

Westminster Gazette



po box 147 westminster vt 05158

Our Community Newspaper @ www.westminstervt.org Vol 21 No 1 January 2025

IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO LIGHT A VILLAGE



Thanks to everyone who came out to fill, set out, light, and pick up our luminaries. This wonderful tradition was started about 30 years ago by Red and Doris Dawkins, who made a surprise visit while we were filling bags.

You can help us keep the tradition going by contributing to the Westminster Activities Committee, through the town clerk at the Westminster Town Hall. And please join us next year to help with the tradition of the Westminster Luminaries. It's a terrific way to meet people and get involved in your community.

Photo credits Millie Beebe, Doreen Kelton and Susan Harlow.

SPECIAL DELIVERY: HOLIDAY CHEER!

Westminster Cares board members Cindy Moses and Pete Harrison prepare to deliver some holiday cheer to older adults in our community.

The Holiday Bags were made possible through donations to Westminster Cares and a contribution from one of the town's public funds, the Frank Miller Milk Fund; with pet toys, treats and other goodies made possible by the Women's Fellowship of the First Congregational Church of Westminster.

The bags were overflowing with shelf stable canned and packaged goods, bread, fresh fruit, cheese, homemade baked goods and treats; plus coffee, tea and hot cocoa with all the fixings.

Thank you to the volunteers who shopped for and assembled the bags.

The true spirit of the season is alive and well in Westminster!



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

Westminster Gazette

Town of Westminster
PO Box 147
Westminster, VT
05158

**DELIVER TO ADDRESSEE OR
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OUR WORKING LANDSCAPE - MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR W/PRIZE! LET'S TRY THIS AGAIN! SIMPLIFIED VERSION

Westminster has many farms and businesses which work the land to create products and jobs, while making the landscape that we see today. The *Gazette* will be highlighting this part of our economy with short articles and letters which explain and recognize the importance of our working landscape. By Mary Scherbatskoy



As Mary wrote last month, she is working on another project at the moment and has suspended her "Our Working Landscape" column for a few issues. In last month's paper, Mary offered a Mystery Tour of several of the photos she used in the articles and offered a prize for identifying them. In hindsight, it was a lot to ask! So here's a simplified challenge to young people - name the Westminster farmers in the left and center of the right photos above. The prize is a \$25 Gift Certificate to the Bellows Falls Opera House! Please send answers to westminsternews@gmail.com. Prize is offered by a donor, not by the Gazette and the first correct answer wins.

ANNUAL TOWN & FIRE & SCHOOL DISTRICT MEETING – MAR. 2 - OPEN POSITIONS

VOTING BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT- MARCH 4, 2025
ELECTED OFFICIALS WITH TERMS EXPIRING MARCH 4, 2025

POSITION	LENGTH OF TERM	PRESENTLY HELD BY
MODERATOR (Town, Fire)	1 Year	David Major
SCHOOL MODERATOR	1 Year	David Major
SELECTBOARD	3 Year	Katrina Hamilton
SELECTBOARD	2 Years	Daniel Crocker
LISTER	3 Years	Racheal Cohen
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND	1 Year	Karen Walter
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND	1 Year	Nancy Dalzell
COMMISSIONER, CAMPBELL FUND	1 Year	Vacant
TOWN TREASURER	3 Years	Pauline O'Brien
TRUSTEE, CAMPBELL FUND	3 Years	Michael Fawcett

TRUSTEE OF PUBLIC FUNDS	3 Years	Michael Fawcett
UHSD#27 DIRECTOR (remaining 1 of 3)	3 Years	David Clark (expiring 1 yr term)
TOWN SCHOOL DIRECTOR	2 Years	Margery Ferry
FIRE DISTRICT #3 PRUDENTIAL	3 Years	Daniel Green

Nomination Petitions are ready for those who wish to run for town office. They may be picked up at the Town Clerk's office any weekday between the hours of 8:30 am and 4:00pm, and must be returned to the Town Clerk's office by 5:00pm on Monday, January 16, 2025, containing at least 28 valid signatures (1%) of Registered Voters.

Anyone whose name does not appear on the voter checklist should register at the Town Clerk's office.

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ADVERTISE IN THE GAZETTE!

