



WCS STUDENTS VISIT STATEHOUSE

Westminster Center School's fourth grade class made their annual trip to the Statehouse in Montpelier on April 15. They were prepared in advance by their teacher, Kimberlee Doyon, and even got a classroom visit ahead of time by Representative Michelle Bos-Lun of Westminster.

With amazing synchrony, Westminster's School Board Chair, Cheryl Charles, was also at the Statehouse that day because she was speaking to the legislature's Rural Caucus early in the morning about potential education legislation affecting our rural schools like Westminster's. She got to join the students for their several hour visit as well. Her granddaughter, Avery Samples, is in the fourth grade class.

The students left the Center School on that Wednesday morning by bus, and made the trip accompanied by Doyon, educator Dena Weiss-Tisman, and a wonderful set of additional chaperones, all of whom happen to be grandmoms of Westminster students.

The students started their Montpelier visit with an educational and interactive session at the Vermont History Museum, and then took the short walk to have lunch on the steps of the Statehouse, followed by their engaging and meaningful visit inside the Capitol itself! There they learned about the building's history, the role of the legislature, and how a law gets made!

Representative Bos-Lun made it a priority to talk with them while they visited, and even waved them off



when their school bus left the Statehouse to make the trip back to Westminster from Montpelier.

Our fourth graders were models of responsible be-

havior, asked great questions, and thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated their visit!

WESTMINSTER SONG FEST - SAT. MAY 2



Featuring Don Dawson as emcee, the Kurn Hattin children's Choir, Ron Bos-lun and many others from all parts of Westminster, the Westminster Inclusion Committee, Westminster West and Butterfield Libraries join to sponsor this Song Fest at the Butterfield Institute on Saturday, May 2 at 4 p.m..

Come sing us a song if you are a musician or just come sing along

The Kurn Hattin children's choir will open the show. Ron Bos-Lun, Nick Keil, Tom Griffith and the Orchard Hill Band along with any musical entertainment is welcome.

We especially invite original songs about Westminster.

- celebrate our history, our heroes, businesses, farming, children or the hill and valleys, flora and fauna...
- use familiar or original tunes
- invite others to sing along or just tell a story

We will end with a sing-along of familiar tunes. Come meet your neighbors and welcome in the Spring

GREEN UP DAY SATURDAY, MAY 2

By the Westminster Conservation Commission

Since 1970, Green Up Vermont has been keeping Vermont clean. In its first year, they closed the highway for 3 hours and bused schoolchildren out to the interstate to do cleanup.

Governor Deane Davis flew around the state in a helicopter landing on the highway to praise the volunteers. Now Green Up Day is in its 56th year and is always scheduled for the first Saturday in May.

As you drive around the town, you may have noticed where roadside trash tends to accumulate, for example along the main roadways such as Route 5, Back Westminster Road, Westminster West Road, Saxtons River Road, Patch Road, etc.

Last year people got out early and green bags were all along the roadways well before the official day. This is fine because it increases visibility, gives a sense of how much trash is out there, and shows which areas have already been cleaned up.

Last year Westminster residents did an outstanding job with greening up. Let's do even more this year!

Did you know that Green Up Vermont has an app?

Optionally, you can download it from the app store and then use it to create a green up team, and organize and report where you green up.

You can also just go out and green up with no tech required! Vermont actually holds a Guinness World Record for green up! According to the GUV website, this record was achieved in 2024, and the official Guinness record title is "The Most Pledges Received for Trash Clean Up in 24 Hours."

The number was 6833 pledges, with about 30,000 volunteers. This year Green Up Day is Saturday, May 2 and is coordinated by the Westminster Conservation Commission.

You can pick up bags at the Town Hall, the Westminster West Library and the North Westminster Community House.

You can also use bags that you have on hand, such



as feed bags, bird seed bags, other trash bags, etc. Additionally, someone will be at the Town Hall on

Thanks for keeping our town beautiful!

Our Monthly Community Newspaper May 2026 Vol. 22 No.5

Westminster Gazette

Town of Westminster
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THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL NAMES SCHLACHTER TO LEAD SCHOOL

The Grammar School (TGS), an independent school serving preschool through 8th grade in Putney, has announced Margaret Schlachter as the new Head of School.

Schlachter will be taking the reins of the 60-acre campus from Nick Perry, who has led the school for the past 10 years. The leadership transition will take place at the end of this school year.

"We are super excited to welcome Margaret as our next Head of School," said Cray Cook, co-chair of TGS's Board of Trustees. "Our search committee was a cross-community effort, involving faculty, parents, trustees, and alumni, and the pool of candidates was very strong, with applicants from around the country. Margaret emerged as an exceptional match for both the responsibilities of the role and the values of the TGS community. The Board of Trustees enthusiastically and unanimously approved her appointment, and we are looking forward to her tenure."

