



## “LIGHT UP WESTMINSTER” WINNERS



*(Editor's note: Last month we received this article about the winners of the Holiday Light Up Westminster contest, but with all the Town Meeting material, we didn't have room to run the article.*

*But it seems very appropriate to run the article this month where the photos can really be appreciated in the Gazette's very first color edition!)*

Thank you to all participating residents who entered the holiday lights contest! The holiday spirit was on display all over Westminster!

We would like to thank the generous sponsors for their donations: Bucky Adams, Sheldon Beebe, and Paul Harlow of Harlow Farm.

- The winners:
- Eric and Myriah Clark of Sunny Meadow Drive
  - Juanita and Doug Oftedahl of US Route 5
  - Erica and Mark McAllister of Patch Road

Stay tuned for more information about the second annual Light Up Westminster Holiday Lights Contest later this year!

## THE WHITE ENVELOPE: A FAMILY TRADITION OF GIVING

On January 8, five generations of the Williams family came to KH to deliver their 2025 White Envelope donation in support of Kurn Hattin's Bikes for Kids Giving Tuesday Campaign. Their generous gift helped bring the campaign total to more than \$7,000 and was given in honor of Charles E. Williams.

Inspired by a modern Christmas tradition focused on quiet, intentional giving, the late Christine "Chris" Williams began the Williams family White Envelope tradition in 2016 in honor of her father.

Each year, the family selects a different local organization to receive the gift. This year marked the first time the tradition benefited Kurn Hattin.

Attending the presentation were Mildred Williams; Roy and Barbara Williams (son and daughter-in-law); Sher Sleeper (Chris's daughter); Samantha Marie (Sher's daughter); and Tucker Kemp (Samantha's son).

The Williams family's long-standing relationship with Kurn Hattin dates back to the 1930s and '40s, when Ralph '38, Harold '41, Donald '43, and Clyde Prouty '43—brothers of Mildred Williams—attended the school.

We are deeply grateful to the Williams family for including Kurn Hattin in this meaningful tradition and for their continued commitment to community and children.



### 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

**SAMPLE BALLOT ON Pg. 7**

Our Monthly Community Newspaper March 2026 Vol. 22 No.3

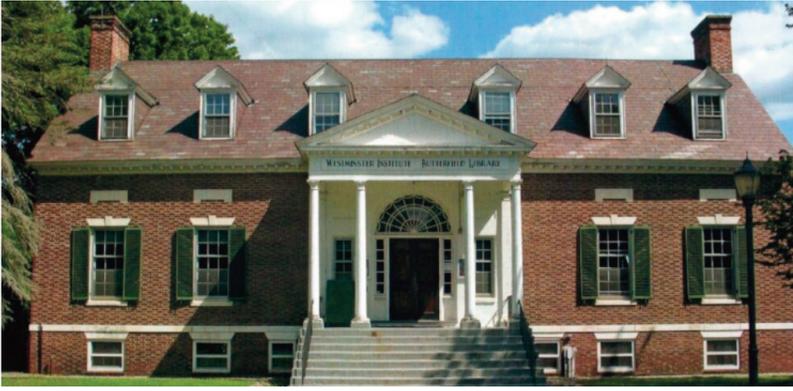
### Westminster Gazette

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## NEWS FROM THE BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY



Happy March, Westminster!

A few quick things I wanted to make sure you were aware of.

Did you know that we have a telescope available to borrow for our cardholders? That's right!

Thanks to a generous donation from a generous supporter (hi mom!) Butterfield has a really awesome National Geographic NT114CF telescope available for your night-sky viewing pleasure!

All we ask is that someone over 18 sign a waiver for it and that you don't look into the sun. Both doable? Great! Call/email/stop by to learn more or

take it home with you (temporarily, of course).

Butterfield is now a member of the Interlibrary Loan Courier Program, connecting us to so many other libraries in the state — and their collections! Once a week, we receive a bin of interlibrary loan materials and we send out materials that other libraries have requested from us.

Borrowing from other Vermont libraries is now easier than ever. If you're after something that we don't have on-site, we should be able to get it for you, and rather quickly to boot. The library received financial support for this service from IMLS through the Vermont Department of Libraries (thank you!!)

And last but certainly not least, a big thank you to Lindy Larson from the Board of Managers of the Westminister Institute and Butterfield Library, for procuring the antique clock that is now mounted in the Institute archway and dedicated to long-time volunteer Dave Murray.

## PARISH HILL CREAMERY AWARDS

The *Westminster Gazette* would like to congratulate our long-time advertisers Peter Dixon and Rachel Fritz Schaal of Parish Hill Creamery in Westminster West, for the creamery's West West Blue Cheese winning a prestigious Super Gold award at the Guild of Fine Foods' World Cheese Awards.