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

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

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

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

On-line at: www.westminstervt.org

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER CARES - YEAR END DONATIONS & MEMORIALS

The Westminster Cares Board of Directors met Wednesday December 4th at 4:30PM at the Westminster Institute with President Lori Larue presiding. The following board members attended: Vice President Pat Goodell, Vice President Pete Harrison, Treasurer Frannie Waldron, Secretary Doug Ofstedahl, Don Dawson, Nancy Dalzell, Kathy Elliott, Miriam Lanata and Director Donna Dawson. Unable to attend: Cindy Moses.

ANNUAL APPEAL UPDATE: We have been humbled by the support received so far from individuals, families and businesses in our community. Your contributions enable us to continue to provide programs and services to older adults in our community.

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

Donations received through December 20th 2024

In Honor of:

In honor of the Westminster Cares volunteers from Pete & Judi Harrison

In honor of Ronnie Friedman from Alicia LaCour

In honor of Karen Walter from:

Bonnie Anderson
Patra Attig
Bill & Connie Carter
Deb Hauserman
Wendy Harty

Memorials:

In memory of Dr. Ralph Buck from Buck Adams
In memory of J. Eric Anderson from Elizabeth Anderson

In memory of Hank & Phyllis Anderson from Don & Cindy Anderson

In memory of Harold Angers from Barbara Angers

In memory of my mom, Evelyn Aubuchont on her birthday, from Judy Harrison

In memory of Regina Borden from:

Dan Borden & Debi Borden-Miller
Pete & Judy Harrison

In memory of the Charuhas & Dillon Family from Jim & Sharon Charuhas

In memory of Reggie Cote from Wendy Speid

In memory of Eileen Deutsch from:
Chris Forgy/Saga Communications

Laurie Indenbaum
Miriam Lanata

Lori Larue
Allyn & Richard Michaelson
Janice Shordike & Bruce Schultz

Karen Walter
Ira Wilner

In memory of Donald & Muriel Devoe from Judy Haggerty

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

In memory of Bob Gay from Bill Smidutz and from John & Bonnie Jones

In memory of Jonathan Godwin from John Ewald & Peggy O'Toole

In memory of Connie Harlow from Dan Harlow & Susan Harlow

In memory of my Uncle, Ralph Harlow, from Lori Larue

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

In memory of Pauline Brennan Kissell from the children of William & Beverly Wareing and Margaret Wareing Brew

In memory of Laura Leonard from Nancy Dalzell
In memory of Arthur Lettieri from Anonymous

In memory of Loved Ones from Mary Mitchell

In memory of Bill Luring from Louise Luring

In memory of Jeanette McKnight from Bonnie Fairchild & David Reid

In memory of Joyce Miller from Karen Walter
In memory of Libby Mills from Laurie Alberts
In memory of Lori Miller from Dick Miller and

Barb & Russ Hodgkins

In memory of Marion Nowers from Burton Nowers

In memory of Bill O'Connor from:

Christopher Abare & Family
Jason Abare & Family
Michael Abare & Family
Reg Abare & Family
Kim Cuiffo & Family
Janet Dube

Peter & Judy Harrison
Lori Larue

Karen Walter

In memory of Michael O'Connor from:

Pete & Judy Harrison
Lori Larue

Bill Smidutz
Karen Walter

In memory of Germaine Palmer from Leonard & Nancy Farrar

In memory of Brad Purinton from Michael & Georgine Wilson

In memory of Howie Rice from Craig & Valerie Forrest

In memory of Lora Rogenski from Francis Rogenski

In memory of Jim Scully from Arlene Scully
In memory of Eshagh Shaoul from Rosalyn Shaoul

In memory of David L. Williams from Elizabeth Williams

In memory of Marie Wright & Chrissy Wright from Marlene and Rory Longe

In memory of my family members, now deceased, from Charlotte Kurkul:

Percy & Eunice Muzzey
William & Marguerite Muzzey
Walter & Anne Muzzey
Gerald & Constance (Muzzey) Kelton
Wellman & Shirley Muzzey

WALKING THE SPANISH CAMINOS WITH HOWIE PETERSON

Howie Peterson is a 76-year-old resident of Putney, who loves to travel and explore, so far visiting six continents and 44 countries.