Schlachter brings two decades of independent school leadership to TGS, most recently serving as Head of School at Mountain School at Winhall, an independent K-6 school in Bondville. Her career spans admissions, college guidance, advancement, program development, student life, fundraising, alumni relations, faculty and staff management, and coaching, at Wasatch Academy (UT), Killington Mountain School, Stratton Mountain School (VT), and Skidmore College (NY). She has also completed Pathways to Leadership, a two-year initiative through the Northwest Association of Independent Schools that prepares women educators for head of school roles.

Schlachter grew up skiing and ski racing in the Adirondacks and Green Mountains and attended Stratton



Mountain School, fostering a deep connection to Southern Vermont and its communities.

She is a graduate of Babson College, where she earned a bachelor's degree and competed as an alpine ski racer, and holds a Master of Education in Education Leadership and Policy Studies from the University of Vermont.

Beyond education, Schlachter founded and built a globally recognized sports media and experiential brand and competed as a professional athlete, helping pioneer

the sport of obstacle course racing — work that earned her international awards and recognition. She is also a co-founder of the nonprofit "For Those Who Would," on whose board she continues to serve.

"I am deeply honored and excited to join The Grammar School community as its next Head of School," said Schlachter. "TGS's commitment to thoughtful, student-centered learning, grounded in creativity, curiosity, and connection to the natural world, aligns closely with my own values as an educator and leader. I am excited to spend time on the beautiful campus, learning alongside students, supporting teachers in their work, and partnering with families to ensure every child feels known, supported, and challenged."

Though she is still finishing out the year with her current school, Margaret is already making time to integrate herself into life at TGS. Last Friday, she visited

"It is wonderful to see Margaret getting integrated into TGS's community already," said Nick Perry, TGS's current Head of School. "Her energy and enthusiasm are palpable, and her eagerness to learn from our students and our faculty will serve her well as she prepares to lead this special school into its next chapter. I've been incredibly proud to be part of TGS's 65-year-old legacy of guiding young people to become the very best versions of themselves as they learn, play, and grow together, and I'm excited to be passing the reins into such capable hands."

The Grammar School is currently accepting applications for the 2026-2027 academic year, with scholarships and other financial aid available. Contact the Admissions Office at (802) 387-5364, email admissions@thegrammarschool.org, or visit www.thegrammarschool.org.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met Thursday April 9th at the Westminster Institute with President Lori Larue presiding.

The following board members attended: Treasurer Frannie Waldron, Don Dawson, Cindy Moses, Pat Goodell, Doug Ofte and Director, Michelle Aron.

The board discussed the upcoming open house for April 17th, and the upcoming Garden Tour on July 11th and 12th.

WESTMINSTER CARES GARDEN TOUR: The 23rd annual Westminster Cares Garden Tour will be held on July 11th and 12th. Over the years this event has become the major fundraiser for Westminster Cares.

Look for more information in next month's Westminster Gazette and at www.westminstercares.org.

COMMUNITY NURSE PROGRAM: Our Commu-

nity Nurse, Kathy Shuster, is available for wellness checks and care coordination. 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 would like to make an appointment for a session, please call the office @ (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 con-

tributions in honor of our cherished volunteers, every gift counts!

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

Donations Received through April 22nd, 2026
HONORARY:

In honor of Donna Dawson, from Beth Haggerty
In honor of Pete Harrison, from George Cheney
In honor of Westminster Cares volunteers, from Bill Smidutz

In honor of Virginia Wyoming, Sharon Boccelli, and the Meals on Wheels program, from Heidi Bernier and Claude Blazej

MEMORIALS:

In memory of Steve Belczak, from Heidi Bernier and Claude Blazej



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ADVERTISE IN THE GAZETTE!

Annual Rates:
Pages 2-3 - approx. 4"x5" \$350 a year - \$50 for one month
Pages 4-7 - approx. 4.7"x6.8" \$600 a year - \$100 for one month
Page 8 - approx. 2.5"x3.25" - \$230 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

SPRINGTIME EPHEMERAL WILDFLOWER WALK



Join the Westminster Conservation Commission in search of woodland wildflowers on Saturday, May 9 from 10 a.m. until noon.

The bloodroot are already up, and many more flowers are on the way!

We will meet at the Westminster West School parking lot and carpool to a local deciduous forest where these short-lived blooms are plentiful and varied.