Parish Hill also won six other cheese awards at the event, including a gold medal for their cheese Reverie; silver medals for their Kashar, Jack's Blue, Idyll, and Humble; and a bronze medal for the Vermont Herdsman.

It seems that Parish Hill is used to sittings excellent cheeses winning major awards. The Creamery won a Super Gold award in 2024 for their Jack's Blue. Winning a Super Gold puts them in a class with the top 100 exceptional cheeses in the world.

Congratulations to Parish Hill Creamery!

## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met Feb. 12 at 4:30 p.m. at the Westminster Institute with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: Vice President Pat Goodell, Treasurer Frannie Waldron, Secretary Doug Oftedahl, Don Dawson, Cindy Moses, out-going Director, Donna Dawson and in-coming Director, Michelle Aron.

The board discussed upcoming plans for the open house on March 6th and bake sale and lunch at Town Meeting on February 28th.

**OPEN HOUSE, WELCOME & FAREWELL:** On Friday, March 6h, from 3pm-6pm, there will be an Open House at the Institute. The community is invited to meet Michelle Aron, the new Director; say farewell to Donna Dawson as she retires; and see our new office space. We will be serving appetizers, desserts and refreshments ~ please join us!

**SOUPS & SPEAKERS:** Westminster Cares will host the 4th Wednesday of each month, from 12-2pm at the First Congregational Church's SOUPer Wednesday this winter. Our volunteers will make soups and desserts and provide a speaker on the following dates:

3/25 and 4/29. Anyone in the community is welcome to attend.

**COMMUNITY NURSE PROGRAM:** Our Community Nurse, Kathy Shuster, held a Blood Pressure Clinic at the SOUPer Wednesday event on January 28th. To receive a phone call or schedule an initial home visit with the nurse, please call the office at 722-3607.

**ELDER TECH:** Do you have questions about a device? [laptop, cell phone, smart phone] Elder Tech sessions are held at the Westminster Institute. If you'd like to make an appointment for a one-on-one session, please call the office at (802) 722-3607. (Open to Westminster residents, 60 and older.)

**ANNUAL APPEAL UPDATE:** We truly appreciate the support received from individuals, families and businesses in our community. Your contributions allow us to continue to provide programs and services to older adults in our community. Whether from Annual Appeal, memorial gifts, or contributions in honor of our cherished volunteers, every gift counts!

The following list is for donations made in some-

one's honor or memory.

### Donations Received through February 18th, 2026

#### HONORARY:

In honor of Heidi Anderson from Jen Anderson  
In honor of Donna Dawson, on her retirement, from Sharon Boccelli and Ingrid Sell-Boccelli

#### MEMORIALS:

In memory of Walter Allbee from Andrea Howe  
In memory of Hank and Phyllis Anderson, Melanie DeLonge and Greta Schoeneman from Jennifer Anderson  
In memory of Lori Miller from Jenny Witherell and Pavel Pepeliaev  
In memory of our aunt, Carolyn Muzzey, from Paul and Lisa Muzzey  
In memory of Carolyn Muzzey, from Laurie Noyes  
In memory of Staci Jones-Maly; Joanne Duval; Caro Duval;  
In memory of Genevieve Farnsworth from Tonia and Lester White  
In memory of George Shuster from Kathryn Shuster



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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](http://www.westminstervt.org)

## CENTER SCHOOL GLOW DANCE FUNDRAISER

Westminster Center School's Parent Teacher Organization recently hosted our annual Glow Dance. This is an event that brings students and families together for a night full of fun and dancing.

The gym was transformed with black lights, glowing bracelets, and lively music that kept everyone dancing.

Students enjoyed spending time with friends while parents volunteered to make the event a success.

The Glow Dance was a wonderful example of how our PTO creates meaningful opportunities to build community and



celebrate our school. This is an annual fundraiser for WCS that funds our Troy Wunderle Circus Residency this June!

## NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER WEST LIBRARY

Westminster West Public Library is moving forward with new faces and programs for 2026.

Leading up to our Annual Meeting, WWPL has nominated two new trustees with deep connections to Westminster West. Michaela Gagnon and Lauren Yohe von Krusenstern as well as three continuing trustees and new bylaws will be voted on by Australian ballot before the Annual Meeting, which will be held at 1:30 p.m. on Sunday, March 15 at the Library.

Many people in the Westminsters enjoyed seeing familiar faces and places in the SuperLocal Film Festival. WWPL is now planning new events for 2026.

The final SuperLocal showing will be Bills Lumber - the story of the closing of an 86 year-old lumber mill in Wardsboro - at the Butterfield Library at 6:30 on March 10.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Westminster Gazette is looking for volunteers to help us distribute copies of the paper throughout the area.

Papers are mailed to all Westminster residents, and hundreds of copies are also dropped at dozens of locations in Westminster, Putney Bellows Falls, Springfield, and Walpole, NH.