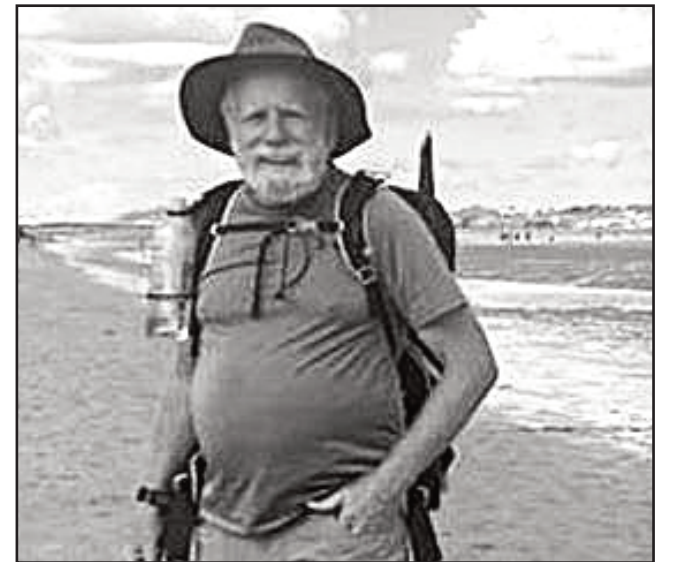
On Thursday, Jan. 2 at 6:30 p.m., Howie will be presenting photos and stories from his Camino walks in Spain this past autumn at Putney Public Library.

This past August and September he walked about 320 miles on the Camino del Norte and the Camino Lebaniego, along the north coast of Spain and into the Picos de Europa mountains.

Join him for a free talk and slideshow about his walking adventures! Howie's previous library presentation about his walking trek across Romania was exciting, engaging and enjoyed by all.

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

In photo, Howie Peterson.



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CHEERS

Happy New Year!

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Nature Notes - Evening Grosbeaks are in Decline

by Alma Beals, Vermont Master Gardener and Naturalist



Evening Grosbeak photos by Don Clark

Has anyone locally seen the flocks of Evening Grosbeaks that we used to see at our feeders, in unbelievable numbers, from about 1965 to the mid-90s? From everything I have read, their population has plummeted.

By the 1920s, Evening Grosbeaks were common winter visitors to New England. Beginning in 1995, winter numbers in the eastern United States crashed. They suffered a 92% population reduction between 1970 and 2016.

These large, black, yellow, and white birds of the finch family have massive bills that are designed to crack large and hard seeds. During the winters, our feeders would be alive with them eating sunflower seeds, emptying the feeders in record time. We are used to seeing chickadees pick up one seed at a time and fly to a nearby tree to crack it. But Evening Grosbeaks have no trouble cracking seeds, so they hang out and eat.

Each winter we wonder if this will be an irruption year. An irruption is an unusual appearance in the non-breeding season and outside their usual range when their supply of northern food drives them south.



We used to think a hard winter was the cause.

Evening Grosbeaks eat conifer seeds and boxelder seeds. Some of the other birds that come south are Red Crossbills that eat conifer seeds of eastern hemlocks and white pine. White-Winged Crossbills eat spruce and larch seeds, eastern hemlock and cedar seeds. Pine Grosbeaks eat crabapples, European Mountain ash berries, and conifer and maple seeds.

For good seed production, trees need warm



weather in the fall and again in the spring for fruit buds to form and for the flowers to set or the crop will be delayed for another year. The boreal trees are very synchronized so that every fir, tamarac, spruce, and birch will have loads of seeds for one year and almost none the next.

Some of the reasons suspected of the decline are loss of breeding habitat due to logging. Another reason is spruce budworm and the spraying done which has affected the caterpillars which the birds eat. Climate change is another reason. The birds may go farther north to breed. Windows and cars are another hazard.

Please call me if you see any Evening Grosbeaks at your feeders, even one or two.

WESTMINSTER SAMPLER: BENJAMIN HALL'S BIG BOOK

By Jessie Haas

Westminster Vt, 1735-2000 is a big fat book, 574 pages including the index. But it's a piker compared to Benjamin H. Hall's *History of Eastern Vermont*, which clocks in at 799 pages. It was published in 1858.

Hall's book covers the history of what is now Vermont east of the Green Mountains and south of Tunbridge, which is pretty much the limits of old Cumberland County, NY.

