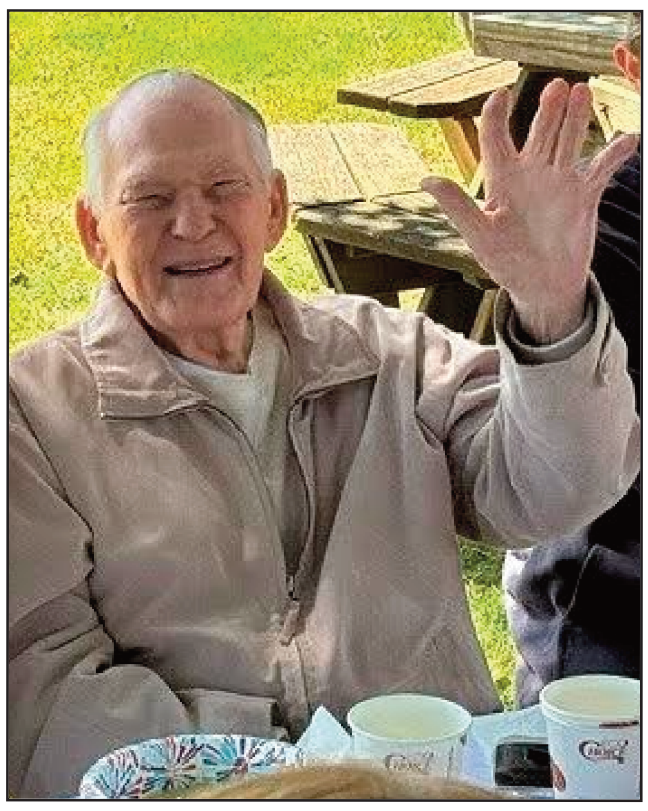
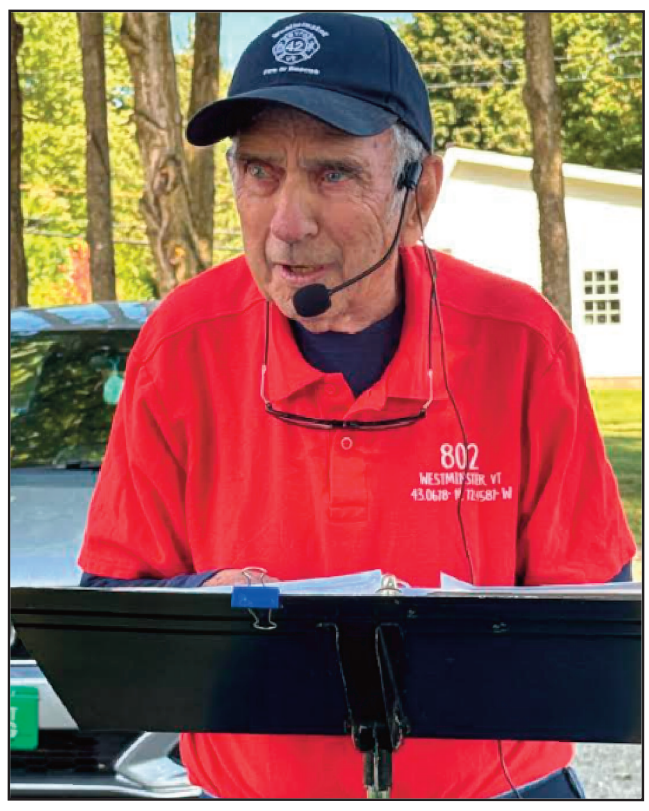
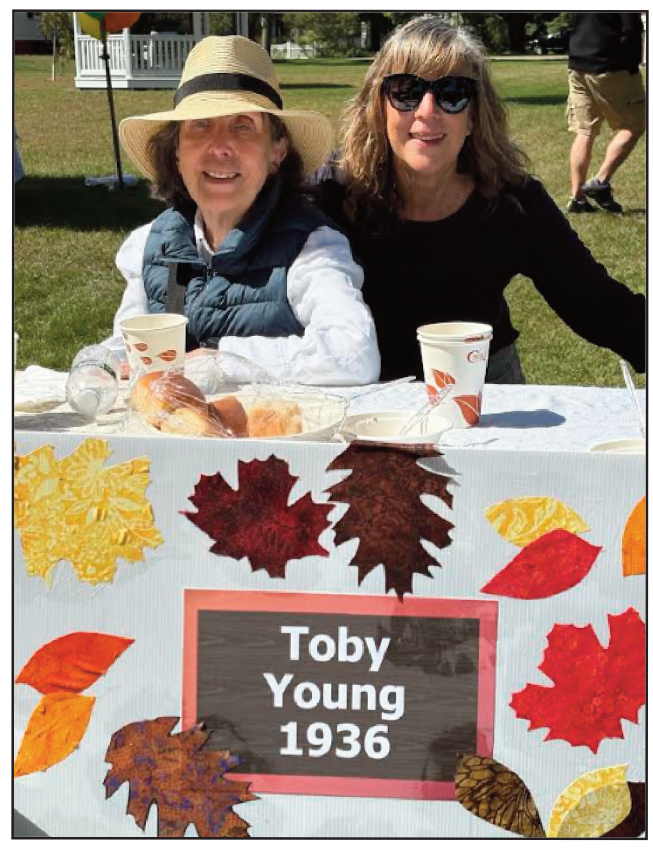
Westminster Gazette

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Honoring and Celebrating the Heart and History of Westminster







The 19th Annual Celebration of Aging was held on Sept. 12.

It was a beautiful day on the back lawn of the Institute. Spending the day swapping stories and catching up, each surrounded by shared memories and laughter, it was truly moving to witness the enduring bonds that tie our community together.

Pete Harrison addressed each honored guest, weaving personal narratives with captivating details about their histories, heritages, and deep roots in the community.

Westminster currently has many residents 90 years of age or older. The ones who attended this year's event were: Toby Young, 90; Bill Burton, 90; Sandy Burton, 90; Bruce MacDuffy 90; Marlene O'Connor 91; Warren Muzzey, 91; Shirley Frost, 91; Lucille Donovan 92; Alma Beals, 92; Keith Gallup, 93; Don Nowers, 94; Myrtle Bartolotta, 94; Randy Major, 95; and Bill Smidutz, 96.

Westminster Cares board and committee members decorated tables with flowers, gourds and pumpkins. A lunch of corn chowder soup, beef chili and apple crisp was served.

Thank you to Sarah James and Smokin' Bowls catering for the delicious soups.

Honorees were thanked for their contributions to our community and given a gift bag to take home.

Next fall we will include anyone born in 1937 or earlier - if that is you or someone you know, please call 802-722-3607 to let us know.