If you have time once a month to help, contact us at westminsternews@gmail.com for details.

## SAVINGS BANK OF WALPOLE ANNOUNCES PROMOTIONS

Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW) is proud to announce several promotions within its Retail Banking team, reflecting the Bank's continued growth and its commitment to developing employees from within.

Recently promoted team members include:

Lisa Bierweiler Franks who has assumed an expanded role as Regional Vice President, now overseeing the Marlboro Street, Court Street, and both Walpole branches. A Walpole native with experience in both markets, Lisa brings valuable insight and collaboration to her expanded responsibilities.

Pam Lane has been promoted to Branch and Business Development Manager at the West Street branch.

Julia Miramontes is now Branch Services Manager at Marlboro Street.

Heather Paight is now Branch and Business Development Manager at SBW's Court Street branch.

Heather Scheck has been promoted to Regional Vice President, overseeing the West Street, Winchester, and Rindge branches.

Robby Smith is now Branch Services Manager at



the West Street branch.

In their new roles, these team members will continue to advance SBW's mission through customer-first service, strong leadership, and community engagement.

"The growth and success of our team is a reflection of our culture," said Dominic Perkins, SVP of Retail Banking. "We're proud to recognize these individuals for their contributions, and to support their continued development within the Bank."

Our team photo includes a few familiar faces whose promotions were previously announced: Pam Wilson, Branch and Business Development Manager at Marlboro Street, and Amy Chickering, Retail Learning and Development Manager. Together, these individuals, and the colleagues who support them, form a cohesive team that draws on one another's strengths to deliver personalized service, deepen customer relationships, and uphold SBW's commitment to community banking."

*In photo, (Back Row) Amy Chickering, Robby Smith, Pamela Wilson, Heather Paight, (Front Row) Heather Scheck, Pam Lane, Lisa Bierweiler-Franks, and Julia Miramontes.*

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## DOG LICENSES & SHOTS

**OFFICE HOURS: 8:30AM TO 4:00PM  
MON-FRI LICENSE FEES ARE:**

**\$11.00 FOR SPAYED/NEUTERED  
\$15.00 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.**

**- 2026 Vaccine Clinics for Cats & Dogs -**

**Hosted by WCSO Animal Control Officer Ashley Pinger & Dr. Kotas, DVM, of Free Range Veterinary Services.**

**Please: Dogs must be leashed, cats must be in carrier.**

**Rabies\* - \$26,**

**Distemper with Lepto - \$32,  
Lyme - TBD**

**\*Bring prior vaccine record to qualify for 3-year rabies**

**Locations, dates, times:**

**Windham County Sheriff's Office  
185 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT  
Feb. 28, March 21 10 am - 1 pm**

**Grafton Town Offices  
117 Main Street, Grafton, VT  
March 7 10 am - 12 pm**

**Westminster Town Garage  
67 Town Garage Rd, Westminster, VT  
March 28 10 am - 12 pm**

## Westminster Cares Farewell and Welcome Open House

**Say farewell to Donna Dawson, retiring after 13 1/2 years**

**Meet Michelle Aron; new Director**

**And see our new office space**

**Where? The Westminster Institute  
When? Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>  
What? 3pm-6pm  
Appetizers and refreshments will be served**

## Nature Notes - What was Holed Up Under my Garage?

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist



One corner of the garage has a small opening underneath. After a snowstorm, Charlie plows as close as he can and I shovel my way in leaving that corner open. Deep snow covers the sides of the rest of the garage leaving a protected area for somebody. But what?

Each time I back out the car, I look, hoping to see someone in the packed down entrance. The squirrels have left tracks back and forth all around the area not plowed leaving no identifying tracks. Whatever it is, the squirrels are not afraid of it, but what is it?

I had seen a bobcat behind the garage a few days earlier, but I was sure it was too large for that small hole. Nor did I think a bobcat would pick a spot that close to all my activity in the yard.

Thinking about bobcats, I decided to take in a program at the Walpole Library presented by the Hooper Institute on bobcats vs Canada lynx and coyotes. After the presentation, members of the adult audience naturally related stories about bobcats, Canada lynx, mountain lions and coyotes.

I left the program thinking about bobcats vs Canada lynx, always hoping to see a lynx. I knew that lynx live in Northern New England in the deep forest of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont and their main food is

snowshoe hares. I also knew that bobcats are reddish-brown with spotted fur and distinct dark stripes on their front legs. Their paws are smaller than lynx and their short tail is black on top and white underneath.

Canada lynx are larger and their grayish fur has no distinct spotting. Their paws are huge. They have longer ear tufts and have thick fur around the face. Their tails are solid black on the tip. Would I recognize a lynx if I saw one? I think I would.

A couple days ago, I was working on my computer when a motion outside the window caught my eye. Coming up the steps to the deck was a rabbit. In the summer, I had one large and two small rabbits in my yard but not having seen them for several weeks, I assumed they had moved on or something had happened to them.