In his preface he describes his naive attempt, begun when he was 22 years old, to write a short book about the very first settlements by "the whites," and how that mushroomed as he discovered that there just wasn't a good history of this part of the state. Existing books gave this area little attention and as he notes of Ira Allen's work, "abounded in inaccuracies." So Hall dived in, reading and taking notes on records in the archives of five states, collecting oral histories, and living in Westminster for much of the six years it took to complete his book.

Hall was a grandson of Lot Hall, a prominent Westminster lawyer and politician. He was 22 when he began his history, fresh out of Harvard. At the time he began his research in 1851, there were people living in Westminster who were there at the time of the Massacre. William Czar Bradley opened his family papers to Hall, and may have provided some career inspiration; Hall would go on to become a lawyer and poet just like Bradley.

A 168-year old book that weighs upwards of three pounds, especially one so heavily footnoted, with 12 appendices and two indexes, brings to mind some ponderous, gray-bearded author full of years and wisdom—not a 22-year-old. It does make sense of one



"Indian Rock."

connection, though. The illustrations in the book are engravings made from drawings by Larkin Mead Jr.; he would go on to become a famous sculptor. You may have seen his Ethan Allen done in marble at the Vermont State House. But in 1855 Larkin Mead Jr was in his early twenties, fresh out of art school.

He couldn't get work in his chosen field and was mooching around Brattleboro. He got no attention until his famous Christmas prank of creating an ice sculpture of the Recording Angel overnight. Brattleboro was stunned and charmed, and Mead soon received a commission to create a statue of Agriculture for the State House dome. It was likely before taking on this career-defining project that he made a series of drawings of local people and places for Benjamin Hall. We don't know if any were done from life, but the portrait of Crean Brush was taken from an oil painting of Brush, owned at that time by the Norman family who were descended from him.

Mead's father was a lawyer and sometimes a partner

of William Czar Bradley's. Bradley was Hall's friend and mentor and probably connected him with the young Brattleboro artist. The two young men who would someday be famous created a fine fat book that puts a different slant on the history of Vermont, centered on Westminster and with very little mention of Ethan Allen.

The history is solid and well-documented, but also, it's fun and gossipy, and gives a real flavor of the times. Some of the best stories are tucked into the footnotes, or the biographical sketches of prominent men. And only men—there are only three or four women even mentioned in the book--Fanny Allen, Jemima Tute, and Mrs. Peter Lovejoy, who was famously married to her second husband in the nude, from inside a closet. You'll have to read the book to learn more about that Westminster story!

One interesting section contains drawings of "Indian Rock," (in illustration above) located near the junction of the Wantastiquet (now the West) River and the Connecticut. This stone was flooded and lost for decades, until recently rediscovered by local scuba diver Annette Spaulding. Even in the 1850s it was under water for part of the year. But Larkin Mead Jr got a good look at it at some point, and did a drawing that contains the figures described by Spaulding.

First editions of *The History of Eastern Vermont* are rare and expensive, but there's a good facsimile available. Despite some occasional purple prose and a definite pro-Westminster bias, it's an interesting trip back in time, a good book to curl up that will get you through quite a bit of the winter.

More Westminster history at www.westminster-vthistory.org, where you can also become a member.

NEWS FROM WESTMINSTER VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

The Westminster Fire & Rescue Department holds their monthly meetings at 7 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of the month and a combined drill on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Rescue training is the 2nd Tuesday of the month.

Next association meeting Tuesday, Jan. 7 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.

The Prudential Committee meets on the 3rd Sunday of every month at the Fire House on Grout Ave. at 10 a.m.

Number of calls in November: 44

Number of calls through December 26th: 40

Number of calls calendar year to date: 508

Number of calls fiscal year, July 1st, to date: 262

Association Meeting: The Westminster Fire and Rescue Association met for their regular meeting December 3rd with President Nancy Deitz presiding. There were 29 members present and 8 members excused. Currently there are 48 members of the volunteer fire department.

Emergency responses: November turned out to be another busy month with 44 calls for the month and currently we have been to over 500 for this calendar year. Here is the breakdown for the 44 calls: 18 rescue/medical calls; 4 motor vehicle accidents; 2 box alarm/false alarm; 7 Mutual Aid, 1 Chester, 1 to Alstead, 2 to Acworth; 3 to Brattleboro; 4 tree on

wires/power line down; 1 illegal burn; 2 service calls; 1 transformer issue at the high school; 2 odor/smoke investigations; 1 brush fire; 2 for CO detectors.