In photos, clockwise from top left, Bill Smidutz, 96; Pete Harrison addressing the group; Toby Young, 90, with her daughter Amy Harlow; and Bill and Sandy Burton, both 90.



An Exciting September at Westminster Center School





September is always an exciting time at Westminster Center School! The hallways are once again filled with the sounds of students learning, laughing, and reconnecting with friends.

The beginning of a new school year is about more than just getting back into routines. It is a time for students to build new relationships, set goals, and discover new things about themselves and the world around them.

Our teachers and staff have been working hard to create classrooms that are welcoming, engaging, and safe for every student.

We are especially excited to welcome our youngest learners and all of our new students and families to the WCS community. We are also grateful to our returning families for helping make the transition back to school such a positive one.

As we settle into the school year, we look forward to all that is ahead—new learning, friendships, and plenty of opportunities to celebrate our students. September is just the beginning, and we are excited for another great year at WCS!

Some highlights of our September include:

- Bike Week! WCS partnered with Local Motion from Burlington, VT. During PE classes students learned all about riding skills and biking safety.
- Student Goal Setting! Teachers are meeting students to choose their personal goal that will be shared with families at our fall conference.
- Studio Y! Fourth and Sixth grades have already had their first trips to Studio Y. Here they lean into enrichment opportunities connected to our science and social studies standards and our literacy curriculum
- Upcoming: Our sixth graders will be heading to Camp Keewaydin in early October. This is a five day immersion experience in an outdoor setting in Salisbury.

- 2026 Elections -
Election Day is
Tues. Nov. 3rd

Early voting
runs Oct. 1 - Nov. 2

Voting Instructions
and Sample Ballot on
Pages 7 & 8
VOTE!

Our Monthly Community Newspaper October 2026 Vol. 22 No.10

Westminster Gazette

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The Medieval Faire Returns to Putney



On Saturday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., The Grammar School will once again transform its bucolic Putney campus into a bustling medieval village for the 38th annual Medieval Faire.

A beloved fall tradition for families across southern Vermont and New Hampshire, the Faire draws more than 1,300 visitors each year for a day of magic, merriment, and community fun.

This year's Faire will debut a brand-new attraction for fairegoers of all sizes: three quests that they can complete at their own pace to receive a prize from the king and queen.

Outside of quests, fairegoers can enjoy returning favorites like the apple slingshot, pillow jousting, foam-arrow archery, life-size chess, the candy catapult, crafts, fortune telling, face painting, hair tinsel and so much more. For the youngest patrons, Merlin's Midway offers games just their size.

Adding to the spectacle, Vermont Armored Combat will stage thrilling demonstrations in full armor, with battles in the ring scheduled for both morning and afternoon, and a chance for audience participation. Pony rides make their triumphant return to the Faire featuring the noble steeds of Hyridge Farms Giddy Up Pony Rides, while wagon rides make their Faire debut with a handsome team from Iron Kettle Farm taking fairegoers for a leisurely tour of the countryside.

Hungry fairgoers can enjoy a mix of hearty homemade soups, mac and cheese, fresh-grilled goodies, breads, and baked goods, and shoppers can peruse handmade wares in the Medieval Marketplace.

Admission is free and open to all. Ride tickets and unlimited all-day passes ($25 for the first, $20 for each additional) are available for purchase in advance or at the gate. The Medieval Faire is The Grammar School's largest annual community event, combining family fun with support for student programs. For more information, visit thegrammarschool.org/medieval or call 802-387-5364.

Learn Tapping - Improve Health

A free talk on tapping will be given at at 12 pm, in the Dascomb Room of the Westminster Institute on Wednesday, Oct. 28.

Tapping is an effective and simple-to-learn technique that can help you become a happier, healthier person.

You will learn to tap on nine acupuncture meridians on your own body. Tapping on the points sends the message to your brain to calm down.

It does not erase memories, but it makes the memories become less stressful.

Tapping (also called EFT for Emotional Freedom Technique) has been proven effective by over 200 peer-reviewed studies. It is accepted by the Veterans Administration as effective treatment for PTSD.

Tapping has been shown to work on reducing chronic pain, healing traumas old and new, 'stuck' places, grief, phobias, and can even improve sports performance.

Experienced tapping practitioner Caitlin Adair, Westminster resident for 24 years, will teach an introductory lesson on how and where to tap.

Affordable private sessions are available on zoom.

For more info, contact 802-289-1539 text or 802-387-5779 land line, or tapwithcaitlin@sover.net.



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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**

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

Poor Balance or Vertigo Causing Your Falls? Physical Therapy Can Help!

By Mike McCormack, Grace Cottage Physical Therapist

(This column appeared first in the 9/18/26 Brattleboro Reformer)

As we age, it's common to worry about falling.

Falls are not just scary and uncomfortable; they're also dangerous, especially for those ages 65 and older.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), falls among adults 65 and older caused over 43,000 deaths in 2024, making it the leading cause of injury death for that group. Emergency departments recorded about 4.5 million visits for older adult falls in 2024.

But falls aren't an inevitable part of aging. Balance is like any other skill - if you don't use it, you lose it! You can't improve your balance unless you challenge it.

That's where physical therapy (PT) comes in. PT can help improve your balance by diagnosing the underlying cause(s) and challenging your balance in a safe environment.

Your sense of balance is affected by three systems: your vestibular system, visual system, and proprioceptive system.

First, balance can be affected by disturbances in the vestibular system, a series of fluid and canals in the inner ear that act like a carpenter's level, helping relay information to our brains regarding our head's position.

One common vestibular disorder is Benign Paroxysmal Positional Vertigo (BPPV), which causes episodes of a spinning sensation known as vertigo. BPPV happens when crystal particles in the inner ear are dislodged and end up in one of the canals that act as our "carpenter's level." This can send mixed signals to our brain and make us disoriented.

These symptoms come on quickly, often within seconds of head movements (lying down, rolling over, or looking up). Often, it's described by patients as the room seeming to spin around them. After these episodes, balance issues can last for hours or days, sometimes with light-headedness or the feeling of floating.

BPPV can clear up on its own, but working with a physical therapist or another medical professional who treats vestibular disorders can bring improvement more quickly – sometimes in just one session! The treatment includes movements to bring on the vertigo symptoms followed by specific maneuvers that shift the crystals back into place.

The most obvious system that affects balance is the visual system. As we all know, the less we can see, the less steady we are on our feet. We rely heavily on our vision – especially as we age.