Being surprised to see a rabbit, I started wondering where it was staying and what it was eating. Their former home was under the gazebo which now was snowed in. My first thought was under the deck but wouldn't I have seen it before now? The next morning heading out to the garage, I spotted the hole and "duh" - of course a perfect spot for a rabbit.

Still thinking about lynx and their favorite food being snowshoe hares, I wondered how different are rabbits from hares. Rabbits are smaller, live in burrows



underground in networks of tunnels called warrens, and the kits are born blind, naked, and helpless. Rabbits are social and live in groups. When threatened, they hide in their burrows or freeze.

Snowshoe hares live above ground in nests in shallow depressions called forms. The leverets are born with fur, open eyes, and are immediately mobile. Hares are mostly solitary or live in pairs. When threatened, hares rely on speed to escape.

*In photos, clockwise from top left, bobcat, Canada lynx and snowshoe hares.*

## WESTMINSTER SAMPLER - A FEW GOOD MEN

By Jessie Haas

The Historical Society needs a few good men, and women, and even kids, to help us make sure we pass down the story of Westminster to future generations.

Fifty years ago, the Bicentennial celebration was a big deal in this town, and our parents' generation had a ball celebrating it. I know, I know, you were a mere child then, and so was I, and they were our ages—and most of them aren't here anymore. That keeps happening; it's a built-in feature of life on earth.

But when past generations go to their rest they take their knowledge with them, unless the younger people are careful to gather in and put it in a form that the next generation will be able to access.

That's what the historical society does. We're easy to get along with, and we aren't necessarily people who know everything about Westminster, or remember all the facts. What we do is save artifacts and documents, write down carefully what they are, where they came from, and where they are now stored, and keep everything organized so that the next person who needs to know something can find it.

This year we've helped newcomers to town find out more about their houses. We've located images for a book and a film, and welcomed people researching their genealogy. We cleaned and straightened gravestones so people can find their Westminster ancestors and read what was said about them at the time of their death. None of it's rocket science. A lot of it is kind of fun, and it's a great way to connect with our town.

We know there are a lot of people out there who care



about our town's history. Can you help keep it alive? Current jobs include putting together a scrapbook of our Massacre commemoration, placing our wonderful embroidery patterns—hand-drawn in oak-gall ink 200 years ago—into protective sleeves, vacuuming the dusty pages of a 100-year-old set of school records, and

learning to use our cataloging program.

Our treasurer and registrar would love assistants and/or understudies. We'll be putting together a cemetery walk, mounting a new exhibit looking back at the Bicentennial celebration, and doing more gravestone cleaning. A couple of hours a week on any one of these tasks would make a big difference to what we can get done, and will help give the history of this town a future.

If you can help, please go to the Contact Us page on our website and send an email, or email me at [kjh@sover.net](mailto:kjh@sover.net). Let us know what part of all this sounds like fun to you.

We ask this as we note the passing of our former president and longtime board member Pat Haas. She worked on the Bicentennial celebration, with Alice Caggiano wrote the book about the Abenque Machine Works, helped put together countless exhibits, worked on cleaning the stage curtain and the Bradley Law Office, put on craft demonstrations and ice cream socials, directed the Massacre play for several years, managed the mailing list, and so much more. This is a big loss for us.

In memory of Pat, I'm hoping some of the folks who care will want to get involved, take on a small task or project, and keep the story of this town going.

You can reach us through our website, [www.westminstervthistory.org](http://www.westminstervthistory.org), or our Facebook page, Westminister VT Historical Society.

Or reach out personally to see what you can do. Please know you will be very welcome.

*In photo, former Westminister Historical Society President the late Pat Haas.*

## 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 is Tuesday, Mar. 3 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 scheduled Prudential Committee meeting Mar. 15th

Number of calls in January: 34

Number of calls through February 18th : 30

Number of calls calendar year to date: 63

Number of calls fiscal year, July 1st :308

**Association Meeting:** The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting February 3rd with President J.T.Tabolt presiding. There were 24 members present and 6 members excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department.

Having successfully completed the required 6 month pro-

bation guidelines, the department welcomed Eliza Sherrod as a full member.

**Snow and Ice:** Be aware of snow and ice on roofs and overhangs. Also check the operation of sump pumps for spring snow melting and run off.

**Mud Season:** Although the worst of mud season is yet to come, it is always a good idea to limit travel on muddy roads as much as possible, giving them a chance to dry out. If using a muddy road is unavoidable, be sure to drive toward the center when possible. The shoulders are apt to be very soft adding to the chances of getting stuck or tipping over.

**Lifeline:** The winter vacations are upon us, and it is a time when many people travel. If you have a Lifeline or a Lifeline type system in your home, it is a good idea to contact the provider to let them know if you are going to be away from home. There should be a telephone number listed for contacting them. If there is an accidental trip of the alarm, the provider will know if the residence is unoccupied or not. This will save the responding agencies from going out for a false alarm.