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

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

Ashes from wood burning stoves or furnaces: When cleaning out your ashes, put them in a closed metal container outside. If they are going to be dumped be sure to wet them down or cover them with snow if there is any. Never put them on a wooden deck or porch floor even in a metal container. Recently there was a building fire caused by coals from a wood stove being placed in a plastic pail.

FIRE EXTINGUISHERS FOR SALE: Anyone

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

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

Westminster Fire & Rescue Association PO Box 111 Westminster, 05158

Donations received in December:

Peggy Aiken

Peter Lefcort

Vermont Academy

Anonymous

Anne [Spring] Knowler/ Christopher Bergman

Decorated Christmas tree from Dan and Kelley Green

Memorial Donations received in December:

Sanborn Head & Associates, Inc in memory of Bob Gay, Jr.

Mary Mitchell in memory of Frank Mitchell

Leonard and Nancy Farrar in memory of family no longer with us

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.westminster-fireandrescue.org.

Aged in Vermont

Westminster Cares, Inc.

SEVEN WINTER SAFETY TIPS FOR OLDER ADULTS

During the winter months, ice, snow, and cold temperatures can make life challenging for anyone. Slippery sidewalks and cold weather can cause a wide range of injuries and illnesses, especially for older people.

1. Avoid slipping on ice

Icy, snowy roads and sidewalks make it easy to slip and fall. Often these falls cause major injuries

such as hip and wrist fractures, head trauma and major lacerations. Younger people often recover relatively quickly from such injuries, older adults face complications, which can be a leading cause of death from injury in men and women over the age of 65.

For that reason, older adults should wear shoes with good traction and non-skid soles and stay inside until the roads are clear. Replacing a worn cane tip can make walking easier, and using ski poles or walking sticks in icy conditions can prevent falls – especially on sidewalks getting to/from the car and getting to/from stores in parking lots. Older people are advised to take their shoes off as soon as they return indoors, because often snow and ice attach to the soles and, once melted, can lead to slippery conditions inside.

2. Dress for warmth

Cold temperatures can lead to frostbite and hypothermia, a condition in which the body temperature dips too low. According to the Centers for Disease Control, death rates attributed to excessive cold or hypothermia increased steadily with age among those in both metropolitan and rural areas.

That's why older adults are advised to wear warm socks, a heavy coat, a warm hat, gloves and a scarf if heading outdoors. In very cold temperatures, cover all exposed skin and use a scarf to cover your mouth.

3. Fight wintertime depression

Because it can be difficult and dangerous to get around, many older adults have less contact with others during cold months. This can breed feelings of loneliness and isolation. To help avoid these issues, we urge family members to check in on seniors as often as possible; a short, daily phone call can also make a big difference. Seniors can also arrange a check-in system with neighbors and friends, where each person looks in on one or two others daily.



Non-slip soles and removable ice cleats can make a big difference preventing falls on the winter ice.

4. Keep the car tuned up

Driving during the winter can be hazardous for anyone. But it is especially dangerous for older people, who may not drive as often anymore or whose reflexes may not be as quick as they once were. Make sure to have cars serviced before wintertime hits. Checking the oil, tires, battery, and wipers can make a big difference on winter roads.

Also make sure your older loved one's roadside assistance plan is up to date in case of emergencies.

5. Prepare for power outages

Winter storms can lead to power outages. Make sure you or your older loved one has easy access to flashlights and a battery-powered radio in case the power goes out. Stockpile warm blankets. Longer power outages can spoil the food in your refrigerator and freezer so keep a supply of non-perishable foods that can be eaten cold on hand. If the power goes out, older adults should wear several layers of clothing, including a hat and gloves.

6. Eat a varied diet

Because people spend more time indoors and may eat a smaller variety of foods, nutritional deficits, especially vitamin D deficiency (which has been associated with health concerns like cognitive decline, depression and osteoporosis, among others) can be a problem. Consuming foods that are fortified with Vitamin D, such as milk, grains and seafood options like tuna and salmon are wonderful sources.

7. Prevent carbon monoxide poisoning

Using a fireplace, gas heater or lanterns can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. Ensure your loved one's safety by checking the batteries on carbon monoxide detectors or purchasing a new one if needed. The most important tip to keep in mind during the colder months is to encourage older people to ask for help. Whether they need to clear their property of snow and ice, or stock up on groceries, they should feel free to ask a family member or neighbor or contact an agency for support.