PT can't improve a patient's vision, but the therapist can offer ideas to accommodate for vision loss. We suggest night lights and the use of assistive devices to reduce fall risk when getting up to use the restroom at night. Also, we love practicing balance in the clinic with your eyes closed to tune-up your other systems. Don't worry, we'll keep it safe!

One last system that affects our balance is our proprioceptive system. Our joints, ligaments, and tendons have receptors that tell our brain where our body is in space. If I close my eyes and move my leg, my proprioceptors are relaying this information to my brain, allowing it to estimate where it has moved to. Most of the time, this sense is instinctive – we don't have to think about it. We can adjust naturally to correct balance as we stand, move, or walk on uneven terrain.

But for some, neurological disorders or musculoskeletal injuries can affect proprioception. For example, patients with diabetes may have decreased sensation in their feet, or someone who sprained an ankle can have delayed or inaccurate signals from their proprioceptors. Balance training with PT can help either to compensate or remediate proprioception deficits.

One of the biggest problems resulting from balance issues or in the aftermath of a fall is the tendency to be inactive, in the hopes that this will prevent another fall. This only makes matters worse. Our bodies do well at trying to keep us as safe as possible. But remember, you can only improve your balance if it's challenged! PT can help do that in a safe environment.

When everything is working properly, our brains process information from our vestibular, visual, and proprioceptive systems very quickly, and subsequently send signals to keep us on our feet. But when some part of the system is malfunctioning, PT can help tune it up.

Without intervention, those who have fallen once have an increased risk of falling again. PT is an important resource for anyone who has fallen, helping them to regain mobility and teaching them ways to live more independently. Talk to your doctor if you have fallen or think you could benefit from a balance assessment.

Mike McCormack earned his Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from the University of Vermont. He joined the Grace Cottage staff in 2022.

Light UP Westminster Holiday Lights Contest



Reminding folks to start thinking about this coming holiday lights contest.

Don't miss the chance to join the annual holiday lights contest and make our town bright with creativity and festive cheer!

Display Requirements: Decorations must be visible from the road and fully lit from dusk to 9 p.m. each evening from December 22-28.

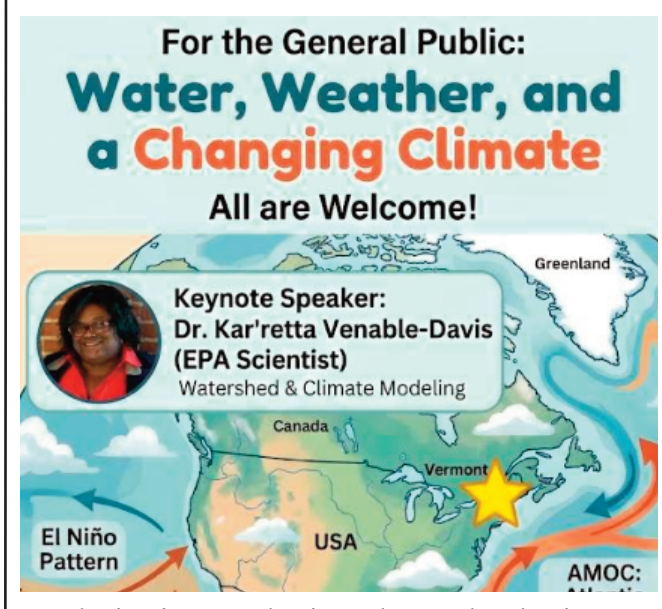
Participants will be judged in four categories: Glitz & Glitter, Classic Christmas, Judges Choice, and Most Decorated Business (new this year!).

Winners will receive a small prize.

By entering the contest, participants agree to have their address published in the Westminster Gazette/Westminster Facebook page and their displays photographed for promotional purposes.

Registration information and additional details are coming soon.

EPA Scientist Dr. Kar'retta Venable-Davis on Water, Weather and a Changing Climate



El Niño is strengthening. The North Atlantic's vast circulation system — known as the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation, or AMOC — is also the subject of intense scientific attention.

What could these large-scale changes mean closer to home? Wet, heavy snow soon?

How are changing weather patterns affecting our farms, forests, gardens, sugarbushes and communities? What happens when we have too little water — or too much? What does increasing heat mean for agriculture, tourism, outdoor recreation and simply living in Northern New England?

The Living Earth Action Group (LEAG) will host Dr. Kar'retta Venable-Davis on Friday, Oct. 9, 2026, from 5 to 6:30 p.m. at the Congregational Church of Westminster West for a community presentation and discussion about water, weather, climate and what changing conditions may mean for our region.

Farmers, gardeners, sugar makers, town planners, outdoor enthusiasts and residents throughout the area are invited to attend. Dr. Venable-Davis will share information and insights about weather and water trends, environmental change, and strategies for living and working under modern climate conditions.

What are you seeing where you live? Has weather changed the way you garden, farm, make maple syrup, enjoy the outdoors or plan for the future? Participants are encouraged to bring their own observations, experiences and questions for the discussion following the presentation.

Dr. Venable-Davis has more than 20 years of experience in environmental research, educational outreach, teaching, public speaking and mentorship of the next generation of scientists and STEM professionals.

She is a scientist with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where her work includes watershed and environmental modeling. Her research and professional interests include hydrology, weather and climate data, environmental modeling, satellite information and the use of large datasets and data analytics to better understand environmental systems.

Dr. Venable-Davis is also active in the American Meteorological Society's Committee on Open Environmental Information Services, bringing together her interests in environmental science, technology and public access to useful weather and climate information.

The presentation will be followed by an open community discussion.

The event is presented by the Living Earth Action Group (LEAG).

For more information, visit www.livingearthaction.net.



News from Westminster Cares

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors resumed after two months hiatus and met on September 10, 2026. Discussions were on upcoming events and wrap-up of the July Garden Tour. The next meeting will be held on October 8th.

CELEBRATION OF AGING:

On Saturday, September 12th, Westminster Cares hosted the annual Celebration of Aging which honors our town's eldest residents, 90 years and older.

COMMUNITY NURSE PROGRAM:

Our Community 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 802-722-3607.

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. These sessions are free and open to Westminster residents who are 60 and older. The next session will be held on Saturday October 31.



Nature Notes - Dragonflies

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist

In my last article, I told you about my enjoyment watching the hummingbirds in the bee balm next to the gazebo. Now that the hummingbirds have left, my attention has gone to the dragonflies that are still flying around.

Dragonflies have two life stages. The first one is that they inhabit wetlands, ponds, brooks, rivers, and swamps as nymphs (larva). The second one is terrestrial, living and growing on land. After growing and shedding their skin several times, the nymphs climb up on the shoreline vegetation and emerge as winged adults through a slit on the back of the larva skin. After developing wings, they become terrestrial for only the last few days, weeks, or months of their lives.