Please register for information on any

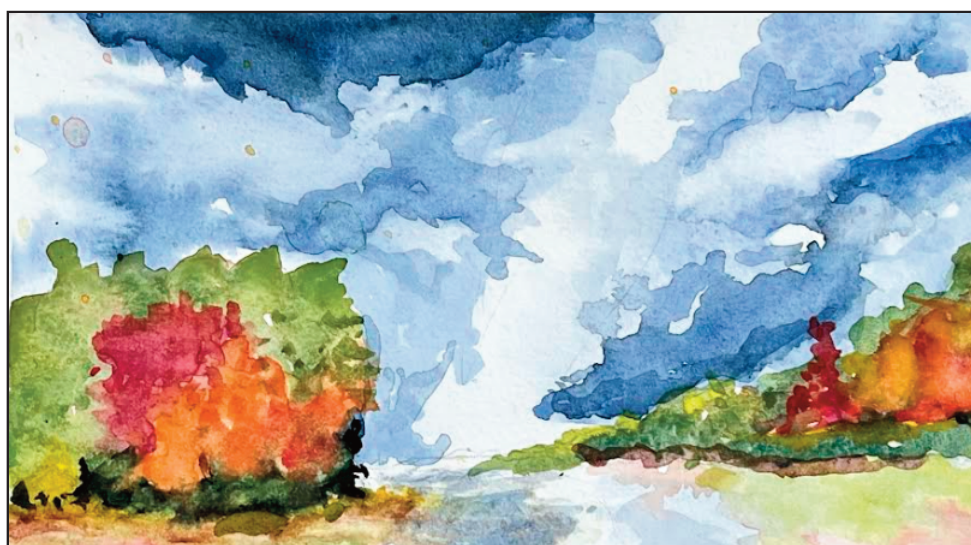
weather related changes. Registration is required, and maximum number of participants is 12.

To register, please email westminstervtconservation@gmail.com.

For more information, call Rachael Shaw at (802) 869-3184.

Photo of spring beauties and trout lilies by Rachael Shaw.

HALVERSON EXHIBIT IN PUTNEY



The Putney Public Library presents Dreams of Color, watercolors and collaged bookmarks by Claire Halverson through May 30. The exhibition includes many small, landscape-based watercolors. Halverson paints what she sees and loves during her walks in Vermont. They are little gems, evocative of place.

Halverson began doing artwork years ago. She explored varieties of graphics—woodcuts, lithographs, and etchings. She studied at the Museum School in Boston, where she discovered how much she loved working in different ways with her hands.

Halverson stepped away from art for several decades while she raised her daughter and began a teaching career. She retired in 2011 and returned to creativity through the medium of collage.

She says “I would sit at my table, turn the music up loud, choose a few bold colors of tissue paper, and see what would happen. I loved tearing the paper into unpredictable shapes and layering brilliant transparent colors over darker ones. I made bookmarks and greeting cards, reveling in the joy of color and experimentation.”

In early 2023 she began painting with watercolors. She took classes with Lynn Zimmerman, who gave her artist quality paints and encouraged her. Lynn taught her watercolor techniques - washes, dripping, mixing colors, spattering, layering and the magic of transparency.

Halverson is particularly drawn to semi-impressionistic work and also studied with Donna Cary and Sarah Yeoman, whose loose style of painting she admires.

Halverson says, “Nature has always been my greatest inspiration. Art helps me notice more. During my daily walks I observe the light on a leaf, moss on a rock, snow and ice in a brook, or the shift of color in the sky. When I’m painting, the noise of the world quiets. For a while, there are only colors, shapes, and possibility—and sometimes, even dreams filled with beautiful color.”

Halverson lives in Dummerston.

Putney Library is located at 55 Main Street in Putney.

This program is free and open to the public during library hours: Monday-Friday 10:30am-6pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm.

THE 23RD ANNUAL WESTMINSTER CARES GARDEN TOUR WILL BE HELD ON JULY 11TH AND 12TH.

KIDS Fishing Derby

Hosted by the Westminster Rec Nonprofit

Saturday, May 16th

Westminster Pool, Morse Brook Road

No Entry Fee
Ages: 14 & Under
Registration: 8am
Derby: 9am

Hot Dogs-
Chips-Drinks

50/50,
Raffles,
Trophies

fishing, fun, and
friendly competition!

Children must be accompanied by an adult

Just Desserts

BENEFIT CONCERT:
24 Main Street Community Building
Saturday, May 2 at 7 PM
\$5 Youth/\$15 Adult
Folk Music by 2x2

Valerie Kosednar, Mark Grieco, Betsy & Lee Rybeck Lynd
A cappella and accompanied on guitar, dobro and banjo.