Wintertime certainly poses challenges for older adults, but with a bit of planning and awareness, you can stay healthy and experience the joys of springtime soon enough.

BACK IN THE DAY - LYNN LAWRENCE REMEMBERS FISHING

By Lynn Lawrence, as told to his daughter, Sherry, when asked, "How did your parents feed 10 children back in the 40's?"

Our family ate lots of fish that we caught ourselves.

We'd start from home with fishline and fish hooks and plain old string, and cut a pole as we were walking along.

We went brook fishing for trout. You could keep the trout you caught as long as they were six inches long, the length of a dollar bill. All 10 of us kids could have legally caught a dozen fish at a time, 120 in all, but I don't think there were that many fish in the whole brook, it was so small.

I didn't know as a kid what I know now. I'd walk along the brook and look for a calm place to drop in my line. But



you're more likely to catch a trout where they feed, in a spot where the water is swift and washes the bugs out.

I knew a man a few years ago who would dump the bugs out of his bug zapper into a pool every night, feeding the fish.

We'd fish in the Connecticut River for bass, hornpout and eels. We'd tie the string to our fish poles, tie about four feet of fishline to that and then put the hook on. We didn't want the fish to see the string, so we made sure that the only part that went into the water was the invisible fishline.

We'd clean and skin the eels, cut them into pieces then parboil and fry them. When we caught eels, once in a while one would try to bite.

LIVING SIMPLY IN A COMPLEX WORLD

Do you find yourself wondering how best to live a life of meaning, purpose and presence in these increasingly complex times?

Join Paul LeVasseur, longtime Putney resident, for a 6 week facilitated discussion course that explores ways to live in harmony with our values while caring for ourselves, our community, and this precious earth.

The course will meet Monday nights at Putney Library Jan. 13 – Feb. 17, 6:30pm-8pm. Before the course begins, there will be an information session Monday, January 6th 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

The discussion topics will include living a life of happiness and meaning, busyness, distraction and mindfulness, consuming less while creating more, technology and its capacity for connection and disconnec-



tion, resisting materialistic values, and embracing simplicity, a different way.

While there is no charge for the course, enrollment is limited, so please contact Paul to enroll or ask any questions you might have:

Paul is a co-founder and trainer for the Putney-based New England Council Collective which recognizes that every person has a story to share and a piece of the whole. He was a co-founder of Transition Town Putney, and taught at SIT Graduate Institute.

Paul can be contacted at plevasseurputney@gmail.com or 802-380-2226.

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

This event is free and open to the public.

REMEMBRANCES

JANUARY 2025:

JANET COBB, 73
2/1/1951 – 11/17/2024
CAVENDISH, VT
FORMERLY BELLOWS FALLS, VT

MARTHA TYLER GOUGER, 66
9/17/1958 - 11/10/2024
BRATTLEBORO, VT

JOYCE MILLER, 94
4/16/1930 – 11/5/2024
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