**Emergency responses:** January turned out to be another busy month with 34 calls for the month. Here is the break-

down for the 34 calls: 10 rescue/medical calls; 5 Mutual Aid: 1 to Chester, 1 to Brattleboro, 1 to Bellows Falls; 2 to Putney, 4 service calls; 3 false alarms; 1 lift assist; 11 motor vehicle crashes/ incidents.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR SALE:** Anyone want to buy a fire extinguisher? We have them for sale and there are 4 sizes available. See the Chief or stop by the fire station for more information if interested.

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Association welcomes donations throughout the year from anyone wishing to remember or honor a loved one or a friend. All memorial donations go into our scholarship fund to be given out at graduation. Send donation to:

Westminister Fire & Rescue Association

PO Box 111 Westminster, 05158

Donations received in February:

Sharon and Ingrid Bocelli

Bruce Mickle

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.westminsterfireandrescue.org](http://www.westminsterfireandrescue.org).

# Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

## CATS LOST AND FOUND

by Helen Neswald



When I was an urban street child of about 7 or 8 I first forged a relationship with so-called alley cats, and, to my mother's dismay, would occasionally bring one home, where it was immediately banished to our coal cellar, presumably kept alive, however invisibly, by daily saucers of milk. Mother, child of an impoverished non-English speaking single parent, regarded "animals" as "dirty," to be kept at a distance.

But my attraction never left me and no sooner had I become mistress of my own household when I launched into a series of adopting stray cats as pets, caring for them via their own preferences with little recourse to professional directions. As my living conditions shifted I was sometimes without a feline companion but the impulse was sufficiently apparent to the extent that neighborhood children once chose me to foster a local stray.

In the ensuing decades of marriage, child-rearing and navigating worldly management, that impulse had remained alive, so that when my family moved to Vermont three decades ago, along with household effects we brought two middle-aged cats with us, both very glad for their newfound freedom of outdoor rambling.

Each lived to a happy maturity and were thereafter replaced when my cohabiting son-in-law brought home a small gray stray someone had abandoned at the farm where he worked. Named Greta by my eight year old grandson, the new arrival thrived and was an affectionate and, as we all noted, intelligent member of our household, and because I was the only predawn riser routine feeding and care befell to me.

Greta had a unique way of communicating. Almost a mute, though capable of howling if accidentally stepped on, she would capture the gaze of the engaged person and with a gesture of her head would turn toward the desired area to request more kibbles or milk, requests to which I promptly responded.

When, impatient with my fixed attentions to a metallic cubicle on our kitchen table, she sought petting, she would repeatedly and gently tap my arm. In short, we had become intimate partners, engaged in routine domestic interactions.

After I turned on my bedroom light each morning, she would allow me about ten minutes of grooming time and then appear on my threshold, preceding me downstairs to our kitchen, where servicing her had precedent over my coffee making then headed for the kitchen's sliding glass door to be let out.

When, as the sun rose, I would head for the store-room to gather supplies for my hens, she would eagerly romp up to the solid wooden door that she saw as the "real" exit.

Cats age much more quickly than humans, and in the past year she had begun to show signs of decline. She was less spry, her coat looked more scruffy and she spent more time indoors. Although it had been 17 years since her arrival, so healthy was our rural lifestyle, as I thought, I felt confident she would outlive the record 19 and 20 years of our original Vermont cats.

It was not to be. One morning she refrained from drinking milk and only sniffed nostalgically when I offered her the raw chicken liver that had been her favorite treat. That was the last food she showed any interest in.

Familiar with the symptoms of kidney failure from years of cat tending, I tried in vain to assess whether she was drinking unusual amounts, but as our home offered reserves of water for our other animals and for watering indoor plants, it was hard to assess. When she still had eaten nothing for two weeks we brought her to the vet, who confirmed the diagnosis.

She took up residence in my bedroom, and we buried her a week later. Bereft of her 17-year companionship, I had grieved for her waning vitality, and wept at her funeral as I had not done for any other cat. But I also realized a sense of relief and, determined to enjoy my remaining time, the words of an aged resident of a nursing home upon waking resonated in my mind: "Glory be...I'm still alive!"

In photo, editor's "found" cat Mimi, age 16.

### PARKS PLACE BUILDING MOMENTUM

I want to personally thank you for the many ways you supported Parks Place in 2025.

Whether you volunteered, donated, partnered with us, or shared our work, your support made a meaningful difference for individuals and families in our community. Your contributions have ensured that children experience joy and that families and individuals feel supported throughout this significant time of year.

As we move into 2026, I would like to share some of the goals I have for Parks Place:

- Enhancing access to services by increasing community awareness of Parks Place as a reliable entry point for assistance.