Opening Act: Half Giraffe

**Yummy Desserts
Great Raffle Prizes**
Bring a donation for the 24 Main Food Pantry and be entered for a prize!

This event is sponsored by
Bill Stevens, Financial Advisor

MORE INFO:
Wanda
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Nature Notes - Bears

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

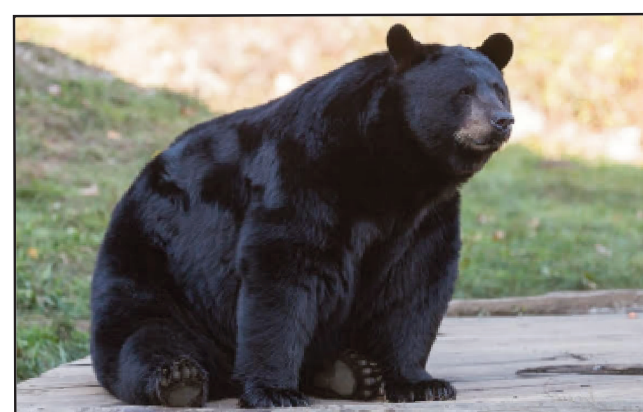
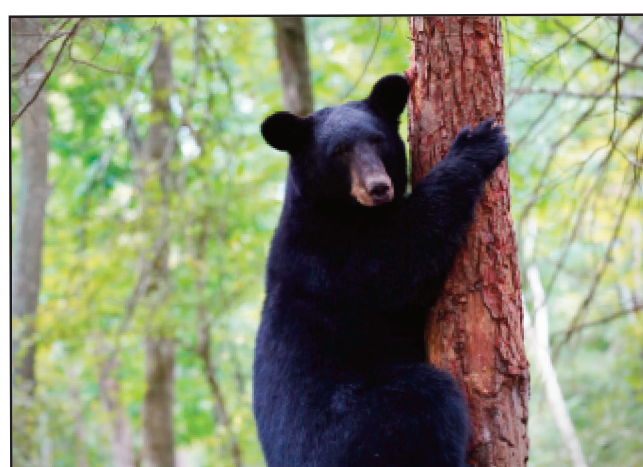
One of the hardest things I have to do in the spring is to give up feeding the birds because of the bears. Birds are such a big part of my life during the winter months.

Bears need forests to survive. They need stands of oak trees and beech trees that produce nuts for food for summer and fall. They need wetlands where they find food in the spring.

Because bears use different habitats seasonally, they need corridors so they can move across roads and other developed areas. Their supply of natural food is reduced when they can't move around in their home ranges.

Their natural foods are berries, apples, nuts, tubers, insects, larvae, small mammals, eggs, honey, carrion, and garbage. Like many other animals, bears are opportunistic and will eat whatever food they find most easily. When bears become used to food sources and come into frequent human contact, they become nuisance bears. As a last resort, in some cases, nuisance bears have to be euthanized.

Some of the most common sources of food provided by people that attract bears are pet food, bird feeders, barbecue grills, garbage, trash containers and campsites with access to food and food waste. Once a bear discovers a good food source, he will keep



returning. So please be aware and remove any of these food sources this spring. They are definitely not doing the bears any favors!

Bears are solitary except for a mother with cubs. Usually the bears that visit me are last year's cubs that the mother sends out to find their own territory when she has a new cub. They are nocturnal and often visit early evening or early morning.

Their eyesight is poor and their hearing only moderate, but their sense of smell is so good that they hone in on that bird feeder and remember from year to year the best food sources.

WESTMINSTER SAMPLER - THE CAMPBELL FUND



By Jessie Haas

Before Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Westminster like other New England towns had its methods of dealing with the wealth gap.

Frank Miller and Bertha Miller Collins collected the story of "Poor Katie," a single woman living in Westminster West village who took to popping into people's houses to sit by the fire for an hour or two. This was viewed as eccentricity until someone began to think and investigate. Had anyone seen smoke coming from her chimney? It turned out she had no wood to burn and almost nothing to eat, and she was bundled off to live with a relative. No word on how that turned out! As far as Westminster was concerned, problem solved.

Like other towns, Westminster followed the practice of 'warning out' newcomers who seemed likely to become a charge on the town. This was based in English stature from 1495, and from the much more ancient idea that people belonged to a certain place. The flip side was that towns were obligated to care for their own poor.

Warning out was a way of telling newcomers, "You are not my obligation." Many Black families and individuals were warned out of Westminster. Most of them lived long lives here, working for and alongside their more prosperous townspeople. Others warned out included people whose families were or became Westminster's most prominent citizens, including a Willard, a Nutting, and a Holden.

Another tactic was the 'bidding off' of poor people to householders who would provide them room and

board. The incentive to choose the lowest bid doubtless led to misery for some, while others likely found decent homes where they lived like family members, or at least like the hired man and hired maid also living in the house.

A third option was the Poor Farm, whereby a house and land was provided for people considered chargeable to the town. They lived there communally under the supervision of a matron and a farmer. There was a poor farm near Sand Hill Road at one time, and later one near Streeter Road. More informally the churches and the stores kept an eye out for people who needed extra help.