While my books say they can be seen from April to November in Vermont, I only notice them on sunny days from mid-morning to mid-afternoon when they are most active. To be able to fly, a dragonfly's body temperature must be warmed to 85 to 95F. Sometimes they exercise their wings to develop full power but usually need the sun's help, too.

Dragonflies and hummingbirds don't get along. They are indifferent and dangerous to one another.



Hummingbirds are aggressive and fiercely protective of their flowers and nectar. They dart at, harass and chase large insects including dragonflies.

We have all seen the flight pattern of hummingbirds, but what is the flight pattern of the dragonflies? They streak through the air forward, backward, and sideways. Both cruise at about 30 miles an hour with both hitting 60 on aggressive or courtship dives.

While I have been concentrating on dragonflies, I can't ignore damselflies that are in the same order, Odonata. There are several distinct differences. The dragonfly is stout and large-bodied, the head is rounded with the eyes covering much of the top and sides of the



head, wings are held straight out while at rest, and they are strong fliers.

Damselflies are delicate and small-bodied, the head is wider than long, the wings are pressed above the body, and they are weak fliers. By my next article, I will have moved past dragonflies to bird migration and what birds to expect when I start feeding them again.

Westminster Sampler : Our Cemeteries - Outdoor Education





By Jessie Haas

You may or may not know that Cheryl Charles, the current chair of the Westminster School Board and of the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union board, is an international leader and teacher in the field of outdoor education. She's also a member of Westminster's Living Earth Action Group (LEAG) where she's been talking with us about connecting people, especially children, with nature, for 10 years. And just yesterday the penny dropped.

I've been noticing how much engagement the Westminster Historical Society (WHS) is getting with our cemetery events, from the Sons of the American Revolution ceremonies placing markers to the recent cemetery cleanings. Events in the cemeteries, despite the poignant context, are fun! We always learn a lot, make new friends, and spend time in nature.

In fact, it's outdoor education that doesn't feel like education. It feels like something we want to do. Our recent demonstration during the Westminster West Church Fair is a case in point. We thought we'd just be showing what we do and talking about it. Instead people grabbed brushes and spray bottles and hunkered down in front of stones. We had two young teens who worked for hours! There's just something about being outdoors, being with the art that memorializes our forebears, and making it readable again.

In the Westminster West Cemetery we frequently found ourselves working on children's gravestones, much more so than in the Old Cemetery. We haven't worked out why yet. Tuberculosis may have been more rampant on the West side or it may be something else.

One stone that stands out for me is that of Elijah Williams, who died at age 14. His stone is clearly homemade. The back of it is raw rock, just as it came out of the ground. The shaping at the top is crude and so is the lettering. He's alone there, without any other Williams family members around him, and we don't yet know who he was. There's a story there, of somebody who should be remembered. Hopefully we will find out more.

Our next order of business is the Annual Meeting—Monday, Oct. 12, 6 p.m. at the Museum — where we will talk more about our Westminster gravestones. Jennifer Bartlau is a 7th generation Vermonter who's been researching family history for 40 years. She loves to travel with genealogical intent, pursuing "History in Person."

This, happily, includes cemeteries, where she can indulge her appreciation for pre-1800 gravestone symbols. Members of our board had a great time walking around with her in a couple of Westminster cemeteries, and learning to identify which local carver had done which stone. Jen lives in Jeffersonville and is currently the town's librarian. She is also a member of the Cambridge Historical Society, responsible for creating their America 250 exhibits.

The Annual Meeting will start at 6 with a short business meeting and election of board members. Chris Harlow, Fletcher Proctor, and Racheal Scott have agreed to stand for election this year, and Susan Talbot has been elected to fill out the term of the late Pat Haas.

We'll have books for sale, including the newly reprinted Old Cemetery Book, at a special price of $10. Members will be able to pay dues at the meeting, and we'll be happy to take on new members. Refreshments will be served.

Watch our Facebook page, westminstervermonthistory, or our website, www.westminstervthistory.org for any updates.

In photos, Westminster West Cemetery, and an up-close detail of the homemade, raw rock gravestone of 14-year-old Elijah Williams.

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, Oct. 6 at 7 p.m.

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

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

Next scheduled prudential meeting Oct. 18.

Number of calls in August: 45

Number of calls through September 25th : 32

Number of calls calendar year to date: 231

Number of calls fiscal year from July 1st: 120

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting September 1st Eyvonne Martin presiding. There were 28 members present and 1 member excused. Currently there are 45 members of the volunteer fire department.

Emergency responses: August turned out to be another busy month with 45 calls for the month. Here is the breakdown for the 45 calls: 29 rescue/medical calls; 2 Mutual Aid: 1 to Rockingham, 1 to Alstead; 4 motor vehicle crashes/ incidents; 3 for alarms sounding/ false call;1 service call; 2 for tree on wires/powerline down; 1 tire fire; 3 lift assists;

Pavilion: The new pavilion is taking shape. The cement pad is complete. The next step will be the framing. Stop by the fire house on Grout Ave. and take a look anytime. There is usually someone there on Sunday mornings to do a guided tour and answer any questions.

Fire prevention week: There will be an open house at the fire house on Grout Ave Thursday October 8th during fire prevention week from 9:am until 2:00 PM

Chimney: Before you fire up your wood stove or furnace, take a look up your chimney or hire a professional to see if it needs cleaning or something has built a nest in it and plugged it up .Every year it seems a home is damaged or completely destroyed due to an avoidable chimney fire.

Emergency off- road: The department is looking for names of anyone who has an off-road vehicle that they would be willing to operate in case of an emergency requiring off road or 4 wheelers. Contact any member of the department if this is something you are willing and able to make available

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

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

Memorial Donations received in September:

In memory of Arnie Glim:

Carl Lynde and Pam Matweecha

Ann Wright

Janet Harclerode

Kathleen Lapan

Paul Handler

Putney Bicycle Club

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.

Bellows Falls Haunted House Returns

Halloween is returning to downtown Bellows Falls with a weekend of spooky fun at the Bellows Falls Opera House.

The Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance (BFDDA) invites the community to enjoy classic Halloween entertainment while helping support the restoration of the Opera House Lower Theater, helping preserve one of downtown's historic gathering places while creating new opportunities for community events, performances, and entertainment.



The festivities begin on Wednesday, Oct. 28, with a special screening of the beloved 1986 cult classic *The Worst Witch*, part of the Opera House's Wednesday Night Classic Movie series sponsored by the BFDDA. Starring Fairuza Balk, Diana Rigg, Charlotte Rae, and Tim Curry as the unforgettable Grand Wizard, the film has become a Halloween favorite for generations of fans and is the perfect way to kick off a weekend of spooky fun.

