expertise, and continuity that have helped shape generations of staff and fueled the company's long-term success.

As the company looks ahead to 2026, the Cota family reflects with gratitude on decades of memories shared with customers, employees, friends, and the wider community. They look forward to honoring those relationships and celebrating this milestone together in the year ahead.

Thank you to our customers, employees, and community for being part of our journey, and from all of us at Cota & Cota, best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year.

Top photo, Casey and Hugh Cota; bottom photo Casey Cota and Kelley Cota Tully.

BDCC PARTNERS WITH HATCHSPACE TO SUPPORT ADULTS EXPLORING THE BUILDING TRADES

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and HatchSpace are partnering to offer a seven week training program designed to help adults explore careers in the construction and building trades.

This hands-on class will introduce adults to foundational construction skills and provide practical career guidance and skills to support next steps in training or employment.

Class will meet twice weekly from March 3rd to April 16th. Tuesday sessions will take place at HatchSpace and focus on introductory carpentry and construction skills such as how to use hand and power tools, construction math, and core safety practices.

Thursday sessions will take place at the BDCC Workforce Center of Excellence and will focus on career pathways, employer expectations, resumes and interviews, credentials and certifications, as well as funds available for future training.

All tools and materials will be provided. The class is designed for adults who want to explore construction for the first time or who are considering a career transition into the building trades.

For more information and to register: <https://tinyurl.com/bdc7ubm4>

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