- Strengthening collaboration with partner agencies to improve referral processes, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate individuals' navigation through complex systems.

- Expanding volunteer engagement to build organizational capacity, enhance outreach, and deepen community involvement in our mission.

These priorities reflect the role of Parks Place as both a direct community connector and a credible advocate striving to enhance the systems that affect individuals and families.

Jennifer Tolaro-Heidbrink, Executive Director

## REMEMBRANCES MARCH 2026

RUTH CHICKERING, 97  
4/23/1928 -  
1/28/2026  
VERNON,  
FORMERLY  
WESTMINSTER, VT

ROBERT DUCA, 73  
10/13/1953 -  
2/15/2026  
WESTMINSTER, VT

KENNETH FLAGG, 80  
2/8/1945 -  
1/24/2026  
WESTMINSTER, VT

PATRICIA HAAS, 85  
2/19/1940 -  
2/13/2026  
WESTMINSTER, VT

DOUG LUND, 66  
3/27/1959 -  
2/11/2026  
WESTMINSTER, VT

WENDY (NORTON)  
MOSS, 62  
9/6/1963 -  
2/6/2026  
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

RUTH WILLIAMS, 95  
9/11/1930 -  
1/24/2026  
BRATTLEBORO, VT

NORMAN WRIGHT, 88  
3/1/1937 -  
2/15/2026  
WESTMINSTER, VT

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## NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR SOUTHERN VERMONT EMERGING LEADERS

The Southern Vermont Young Professionals (SoVTYP) and Shires Young Professionals (SYP) are seeking nominations for the 2026 Southern Vermont Emerging Leaders awards, which honor community and professional leaders in all fields, who are between the ages of 21 and 40.

“Our communities are full of extraordinary individuals who are working to make a difference,” says Jack Spanierman, SoVTYP program manager and workforce education specialist at Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC). “We love how people really come together to help honor and celebrate the next generation through the annual Emerging Leaders Awards.”

Each year, the Southern Vermont Young Professionals (a program of BDCC) and the Shires Young Professionals (an affiliate of the Southwestern Vermont Chamber of



Commerce) highlight and honor young adults who are leaders and change-makers in the region's economy and communities through the Emerging Leaders awards. Nearly 200 local leaders have received awards since the program started in 2018. Of those, 44 were subsequently recognized as Vermont Business Magazine's Rising Stars.

“With the demographic transition that Vermont is facing, celebrating upcoming local leadership is that much more important,” says SYP chair Courtney Wilson. “Our region has a lot to be excited about when it comes to new-

comers with diverse experiences and backgrounds to help us face challenges in Southern Vermont.”

Nominee must be between the ages of 21 and 40.

Nominee must live or work in Bennington County or the Windham Region.

Previously recognized Emerging Leaders will not be honored again. You can see a full list of previous awardees at our website

You may submit as many nominations as you like.

We are not able to accept self-nominations

Nominations are due March 20 and can be submitted using a brief online form at [www.sovermontzone.com/emerging-leaders](http://www.sovermontzone.com/emerging-leaders). For more information, visit [www.sovermontzone.com/emerging-leaders](http://www.sovermontzone.com/emerging-leaders) or email Rachel Shields Ebersole at [rsebersole@brattleborodevelopment.com](mailto:rsebersole@brattleborodevelopment.com).

## 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

March 1. Sunday service at 10 a.m.

March 3. Women's Fellowship 10:30 a.m. Hall

March 4. SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

March 4. Lenten Bible study. 6:30 p.m. Hall and Zoom

March 8 Sunday Service at 10 a.m. with Communion

March 11 SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

March 11 Lenten Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Hall and Zoom

March 15 Sunday Service 10

March 16; Standing Committee 5:30 p.m.

March 18 SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

March 18 Lenten Bible study 6:30 p.m. Hall and Zoom

March 22 Sunday service at 10 a.m.

March 25 SOUPer Wednesday 12-2

March 29. Holy Week begins. Palm Sunday Service at 10 a.m. With distribution of palms

March 29. Tenebrae Service 7 p.m. Upper Sanctuary

The First Congregational Church of Westminster is located on Rt 5 in Westminster. We have a special children's message each Sunday and a fellowship hour after the service. Rev. Rich O'Donnell serves as Pastor. We are a growing congregation and have lots to offer so please stop by anytime.

The Congregational Church of Westminster West Worships every Sunday at 10 a.m. We are using Facebook Live to stream our weekly services. We are an Open and Affirming Church and fully accessible.

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

As we seek a settled pastor through our search and call process, we will not be able to offer office hours as usual, but the Deacons (Karen Blanchard, Charlotte Gifford, Ray Huessy, Adrienne Major and Sue Venman) are available to support the congregation.

You can leave a message on the church number (802-387-1175) or you can contact a deacon directly.