On Thursday, Oct. 29, the Haunted House opens for a Family-Friendly Low Scare Night from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., offering younger visitors and families the chance to experience the attraction with toned-down scares in a fun Halloween atmosphere.

For those looking for something more intense, the full Haunted House returns on Friday, Oct. 30, from 6 to 9 p.m., featuring frightening scenes, unexpected surprises, and plenty of Halloween thrills throughout the Lower Theater.

The evening concludes with a special screening of George A. Romero's horror classic *Night of the Living Dead* beginning at 10 p.m.

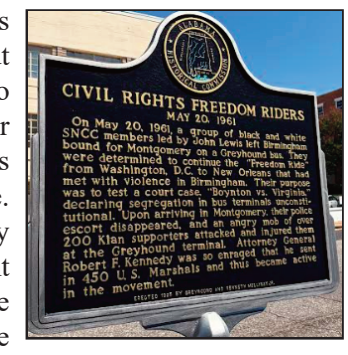
"We're excited to bring Halloween back to the Opera House while supporting an important community project," said Casey Griffin, Executive Director of the BFDDA. "Whether you're bringing the family on Thursday, looking for a good scare on Friday, or joining us for one of the classic films, there's something for everyone to enjoy."

Community members interested in volunteering to help build, decorate, act, or assist during the event are encouraged to get involved. Local businesses and organizations interested in sponsoring the event are also welcome to participate.

Additional details, including ticket information, volunteer opportunities, and event updates, will be announced in the coming weeks.

For more information, visit BellowsFallsVT.com or follow Bellows Falls, VT on Facebook and Instagram.

Butterfield Library October News



In September, I was lucky enough to venture out to Montgomery, Alabama to attend the Association for Small and Rural Libraries (ARSL) 2026 conference. My conference fee, my travel/lodging, and payment for a library substitute were all covered thanks to the Overcoming Obstacles: Enhancing Access to Professional Development for Solo Librarians Grant Program.

This program was funded in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

Back in March, solo librarians from New England (and beyond!) met virtually to discuss the challenges we saw in pursuing professional development opportunities. The perspectives shared in the focus group will help to inform reports, trainings, strategies, and program development, all for solo library workers. Part of the deal for participants was attending, in-person, the 2026 ARSL conference (in Montgomery, Alabama!) to learn from our peers and further discuss our solo librarian POVs.

I had an incredible time hearing from professionals in positions so similar to mine. I went to sessions that focused on friends groups, library of things, preparedness and sustainability, and more. And despite a busy conference schedule, I found the time to take in some very moving historical sites like the Freedom Rides Museum and the Edmund Pettus Bridge in nearby Selma, and wonderful cultural sites like The New South Bookstore in downtown Montgomery, as well as The Scott & Zelda Fitzgerald Museum, the only museum in the world dedicated to the literary duo.

I am truly grateful to ARSL for this opportunity. And I'm so excited to implement many ideas gleaned from the conference here at Butterfield in the coming weeks and months. Please stay tuned!



Congratulations to Paul Harlow For Lifetime Achievement Award



The Board of Directors of the Westminster Gazette would like to recognize third-generation Westminster farmer Paul Harlow for being honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award and inducted into the Vermont Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Harlow Farm goes back 109 years and has played a vital role, not just in Westminster's agricultural heritage, but that of the entire Northeast.

Congratulations Paul for a well-deserved award!

Clothing Closet Expands Hours

The Clothing Closet is now open 4 days a week. The original schedule, which remains unchanged, are Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Additional hours have been added on Tuesday and Thursday from 5-6 p.m.

Clothing for babies, children, teens and adults. Bring an item to swap or make a cash donation. Fall items are now available.

Remembrances October 2026

Robert (Bob) Anderson Jr., 62
11/15/1963 - 9/11/2026
Westminster, Vt

Ronald Borges, 82
9/18/1943 - 9/13/2026
Bellows Falls, Vt

Paul Collier, 68
3/28/1958 - 9/15/2026
Westminster, Vt

Jeffrey Emery, 58
10/23/1967 - 9/6/2026
Winchester, NH
formerly Dummerston, Vt

Joseph (Joe) O'Brien, 75
11/3/1950 - 9/12/2026
Westminster, VT

Tonia White, 61
7/27/1965 - 8/2/2026
Westminster, Vt





Kurn Hattin Staff Ready Campus for a New Year

This past month, the staff of Kurn Hattin Home and School for Children united for training week, a time for professional development, community building, and campus transformation.

Ahead of students' fall arrival, staff set out to ready the organization and continue its over 130-year mission helping children from families facing difficult circumstances.

Professional development expanded resources as staff participated in informational sessions. Discussions were held on child development, curriculums, and tackling challenges with the help of "The Energy Bus."

The bestselling book, written by Jon Gordon, follows George, the main character, in an uplifting adventure. With his car broken down, George must take the bus to get to work.

A unique cast of characters take him on the "ride of his life," teaching 10 secrets for approaching challenges with positive energy. The enlightening sessions gave staff the tools to achieve a healthy mindset and better achieve meaningful accomplishments in their line of work.



A highlight of the week came with the hands-on community work session, dubbed "All Hands on Deck." Staff worked side by side on shared projects that strengthened both the campus and sense of community.

Together, the family apartments were refurbished, the vegetable gardens were tended to, trails were marked, flower beds were weeded, and Kurn Hattin-branded t-shirts were created for the incoming children.

To conclude training, the staff boarded the Kurn Hattin school bus to serve as their own "Energy Bus" in a ride around the grounds. It was an opportunity to appreciate campus and the inspiring mission everyone shares.

With campus set, the staff were beyond excited to welcome students in the following weeks as school began. Now, with training week having provided valuable time for collaboration and sharing ideas, Kurn Hattin is poised for another incredible year committed to the children they serve.

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 On Rt. 5 in Westminster welcomes you to join our active and growing congregation.

Oct 4th. Service at 10 a.m.
Oct 6th. Women's Fellowship at 10:30 am. Hall
Oct 7th. Bible Study 6:30 pm. Hall and Zoom
Oct 11th Service with Communion 10 a.m.
Oct 14th Bible study 6:30 pm. Hall and Zoom
Oct 18th Service at 10 a.m.
Oct 19th Standing Comm 5:30 p.m.
Oct 21st Bible study 6:30 p.m. Hall and Zoom
Oct 25th Service at 10: a.m. Memorial Wall dedication after the Service
Oct 31 st. Trunk or Treat. Church parking lot starts at 5 p.m.