BYRON STOOKEY, 90
D. 4/12/2024
BRATTLEBORO, VT
FORMERLY WESTMINSTER WEST

CONSTANCE "CONNIE" WELDON, 91
11/17/1932 – 11/7/2024
TOWNSHEND, VT

ARTHUR WILLARD, 85
11/6/1938 – 11/16/2024
BELLOWS FALLS, VT

MAIN STREET ARTS ANNOUNCES UPCOMING WINTER COURSES

main street arts

WINTER PROGRAMS JANUARY-MARCH 2025
35 Main St., Saxtons River, Vermont

<p>Music</p> <p>String Band • Drop-in rate \$10/session Wednesdays Jan. 8-June 4, 5-6:30 pm</p> <p>Open Mic • Free 4th Fridays Jan. 24, Feb. 28, March 28, 7-9 pm</p> <p>All-Genre Songwriters Circle • \$5-10 suggested donation • 4th Fridays Jan. 24, Feb. 28, March 28, 5:30-6:30 pm</p> <p>Red Tent Singers • \$100/10 sessions Women-identifying singing group. Ages 13+ Mondays Jan. 6-March 24, 4:30-5:30 pm</p> <p>Jumpstart Your Ukulele • \$90/6 sessions Tuesdays Jan. 7-Feb. 11, 3:30-4:30 pm Scholarships available</p> <p>Theater</p> <p>Murder By The Book, a theater production • \$22/ticket • Jan. 17 & 18 at 7 pm, Jan. 19 at 2 pm</p> <p>Once in the Time of Trolls, a youth theater production • \$12/ticket March 7 at 7 pm, March 8 at 2 pm & 7 pm</p> <p>Movement and Wellness</p> <p>Feldenkrais • \$120/6 sessions • Free intro class Jan. 7 • Tuesdays Jan. 14-Feb. 18, 9-10 am</p> <p>Mixed Rhythm Classes/Dances • \$10/person/lesson • Thursdays 7-9 pm</p> <p>Swing/Waltz Dances • \$10/person • Monthly on Thursdays 7-9 pm • Jan. 23, Feb. 20, March 20</p> <p>Tai Chi • By donation • Tuesdays 11 am</p> <p>Community Programs</p> <p>Unlock Your Creativity, Based on <i>The Artist's Way</i> \$30/6 sessions, \$5 drop-in Tuesdays Feb. 25-April 1, 9-10 am</p> <p>Writers Studio • By donation 1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10 am-noon</p>	<p>Creative Aging</p> <p>Free multidisciplinary art classes for people 60+</p> <p>Bookmaking Using Sewing Techniques, Amber Paris • Thursdays Feb. 6-March 27, 10 am-noon</p> <p>Print-Making, Annie Quest Tuesdays Feb. 4-March 25, 10 am-noon</p> <p>Theater Play, Michael Zerphy & Ham Gillett Tuesdays Feb. 4-March 11, 1-2:30 pm</p> <p>Creative Aging Lunches • Suggested donation \$3 Tuesdays noon-1 pm</p> <p>ElderTalks, bi-weekly, Tuesdays 12:50-1:10 pm</p> <p>Events</p> <p>LifeSongs Concert • Free Jan. 4, 4 pm</p> <p>Vocal Improv Workshop • \$50 Feb. 1, 10 am-4 pm</p> <p>Tea Parties - A fundraiser for MSA Valentine's Day Tea, Sat. Feb. 8, 1-3 pm St. Patrick's Day Tea, Sat. March 15, 1-3 pm Mother's Day Tea, Sat. May 10, 1-3 pm \$35/person • RSVP to nlesier@saxton.net</p> <p>Family Music Palooza w/ Stu Fuchs & friends \$5/person, \$10/family Feb. 7, 3 pm</p> <p>Family Dance w/ MSA String Band \$5/person, \$10/family Feb. 14, 6-8 pm</p> <p>GardenFest • MSA fundraiser • June 14-15</p> <p>Gallery Lounge Featuring artwork by local artists Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, noon-3 pm Also open during MSA public events</p> <p>Space Rentals Available • Contact info@mainstreetarts.org</p>
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This winter, Main Street Arts in Saxtons River is thrilled to add nine new classes.

Jumpstart your Ukulele with Stu Fuchs, Feldenkrais with Paris Kern, Unlock Your Creativity based on the Artist Way with Ashley Storrow, and Vocal Improv Workshop with Paris Kern.

MSA will also offer three Creative Aging Classes that are free to anyone over the age of 60. These classes include Booking Making Using Sewing Techniques with Amber Paris, Printmaking with Annie Quest, and Theater Play, with Michael Zerphy and Ham Gillett.

A class participant stated, "It enlivens me to see people of all ages, interest, and abilities filling the building. There's something here for everyone to explore their creativity and connect with one another."

Jumpstart your Ukulele with Stu Fuchs is on Tuesdays from 3:30-4:30, \$90 for six sessions. It runs from January 7 through February 11.

Feldenkrais with Paris Kern will take place on Tuesdays from 9-10 am, \$120 for six sessions. It runs from January 14 through Feb 18.

Unlock Your Creativity based on the Artist Way with Ashley Storrow, is on Tuesdays from 9-10 am, \$30 for six sessions. It runs from February 25 through April 1.

The Vocal Improv Workshop with Paris Kern is on February 1 from 10-4 pm.

The Creative Aging courses:

Booking Making Using Sewing Techniques with Amber Paris is on Thursdays Feb. 6-March 27, 10 am-noon. Printmaking with Annie Quest is on Tuesdays, Feb. 4-March 25, 10 am-noon. Theater Play with Michael Zerphy and Ham Gillett is on Tuesdays Feb. 4-March 11, 1-2:30 pm.