Another effort began in 1876 when a man named David R. Campbell, a native of Rockingham (though likely connected to the prominent Westminster Campbells) gave \$5,000 to the inhabitants of Westminster, to be invested, according to the official town document, with the interest or income to be applied for "the support and aid of the Paupers, Indigent, and Poor of said Town of Westminster."

Ever since, the Campbell Fund has been available to help Westminster inhabitants with emergencies. Recent examples include replacing a water pump, buying snow tires, preventing electricity shutoff, or helping someone come up with a security deposit. Currently the fund is somewhat diminished. The original \$5,000 is still invested, and overseen by the Trustees of the Public Funds, with around \$1400 available to help Westminster citizens.

The Commissioners of the Campbell Fund and the Trustees have occasionally held raffles to increase the endowment, but there is no doubt that it could use a

top up so that it can continue to fulfill its mission. \$5,000 isn't as much money as it was in 1876 when David R. Campbell, an 82-year-old bachelor, made his gift to Westminster.

One possibility would be for citizens to make donations or bequests. It would be advisable to contact the town offices about the best way to do that if you need to take a charitable deduction, and to find out the best way to make out the check. We've all been in those situations where money is tight, and your car or pet decides to come up with a sudden, expensive ailment. In memory of those times, a little donation to the Campbell Fund might be in order for those who can. It's also important to note that the Campbell Fund often partners with Westminster Cares, the Church, and SEVCA to increase the amount of aid to individuals who need help.

In other news, you may have noticed the change in appearance of the water trough in front of the Town Hall. The Historical Society is treating it with D2 biocide, and giving it a scrubbing, a process by which a monument or gravestone is cleaned of lichen and stains (see photos).

The trough looked simply godawful for the first day or two after treatment, but is now improving. This is the same process we have used in the Old Cemetery.

Save this date! June 13, all morning, we will be cleaning and straightening the rest of the stones in the Old Cemetery. This is a pleasant, sociable activity with impressive results. All are welcome!

Photos of water trough restoration work by Obie Lisai, courtesy of the Westminster Historical Society.

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, May 5 at 7 p.m.

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

Unless otherwise called for a special meeting, the Prudential Committee meets on the 3rd Sunday of every month at the Fire House on Grout Ave at 10 a.m.

Next scheduled Prudential Committee meeting May 17.

Number of calls in March: 19

Number of calls through April 24th 32

Number of calls calendar year to date: 128

Number of calls fiscal year from July 1st: 373

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting April 7th with President J.T. Tabolt presiding. There were 19 members present and 5 members excused. Currently there are 43 members of the volunteer fire department.

Emergency responses: March turned out to be another busy month with 19 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown for the 19 calls: 8 rescue/medical calls; 1 Mutual Aid to Alstead; 2 service call; 1 Hazmat; 4 motor vehicle crashes/ incidents; 1 Brush Fire; 2 smoke investigations;

Walkers: We see more people than usual walking out on the roads these days and a few of them are walking and running with the flow of traffic on the right side of the road. That can be very dangerous. Be sure to always walk or run facing traffic on the left side of the road. There have been some pedestrian fatalities due in part to walking on the wrong side of the road. When biking, ride with the flow of traffic, on the right side of the road. Remember, you are responsible for your own safety when walking or biking.

Burn Permits: Due to the fact that the weather is very dry, doing an outside burn will be put on hold for the time being, subject to change.

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 from Bellows Falls Union High School. Send donation to:

Westminster Fire & Rescue Association
PO Box 111 Westminster, 05158

Donations in April:

Jacalyn & John Connors

Pond Hockey

Tom and Diane Coulombe

Pat Haas. Celebration of life for Pat Haas to be held at the Westminster Fire Station on Grout Ave June 27 at 1pm. Bring a dish or a memory to share, or both. Questions? Martha Haas, 802-722-9097 or marthaas@gmail.com

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

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

IT TOOK A VILLAGE

One of the founding members of Westminster Cares, Karen Walter, along with Barbara Greenwood and several neighbors and friends, started Westminster Cares 38 years ago this fall. For 12 years Karen coordinated this volunteer effort to assist aging residents of our town. Having recently hired it's third director, Westminster Cares has evolved into what it is today, offering many programs and services to older adults in our town.

As Karen prepares to move out of the area, she reflects back on her years as a Westminster resident:

Living in Westminster has been a treat. Where can I begin to record the last thirty-nine years of my life. I remember wondering what it was going to be like to permanently move from Long Island to a small town in Vermont. I knew that the many times of the year that we drove up to enjoy our land as part-timers, it was always difficult to leave. Our decision was to build a timber frame house with passive solar energy and live in a natural setting. We did it and met new and interesting neighbors along the way that became lasting friends.

When I was growing up in Denver, Colorado I had loved visiting my grandparents on their farm in a small Kansas town. Well, here I was in Westminster farm town and ready to be a part of it all. When you embrace the place where you live it can bring the most amazing adventures into your life.