Each service has a children's message and an active fellowship hour in the Hall after the Sunday service. Rev. Rich O'Donnell serves as Pastor. Please join us!

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. wwwwalpoleunitarian.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 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 Beginner Tai Chi: Tuesdays at 10:30 and Thursdays at 5:30. Westminster Inst. $10-20 sliding scale. Open to new students in September.
Seated Tai Chi: Tuesdays at 12:15. Gentle all body workout. Westminster Institute. $10-20 sliding scale. Join anytime.
Info: WestminsterCaresVt@gmail.com or 802-722-3607.

The East Putney Contradance at Pierce's Hall — 121 East Putney Falls Road off Route 5 (Look for the "Dance" signs)
Special Halloween Dance – Saturday, October 31! Come in costume, if you want.
6 p.m. - Family Hour with music and dances for kids and their grown-ups.
7 p.m. - Snacks
7:30 p.m. – Squares, contras and circle mixers for all ages.
All dances are taught. No partner required. By free will donation.

Knitting Together
An Enjoyable Experience! Wednesdays 1- 3 p.m.
Village Square Booksellers, Bellows Falls
Bring your needles, we have yarn and casual instruction - all products donated locally.
Contact: Caroline 802-463-4653

Coffee Mornings - Coffee, Community, Conversation Westminster West Library, Saturdays from 10 to 2. All welcome, please drop in!

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. No meetings in July and Aug.

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.

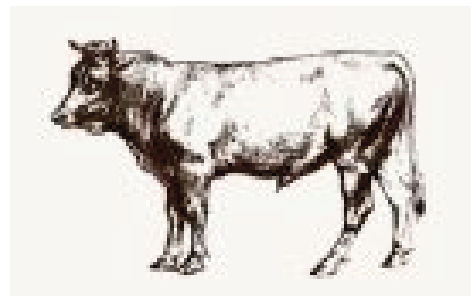
Westminster Gazette westminsternews@gmail.com
3rd Monday, 5 p.m., Westminster Institute

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.



Early November Deadline

The deadline for the Nov. 2026 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, Oct. 21
Publication Date Is Wed. Oct. 26

To Contact the Westminster Gazette E-mail: westminsternews@gmail.com

THE GAZETTE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE SUPPORT OF ITS UNDERWRITERS:

Abigail Altabef
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Town of Westminster
Westminster Cares
Westminster Fire and Rescue Association
Burtco Inc.
The Dascomb Trust
American Wealth Adminstration Group
Sojourns Community Health Clinic

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Joyce Sullivan - Secretary
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Michelle Aron

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westminsternews@gmail.com

How to Vote in VT's 2026 General Election Oct. 1st to Tues. Nov. 3rd

Check to be sure you are registered online at vote.vermont.gov.

All currently registered voters will automatically be sent ballots in the mail.

If you have received a ballot in the mail, you should bring it with you to use. If you do not bring the ballot you received in the mail, you will be asked to sign an affidavit stating that you have not previously voted by mail.

There are three ways to vote:

1. Early voting by mail. If you're mailing your ballot, allow two weeks for delivery.

2. At your clerk's office up to and including Nov. 2. The office is open from 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m, M – F. Be sure to bring the ballot that was mailed to you.

OR you can deposit your voted ballot any time in the ballot slot at town hall (slot is to the right of the entry doors).

3. In person at your polling place on Nov. 3. Be sure to bring the ballot that was mailed to you.

Voter registration

All U.S. citizens who are residents of Vermont are eligible to register to vote. If you are not registered yet but will turn 18 years old on or by Nov. 3, you may register to vote.

If you are not registered, there are multiple ways to do so:

- In person at your town clerk's office in the days leading up to the election or at a voter registration event.
- In person at your polling place on the day of the election (Nov. 3).
- You may also register online or by mail using a paper registration form, both available via the Secretary of State's Office website (vote.vermont.gov). Be sure to allow several days for your registration to be processed if you are using these methods. According to the Secretary of State's Office, registrants must provide an identification number when filling out their registration applications, often a driver's license number. First-time registrants will be required to submit a valid form of ID if registering online or by mail. A photocopy of the ID should be submitted with the registration form. Acceptable documents include:
  - Valid photo ID (driver's license or passport)
  - Current utility bill
  - Current bank statement
  - Another government document

First-time Vermont voters must also take the voter's oath, a short statement one may recite to oneself. If you register after ballots are mailed, you may request your ballot at your town clerk's office.

Early voting

Early voting is available from when ballots are sent (by Oct. 1) through Nov. 2. All currently registered voters will automatically be sent ballots.

Submit your ballot by mail or drop it off at your town clerk's office or deposit your voted ballot in the ballot slot at town hall (ballot slot is located to the right of the entry doors).

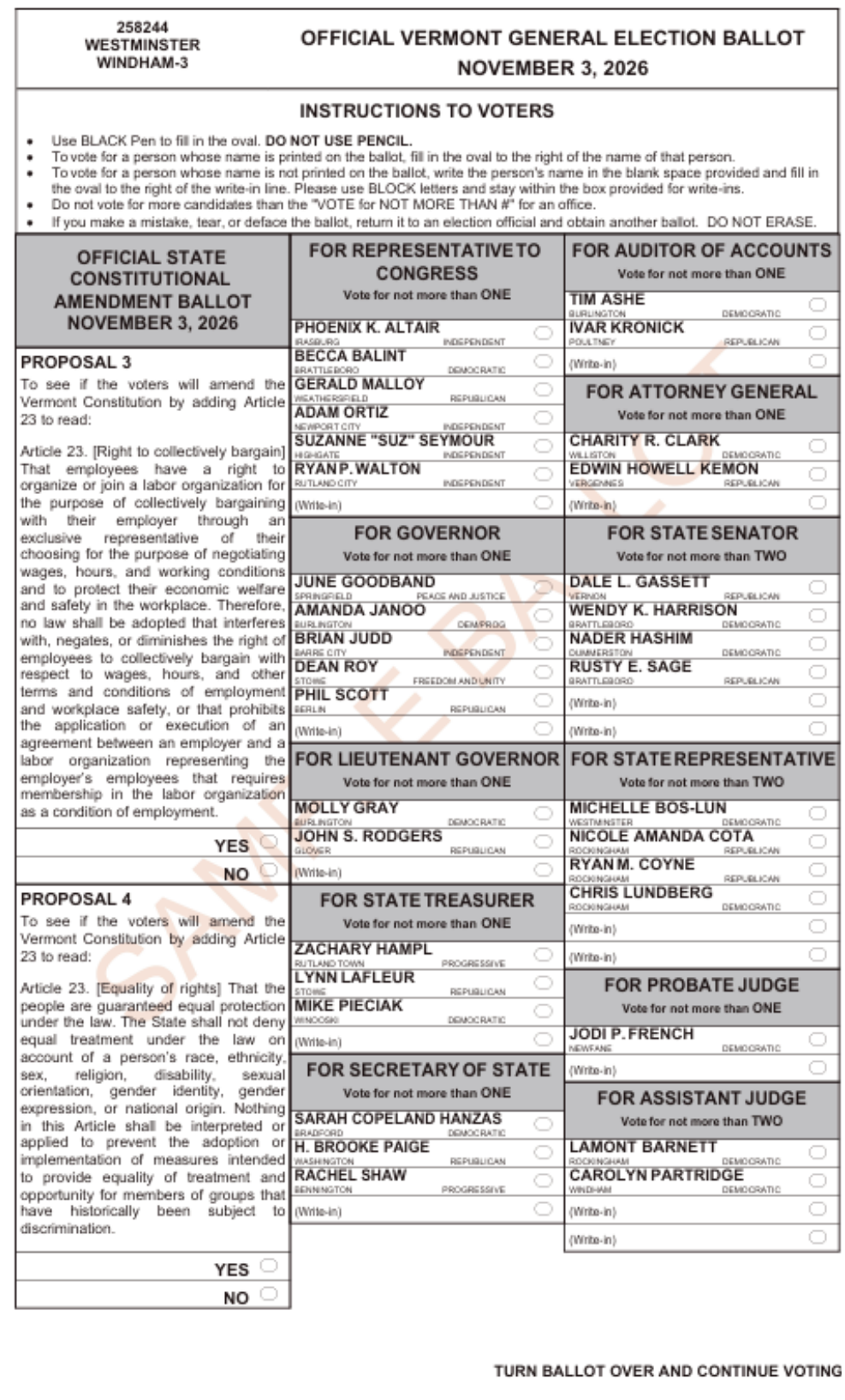
If you're mailing your ballot, allow two weeks for delivery.