For all questions of church building use, please contact Tom Griffith ([tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org](mailto:tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org)).

#### Walpole Unitarian Church

The corner of Union and Main Streets, Walpole, NH. Services begin at 10 a.m. with Rev. Elaine Bomford. [www.walpoleunitarian.org](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, Intergenera-

tional 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 and online for winter.

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 Seated Class Tues. 12:15-1:15 p.m.

New Beginner Class Tues. 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Intermediate Class Tues. 10:30-12 p.m.

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 at Pierce's Hall - Saturday, March 28 at 121 E. Putney Falls Road (look for the "Dance" signs)

Circle and Contra Dances with David Millstone calling.

6 pm - Family Hour with Dancing for all ages

7:00 - Snacks

7:30-Contra Dance

9:30--Last waltz

All dances are taught. No partner required. By free will donation. Stay in touch at: [eputneypierceshall@gmail.com](mailto:eputneypierceshall@gmail.com)

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 p.m. - 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

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THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

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Sojourns Community Health Clinic

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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: [CaitlinAdair@sover.net](mailto:CaitlinAdair@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:

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Alma Beals - Treas.

Joyce Sullivan - Sec.

Donna Dawson

Mary Scherbatskoy

Michelle Aron

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Pictures and Articles

Provided by the

Community

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

## April Deadline

The deadline for the April 2026 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, March 25 Publication Date Is

Wed. April 1

To Contact the Westminster Gazette

E-mail:

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

**COMMUNITY READ OF "THE PROBLEM WITH PLASTIC"**

The Putney Public Library and the local Beyond Plastics affiliate group Third Act Windham/Windsor is sponsoring a community read of *The Problem With Plastic: How We Can Save Ourselves & Our Planet Before It's Too Late*.



copies of the book available for checkout to Putney Library cardholders—request a copy by emailing request@putneylibrary.org.

All are invited to a facilitated community discussion of the book on Tuesday, March 24 at 6:30 pm.

The library has multiple

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Questions? Contact Erin Beaudry  
ebeaudry@kurnhattin.org  
802-721-6914

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OFFICIAL BALLOT ANNUAL TOWN AND TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT AND TOWN FIRE DISTRICT #3 WESTMINSTER, VERMONT MARCH 3, 2026		
INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use BLACK Pen to fill in the oval. <b>DO NOT USE PENCIL.</b></li> <li>To vote for a person whose name is printed on the ballot, fill in the oval to the right of the name of that person.</li> <li>To vote for a person whose name is not printed on the ballot, write the person's name in the blank space provided and fill in the oval to the right of the write-in line. Please use block letters and stay within the box provided for write-ins.</li> <li>Do not vote for more candidates than the "VOTE for NOT MORE THAN #!" for an office.</li> <li>If you make a mistake, tear, or deface the ballot, return it to an election official and obtain another ballot. <b>DO NOT ERASE.</b></li> </ul>		
<b>FOR MODERATOR OF THE TOWN</b> 1 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>DAVID MAJOR</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR LISTER</b> 3 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>JOHN E. EWALD</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS</b> 3 Year Term Vote for not more than one <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
<b>FOR MODERATOR OF THE TOWN FIRE DISTRICT #3</b> 1 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>DAVID MAJOR</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR LISTER</b> Remaining 2 years of a three-year term Vote for not more than one (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR TRUSTEE OF CAMPBELL FUNDS</b> 3 Year Term Vote for not more than one <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
<b>FOR MODERATOR OF THE TOWN SCHOOL DISTRICT</b> 1 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>DAVID MAJOR</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR COMMISSIONER OF CAMPBELL FUND</b> 1 Year Term Vote for not more than three <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR UHSD#27 DIRECTOR</b> 3 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>JUNE STREETER</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
<b>FOR SELECTBOARD</b> 3 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>STEPHEN MAJOR</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR TRUSTEE CAMPBELL FUND</b> Remaining 2 years of a three-year term Vote for not more than one <b>MATTHEW S. CONKLIN</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR TOWN SCHOOL DIRECTOR</b> 2 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>KAREN BLANCHARD</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>
<b>FOR TRESURER</b> Remaining 1 year of a three-year term Vote for not more than one <b>MILDRED (MILLIE) BARRY</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS</b> Remaining 2 years of a three-year term Vote for not more than one <b>MATTHEW S. CONKLIN</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>	<b>FOR FIRE DISTRICT #3 PRUDENTIAL COMMITTEE</b> 3 Year Term Vote for not more than one <b>CHRISTOPHER HARLOW</b> <input type="radio"/> (Write-in) <input type="radio"/>