First, we joined the church and met native Vermonter and some newcomers like us. It didn't take long to learn about the richness of this unique town. What?, a Revolutionary War town with a massacre and the King's Highway as the main street, the first town with a newspaper, printed money and a printing press. The historical society was active and had many interesting programs during the year. There are how many farms in Westminster? They provided us with heirloom apples, tomatoes, organic vegetables and meat, world class cheese, milk, and ice cream. We also have visited spectacular gardens. Lucky us!! Local theater was a favorite of ours over the years.

Kurn Hattin was down the road from us and we began volunteering there. I eventually became the librarian at the new school on campus. We volunteered at the Westminster Center School. I joined the Friends



of the Butterfield Library. We attended the Christmas Eve Service at The Westminster West Congregational church the night of the fire, we watched the rebuilding of the Westminster Bridge, we participated in the 250th anniversary of our town and we relished attending Town Meeting to watch democracy at work firsthand.

Another blessing was the Westminster Fire and Rescue helping us out as we needed it. It felt good to know the people that came to help. We appreciated the volunteer time commitment of so many Westminsterites.

When I met Barbara Greenwood at a "meet your neighbor night" at the Westminster Institute, we talked about her recent retirement from Vermont Center for Independent Living and her idea to setup a helping program here in Westminster. I said I had noticed the lack of transportation, as we had already begun giving rides to neighbors for church and events. From that conversation Westminster Cares began. You know you should "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead, she was right it works. I will say that I am amazed and proud to have been a part of We Cares.

Meeting many kind, interesting, enterprising, creative, and smart people with great stories to tell and share in Westminster has been a blessing. I will cherish these experiences and friendships the rest of my life. I have loved living here.

Thank you Karen, for your contributions to Westminster Cares and to our town. We have all been enriched by having you here!

In photo, from left, the succession of Westminster Cares leadership: Karen Walter, Ronnie Friedman, Donna Dawson and Michelle Aron.

REMEMBRANCES

MAY 2026

WILLIAM (BILL) MURPHY, 77
7/29/1948 – 3/26/2026
BELLOWS FALLS AND SAXTONS
RIVER, VT

HOLLIS RYEA, 84
10/10/1941 – 4/10/2026
WESTMINSTER WEST, VT

NORMAN SUSEE, 87
1938 – 4/9/2026
WALPOLE, NH

KELLY ANN COHUN, 47
7/16/1978 - 3/4/2026
FORMERLY OF WESTMINSTER

RANDALL PERRY HICKS, 80
4/5/1945 - 3/25/2026
THE VILLAGES, FL
FORMERLY WALPOLE, NH

SPRING TUBER & BULB SWAP

On Tuesday, May 5 from 6 -7 p.m. at Putney Library, bring your excess spring bulbs, corms, perennial starts, and tubers to swap with your neighbors.

Please brush off as much dirt as possible and label your contributions as best you can, even if only with the plant name and color (pink dahlia.) We'll also have a section for "mystery" colors for the adventurous. We acknowledge that jumping worms or other dirt-borne pests are a risk when introducing new plants to our gardens.

The library is located at 55 Main St. in Putney.

SBA DISASTER LOANS AVAILABLE FOR WINDHAM COUNTY

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has announced low-interest disaster loans for small businesses and nonprofits affected by the extreme cold temperatures on Jan. 21-22, 2025.

The declaration includes Windham County, along with nearby counties in New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Eligible small businesses, nonprofits, and certain agricultural cooperatives can apply for Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) to cover working capital needs, including payroll, fixed debts, and other operating expenses. Physical damage is not required to qualify.

These loans are intended to help organizations manage financial impacts and maintain operations during recovery.

BDCC OFFERS ONLINE BUSINESS WORKSHOP

The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC), in partnership with the Vermont Small Business Law Center, will host an educational workshop on Understanding How to Collect Unpaid Debts as a Small Business.

The virtual session will take place on Thursday, May 14 from 10 a.m. to noon. They are open to entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout Vermont and the region. These two workshops will provide practical education to help businesses understand common legal considerations, reduce risk, and explore options when challenges arise. Participants will learn directly from attorneys experienced in working with small businesses.

Visit the BDCC website for details and to register.

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SAVINGS BANK OF WALPOLE SEEKING CALENDAR PHOTO ENTRIES

The Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW) is pleased to announce a call for entries for its 2027 Community Calendar Photo Contest. The contest runs through Sunday, May 31.

Now in its eighth year, this annual contest celebrates the people, places, and experiences that make our region unique. SBW invites both amateur and professional photographers to submit images that capture the beauty and character of New Hampshire, with a focus on local events, attractions, businesses, and everyday moments within the Monadnock Region.