Early ballots must be received at your town clerk's office by close of business on Nov. 2.

Voters can track the status of their ballot at vote.vermont.gov.

Election Day Tuesday Nov. 3, at the Westminster Institute, 3534 US Route 5, Westminster, VT.

Polls will be open from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.



258244
WESTMINSTER
WINDHAM-3

OFFICIAL VERMONT GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT
NOVEMBER 3, 2026

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

- Use BLACK Pen to fill in the oval. **DO NOT USE PENCIL.**
- 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.
- 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.
- Do not vote for more candidates than the "VOTE for NOT MORE THAN #" for an office.
- If you make a mistake, tear, or deface the ballot, return it to an election official and obtain another ballot. DO NOT ERASE.

OFFICIAL STATE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BALLOT NOVEMBER 3, 2026

PROPOSAL 3

To see if the voters will amend the Vermont Constitution by adding Article 23 to read:

Article 23. [Right to collectively bargain] That employees have a right to organize or join a labor organization for the purpose of collectively bargaining with their employer through an exclusive representative of their choosing for the purpose of negotiating wages, hours, and working conditions and to protect their economic welfare and safety in the workplace. Therefore, no law shall be adopted that interferes with, negates, or diminishes the right of employees to collectively bargain with respect to wages, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment and workplace safety, or that prohibits the application or execution of an agreement between an employer and a labor organization representing the employer's employees that requires membership in the labor organization as a condition of employment.

YES ○
NO ○

PROPOSAL 4

To see if the voters will amend the Vermont Constitution by adding Article 23 to read:

Article 23. [Equality of rights] That the people are guaranteed equal protection under the law. The State shall not deny equal treatment under the law on account of a person's race, ethnicity, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or national origin. Nothing in this Article shall be interpreted or applied to prevent the adoption or implementation of measures intended to provide equality of treatment and opportunity for members of groups that have historically been subject to discrimination.

YES ○
NO ○

FOR REPRESENTATIVE TO CONGRESS (Vote for not more than ONE)

- PHOENIX K. ALTAIR — BRASSBURG — INDEPENDENT ○
- BECCA BALINT — BRATTLEBORO — DEMOCRATIC ○
- GERALD MALLOY — WEATHERSFIELD — REPUBLICAN ○
- ADAM ORTIZ — NEWPORT CITY — INDEPENDENT ○
- SUZANNE "SUZ" SEYMOUR — HIGHGATE — INDEPENDENT ○
- RYAN P. WALTON — RUTLAND CITY — INDEPENDENT ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR GOVERNOR (Vote for not more than ONE)

- JUNE GOODBAND — SPRINGFIELD — PEACE AND JUSTICE ○
- AMANDA JANOO — BURLINGTON — DEM/PROG ○
- BRIAN JUDD — BARRE CITY — INDEPENDENT ○
- DEAN ROY — STOWE — FREEDOM AND UNITY ○
- PHIL SCOTT — BERLIN — REPUBLICAN ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR (Vote for not more than ONE)

- MOLLY GRAY — BURLINGTON — DEMOCRATIC ○
- JOHN S. RODGERS — GLOVER — REPUBLICAN ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR STATE TREASURER (Vote for not more than ONE)

- ZACHARY HAMPL — RUTLAND TOWN — PROGRESSIVE ○
- LYNN LAFLEUR — STOWE — REPUBLICAN ○
- MIKE PIECIAK — WINOOSKI — DEMOCRATIC ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR SECRETARY OF STATE (Vote for not more than ONE)

- SARAH COPELAND HANZAS — BRADFORD — DEMOCRATIC ○
- H. BROOKE PAIGE — WASHINGTON — REPUBLICAN ○
- RACHEL SHAW — BENNINGTON — PROGRESSIVE ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR AUDITOR OF ACCOUNTS (Vote for not more than ONE)

- TIM ASHE — BURLINGTON — DEMOCRATIC ○
- IVAR KRONICK — POULTNEY — REPUBLICAN ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL (Vote for not more than ONE)

- CHARITY R. CLARK — WILLISTON — DEMOCRATIC ○
- EDWIN HOWELL KEMON — VERGENNES — REPUBLICAN ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR STATE SENATOR (Vote for not more than TWO)

- DALE L. GASSETT — VERNON — REPUBLICAN ○
- WENDY K. HARRISON — BRATTLEBORO — DEMOCRATIC ○
- NADER HASHIM — DUMMERSTON — DEMOCRATIC ○
- RUSTY E. SAGE — BRATTLEBORO — REPUBLICAN ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE (Vote for not more than TWO)

- MICHELLE BOS-LUN — WESTMINSTER — DEMOCRATIC ○
- NICOLE AMANDA COTA — ROCKINGHAM — REPUBLICAN ○
- RYAN M. COYNE — ROCKINGHAM — REPUBLICAN ○
- CHRIS LUNDBERG — ROCKINGHAM — DEMOCRATIC ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR PROBATE JUDGE (Vote for not more than ONE)

- JODI P. FRENCH — NEWFANE — DEMOCRATIC ○
- (Write-in) ○

FOR ASSISTANT JUDGE (Vote for not more than TWO)

- LAMONT BARNETT — ROCKINGHAM — DEMOCRATIC ○
- CAROLYN PARTRIDGE — WINDHAM — DEMOCRATIC ○
- (Write-in) ○
- (Write-in) ○

SAMPLE BALLOT

TURN BALLOT OVER AND CONTINUE VOTING

Above, front of a sample Westminster ballot for the 2026 elections. Back of the sample ballot can be seen on page 8.