ARTICLES	
<b>Article 1:</b> Shall the voters of the Bellows Falls Union High School No. 27 (BFUHS) approve the school board to expend \$9,192,421 (nine million, one hundred ninety-two thousand, four hundred twenty-one dollars), which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year? Bellows Falls Union High School No. 27 (BFUHS) estimates that this proposed budget, if approved will result in per pupil education spending of \$12,970.91, which is <b>\$378.07 LOWER</b> than per pupil education spending of the current year.	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>
<b>Article 2:</b> Shall the voters of the River Valley Technical Center School District approve the sum of three million, five hundred thirty-seven thousand, two hundred thirty-eight dollars (\$3,537,238) to defray current expenses for the ensuing fiscal year and to pay outstanding orders and obligations?	YES <input type="radio"/> NO <input type="radio"/>

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**ART CONTEST: "With Liberty and Justice for All"**  
 For the 250th anniversary of the USA, GFCJC is hosting an open Art Contest about the meaning of justice, based on the words of our Pledge of Allegiance: "With Liberty and Justice for All." Enter any form of art (visual, verbal, etc.) on what justice means to you. Submit your work: www.greaterfallscjc.org until April 1st. We will honor artists & share; Rockingham Free Public Library - Wednesday, April, 8, 6 PM. We welcome all political points of view - to better understand each other. Prizes include bikes, a gift basket, T-shirts, and gift certificates from our Sponsors:  
 - Allen Brothers - Halladay's Flowers - Flat Iron Coop  
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 - Village Square Booksellers - Vermont Country Store  
 Tim Hayes, 2025  
 GFCJC addresses conflict and crime by promoting shared responsibility for a safe, healthy community, repairing harms, restoring relationships, and building community connections.  
 Page 1 / 1  
 \*\*For info, contact john@gfcjc.org

**MARCH BUSINESS OF THE MONTH:  
 CHRISTOPHER HINDS  
 LICSW, ACSW**



Chris Hinds is a Clinical Social Worker providing face-to-face psychotherapy to adolescents, adults and families at his Bellows Falls office. He accepts BC/BS private insurance and out-of-pocket payments.

Clinical Social Workers are trained in mental health treatment, prevention and diagnosis. They typically have additional training in diversity, sociocultural differences, ethnicity, human development and many of life's bigger challenges.

Chris has been a Mental Health Professional for over 40 years. He was a Family Therapist at the Yale Psychiatric Institute, Yale School of Medicine in Connecticut from 1989-1992.

He later became a Clinical Director for six (6) different accredited mental health and substance abuse treatment programs across the Northeast and Southeast. In those positions he designed and developed integrated treatment programs and therapy modalities for Partial Hospitalization, Intensive Outpatient, Substance Abuse Treatment, Residential and Wilderness Behavioral care.

Chris has seen clients in therapy himself nearly every day for those past 40 years. "That's a lot of people's problems, if you think about it," he said...But it's all good, because such is commitment in the Social Work profession!

Chris set his sights on moving to Southern Vermont four years ago. He grew up in a Connecticut river valley among tobacco fields, floodland and the meandering Farmington River. He remembers coming to Vermont in summertime during the seventies and hitch-hiking with teenage friends from Dorset and Grafton, through Saxton's River. "Not many rides were to be had", he said.

"When I was 10, I learned to ski "old school" at Stratton from those Austrian Instructors who were so good at flirting with housewives and teaching their special ski techniques. My dad grew up in Rutland and I have eight generations of Vermont ancestors "planted" between Rutland and Brandon cemeteries". The oldest was a Green Mountain Boy. "I'm taking my place in line".

Chris has been licensed in six states during his very diverse career. He received his MSW from Boston University and his Undergraduate Social Work Degree from the Rochester Institute of Technology.

In 1980, Chris attended the University of Oslo, Norway where he studied Peace Research and the Norwegian social welfare system. Other areas of professional interest are community organizing, activism and helping young people and adults with climate and existential anxieties.

Clinical Social Workers provide more mental health services in the U.S than psychiatrists, psychologists and all other helping professionals combined.

I am located at 39 The Square, Suite 201 in Bellows Falls, and can be contacted at (404) 989-4320.

**GRANTS PROGRAM**

Windham Foundation, a nonprofit based in Grafton, that works to enhance Vermont's economic, cultural, and civic life, is pleased to announce its funding opportunities and new guidelines for its 2026 Grants Program.

Similar to 2025, the Foundation will offer two grant cycles, Spring and Fall, with each cycle having two distinct mission-driven focus areas. New this year, the Spring cycle, with a deadline of March 15 at 5 p.m., will be open to nonprofits focused on (1) Economic Development; Workforce Development; and Job Readiness, and (2) Cultivation of Food; Food Security; Food Processing and Distribution; Healthy Forests and Streams; Conservation; Climate Change Adaptation.

The Fall cycle has a deadline of Sept. 15. More information about these focus areas, and an updated Grants Guidelines section, can be found on our website (Windham Foundation Grants Program).

For more information contact Meg Gonzalez at, meg.gonzalez@windham-foundation.org.

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