Selected images will be featured in SBW's 2027 wall calendar and may also appear in other marketing materials, including the Bank's website, holiday cards, and note cards.

A \$100 cash prize will be awarded for each winning



Photo by Jennifer Desautell

photo, and participants may submit up to 10 entries. All submissions must be made electronically. Entries will be evaluated based on subject matter, quality, and how well they reflect the spirit of the contest.

"We've been inspired year after year by the creativity and perspective of photographers in our community," said Danielle Ruffo, Vice President of Community Engagement & Marketing. "We encourage photographers of all skill levels to share what makes this place special to them. We're excited to see this year's submissions."

Entries must be submitted through the contest link on SBW's website. Visit www.walpolebank.com/photocontest for complete rules, details, and submission information. No purchase is necessary to enter or win. All entries must be received by Sunday, May 31.

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

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

May 3rd. Service at 10 a.m.

May 5th Women's Fellowship 10:30 Hall and Zoom

May 6th. Souper Wednesday BBQ. 12-2

May 10th Service with recognition of Mother's Day. Each mom will receive a gift at the 10 Service. Communion will also be served.

May 13. Lucky Lunch Starts 12-2

May 13 Bible Study 6:30 pm Hall and Zoom

May 17th. Service at 10 with Deacon meeting to follow.

May 18th Standing Committee 5:30 p.m.

May 20th. Lucky Lunch 12-2

May 20th Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Hall and Zoom

May 24th. Service at 10; with special Memorial Day recognition. Patriotic gift given to all in attendance. A table where pictures of deceased veterans may be placed. This is also Pentecost Sunday. Please wear red.

May 27th Lucky Lunch 12-2

May 27th. Bible Study 6:30 p.m. Hall and Zoom

May 31st Service at 10

We also will be welcoming new members in May, so anyone wishing to join please see Pastor Rich. We have a interactive children's message each Sunday and there is a well attended fellowship hour after church for social gathering. Please check out our growing congregation.

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).

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 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. 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, May 30 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-Contradance
9:30--Last waltz

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

East Putney Contradance at Pierce's Hall - 121 East Putney Falls Road off Rt. 5 (look for the signs) Saturday, April 25

Circle and Contra Dances. Great live music!
6 pm - Family Hour with Dancing for all ages
7:00 - Snacks
7:30--Contradance (starting with instructions for beginners)
9:30--Last waltz

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

Knitting Together

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

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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- Meets 2nd Tues. at 6 p.m., Westminster Institute. Contact is Jim Grout at jgrout@high5adventure.org.

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

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Provided by the Community

westminsternews@gmail.com

June EARLY Deadline

The deadline for the June 2026 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, May 13
Publication Date Is Wed. May 18
To Contact the Westminster Gazette
E-mail: westminsternews@gmail.com

LOOKING BACK AT BFMS MINI-COURSES

| MINI-COURSES 1981 | | |
|----------------------|--|--------|
| NAME OF COURSE | DESCRIPTION | PERIOD |
| ADAMS MUSEUM | LEARN WHILE YOU WORK IN A FASCINATING SETTING. HELP SPRUCE THE PLACE UP FOR THE TOURIST SEASON. | 5-6 |
| ALPINE SLIDE I | BRING BAG LUNCH, NO GLASS CONTAINERS WEAR LONG PANTS, JACKET, SNEAKERS, OR TIE SHOES. \$1.00 PER RIDE. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF RIDES ALLOWED IS 3. | 1-6 |
| ALPINE SLIDE II | SAME DESCRIPTION AS ABOVE. | 1-6 |

By Rachael Shaw (and the teachers at BFMS)

A couple months ago, I got this text from my old friend Tina Curcuru, "Found these while cleaning out stuff. We really had a lot of choices for mini courses! I'm digging the typewriter print."

She had enclosed photos of the list of mini-courses. It was so fun to look back at this list of offerings that the staff put together in 1981 for the Bellows Falls Middle School students. These were activities that we could sign up for that took place on the last two days of school in mid June. In 1981, after accounting for whatever snow days we had that year, the days were a Tuesday and a Wednesday. I can see why Tina said she was digging the typewriter print; it was so classic!

I've included a photo of an actual page here so you can see what it looked like. I am guessing that a committee of teachers met after school to organize the mini courses schedule, after they all wrote up what they could offer.

Then school secretary Mrs. Stickney probably typed it all up for them, in all caps. We all received the list and a sign up sheet.

I had forgotten but Tina reminded me that "(she) remembered a piece of this and then just confirmed it with Mary Lou Massucco - there was a sign-up day where we had to run around the school to teachers' rooms to sign up for the courses we wanted.

Kids strategized how to get what they wanted the most. Sometimes the most popular choices were in opposite locations - not always in the presenting teacher's homeroom."