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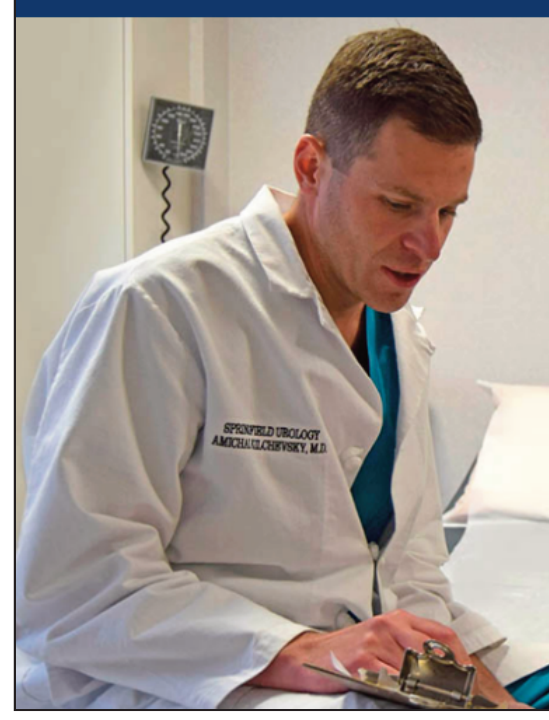
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October Business of the Month: Livewater Farm & Dairy



Livewater Farm and Dairy is a sustainable grass based dairy farm in Westminster West producing dairy and farm goods. With an on-site farm stand they purvey farm products grown and raised with GMO-free sustainable and regenerative practices in mind, never using chemicals, hormones or preservatives.

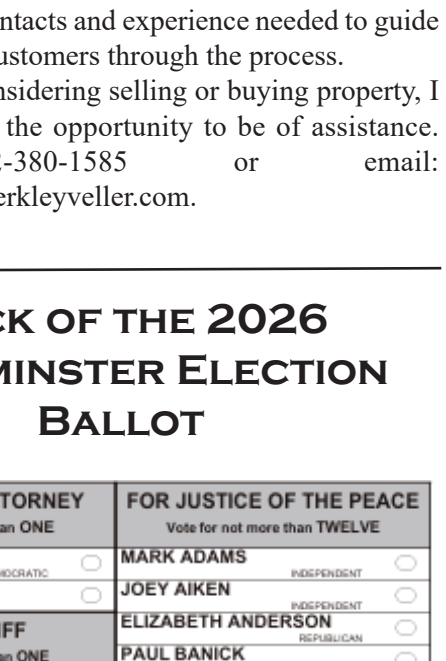
Taylor and Dana live on the farm with their three children along with Taylor's parents, Bill (in photo) and Miriam whom they purchased the farm from in 2018.

Taylor and Bill conduct the seasonal farm activities from hay making, to maple syrup, to daily chores raising animals, cutting firewood, or performing routine maintenance on equipment.

Come by the farm stand located on the Westminster West Road Thursday - Sunday 9 am to 6 pm for raw milk, eggs, fresh and aged cheese, maple syrup, grass fed beef, pasture raised chicken, pork and more!

Livewater Farm & Dairy, Westminster West, VT, (802) 222-1525 or livewaterdairy@gmail.com.

October Business of the Month: Heidi Bernier, Realtor



As a lifelong native of Vermont, with nearly 30 years' experience as a Real Estate Agent, licensed in both Vermont and New Hampshire, I offer my customers and clients a keen familiarity of the area and the local real estate market.

I take pride in providing personalized service, catering to the individual requirements of my clients and customers, along with a creative marketing approach. Trained in representation of homebuyers, as well as sellers, I earned my CBR designation (certified buyer representative) in 1996. In 2022 I earned my Senior Real Estate Specialist Designation in order to better assist the needs of buyers and sellers aged 55+.

Many people and services are required to bring a transaction to a successful closing, including: Mortgage Brokers, Engineers, Building Inspectors, Insurance Agents, Attorney's and Title Companies. My years of working full-time in the field of Real Estate have gained me the contacts and experience needed to guide my clients and customers through the process.

If you are considering selling or buying property, I would welcome the opportunity to be of assistance. Cell 802-380-1585 or email: heidi.bernier@berkleyveller.com.

Back of the 2026 Westminster Election Ballot

FOR STATE'S ATTORNEY Vote for not more than ONE		FOR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE Vote for not more than TWELVE	
STEVEN M. BROWN BRATTLEBORO	DEMOCRATIC	MARK ADAMS	INDEPENDENT
(Write-in)		JOEY AIKEN	INDEPENDENT
FOR SHERIFF Vote for not more than ONE		ELIZABETH ANDERSON	REPUBLICAN
MARK R. ANDERSON BRATTLEBORO	DEMOCRATIC	PAUL BANICK	REPUBLICAN
(Write-in)		K. SHELDON BEEBE	REPUBLICAN
FOR HIGH BAILIFF Vote for not more than ONE		KAREN BLANCHARD	DEMOCRATIC
ANGELA LAWRENCE BRATTLEBORO	DEMOCRATIC	RON BOS-LUN	DEMOCRATIC
(Write-in)		MARK COESTER	REPUBLICAN
		JANE FITZWILLIAM	DEMOCRATIC
		ELIZABETH HARLOW	DEMOCRATIC
		SUSAN J. HARLOW	DEMOCRATIC
		LAUREL HATHAWAY	REPUBLICAN
		YEVETTE HENDLER	DEMOCRATIC
		NICK KEIL	DEMOCRATIC
		LORI LARUE	INDEPENDENT
		ADRIENNE MAJOR	DEMOCRATIC
		PEGGY O'TOOLE	DEMOCRATIC
		SUSAN ROMAN	DEMOCRATIC
		SARAH WALDO	INDEPENDENT

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