Thank you Tina for filling in the holes in my memory! Hopefully everyone got what they wanted, with the friends they wanted to go with! One year I remember bringing my bike in to school and going on a bike ride to Lake Warren for a day trip of swimming and picnicking, with Mr. Ladd as our chaperone. It was a hard ride up the hills of the Alstead area to get to the lake! It was an easier ride back to the Middle School.

Another year I remember going to Townshend Dam. I also have a vague memory of making a Marble Mouse! There are 39 creative offerings listed, including 16 different all-day trips, most offered both days. They are listed in alphabetical order, but they don't specify which teachers are leading the courses. I'm pretty sure it was Mr. Wunderle who would have offered Wunderfest

I thought this nostalgic article would be a perfect way to say thank you to our dedicated teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week, which is May 4-8 this year. Thank you to all of the teachers past and present! They work so hard to create incredible learning experiences for their students.

What do you remember from Mini-Courses?

PARKS PLACE LOOKING AHEAD - STARTING FUNDRAISER



*By Jennifer Tolaro-Heidbrink
Executive Director*

At Parks Place Community Resource Center, this season often brings renewed energy—not only in our work, but in the connections we see forming every day. More individuals are reaching out, more conversations are happening, and more opportunities for support and connection are taking shape.

At the heart of our work is a simple but important approach: meeting people where they are. Whether someone comes through our doors or connects with us in the community, we focus on listening first, and then helping to connect them with referrals and resources that support their next steps.

Thanks to your continued support, we are able to do this work with care, consistency, and respect.

One meaningful example of this approach is our Parks Place baseball team.

While it may appear to be a recreational activity, it represents something deeper. The team creates space for connection, builds relationships, and fosters a sense of belonging among participants and the broader community.

These moments—whether on the field or along the sidelines—are a reflection of what outreach looks like at Parks Place: accessible, relationship-driven, and rooted in trust.

This spring, we are building on that foundation by expanding our outreach efforts.

We are planning additional community events, increasing our presence in partner spaces, and continuing to find ways to connect individuals with the support they need. Our goal is to ensure that more people in our community know where to turn and feel comfortable seeking assistance.

This work takes time and intention, but it is essential to creating lasting impact.

To support these efforts, we have set a goal to raise \$25,000 for our spring outreach campaign.

Your support directly contributes to this work:

\$25 helps connect an individual with appropriate referrals

\$50 supports outreach efforts in the community

\$100 provides personalized support and navigation

\$250 helps expand programs that foster connection and belonging

Every contribution plays a role in strengthening our ability to serve the community.

We are grateful for your continued support and for being part of the Parks Place community.

Your investment in this work makes it possible for us to show up each day with the intention of creating a welcoming, supportive environment for all.

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How it works:

- Register as an individual or create a fundraising team
- Invite friends, family, or coworkers to support your goal
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MAY BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: MILKWEED FARM



If you are looking for delicious healthy local produce in Westminster West, consider Milkweed Farm! Now in their 10th season, owners Jonah Mossberg and Emily Hartz (with the help of a few part-time employees) use organic no-till practices to grow a diverse array of vegetables and fruits on a couple of acres.

They grow the classics, like sweet carrots, juicy slicing tomatoes and crunchy peas, as well as more unique varieties like Jimmy Nardello and shishito peppers, Red Long of Tropea Onions, sprouting cauliflower, radicchio, young fresh ginger, asian pears, and shiitake mushrooms. Milkweed Farm Salad Mix is a crowd favorite, iykyk (if you know, you know).

The Milkweed Farm Store at 27 Earth Bridge Road is open to the public every day of the week, all year long. Summer hours are 8am-8pm. The store highlights the farm's produce and flowers (fresh and everlasting), and also carries other locally produced meat, dairy, eggs, fruit, bread, ice cream, pantry items, baked goods, and more! Milkweed Farm also proudly feeds 140 CSA members/families with weekly pickups on the farm and in Brattleboro from May - October.

To learn more about Milkweed Farm, keep tabs on what's fresh in the store, and be the first to hear about CSA sign-ups and events, visit www.milkweedfarmvt.com and join their mailing list. The folks at Milkweed Farm would love to feed you!

MAY BUSINESS OF THE MONTH WESTMINSTER ANIMAL HOSPITAL



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

Westminster Animal Hospital employs 20 people including the veterinarians, technicians, and animal caregivers.

We take pride in providing compassionate care for our neighbors' pets.

Our resident pets are Virgil the miniature donkey, Peri the three-legged cat and our newest feline rescue addition - Milton!

JUNE EARLY DEADLINE NOTICE
 DUE TO THE HOLIDAY PRINTING SCHEDULE, THE JUNE 2026 GAZETTE DEADLINE IS **WED. MAY 13**

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