For registration and to view all of our course offerings, visit mainstreetarts.org. Main Street Arts is located at 35 Main Street in Saxtons River, Vermont. Main Street Arts has a ramp, elevator, and accessible bathrooms.

Happy
New Year

BUTTERFIELD LIBRARY - NEW LIBRARY HOURS, STORYTIME

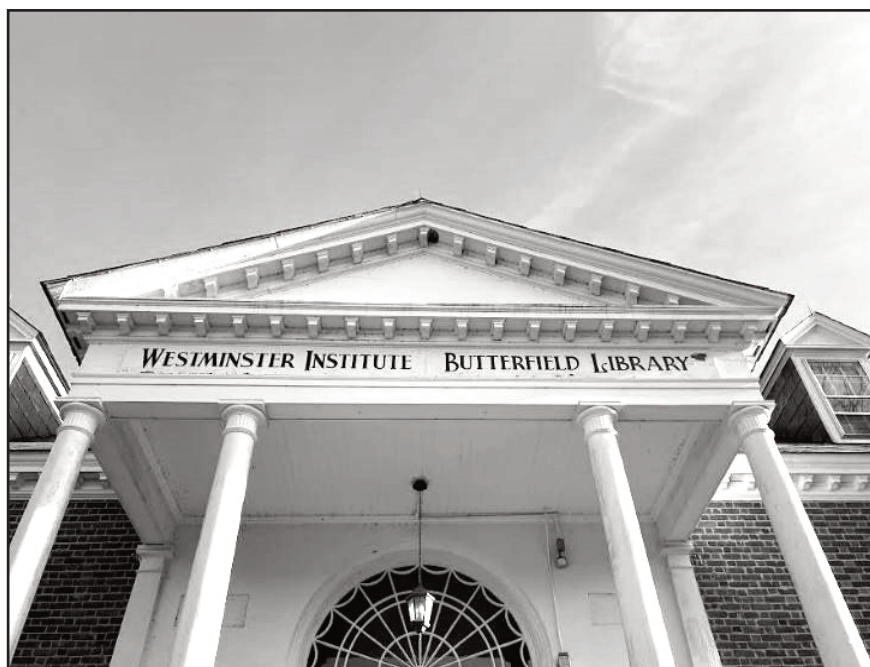
By Alison Baitz, Librarian

Hello Westminster! I hope your 2025 is off to a wonderful start!

We're giving new hours a try in the new year. Starting Jan. 6, the library will be open Mondays 10am – 3pm; Tuesdays 3pm – 8pm; Thursdays 1pm – 6pm; Saturdays 10:30am – 12:30pm. This shift allows for some very exciting programming opportunities.

To start, preschool-aged children and their caregivers are invited to join us for storytime every Monday (save for national holidays!) at 10am, beginning Jan. 6. Retired art teacher Colleen Grout and former children's librarian Jennifer Holan will alternate as storytime lead — reading a few handpicked picturebooks and then overseeing some gentle crafting. Please come or share this with the youngest people in your life!

Speaking of crafting! Each Saturday in January, from 10:30am – 12:30pm, we welcome families



with children of all ages to join us to collaborate on two art projects that, once finished, will decorate the Butterfield children's room. We are also re-

launching the Butterfield craft group — all ages are encouraged to convene for communal crafting each month's first Tuesday from 4pm – 6pm and every third Saturday from 10:30am – 12:30pm.

To support activities like the above, the library is launching a craft-focused Library of Things collection, and we need your help! Please consider donating craft items that you no longer use to the library, during open hours.

On Jan. 14 at 7pm, Ruth Grandy and Mary Scherbatskoy will be here as part of Westminster Land Week, and Bring Your Own Book Club is meeting again on the 21st at 5pm.

Last but certainly not least, please come and see the new bench at the Institute — a memorial celebrating the life of Rohr Cook.

Thank you for your patronage and support through 2024 and I hope to see you at the library soon!

WESTMINSTER HAPPENINGS

WE'RE ALWAYS UPDATING THE HAPPENINGS ENTRIES. IT IS YOUR GROUP'S RESPONSIBILITY TO LET US KNOW WHEN THINGS CHANGE OR WHEN SOMETHING SHOULD BE ADDED OR REMOVED. THANK YOU!

FAITH COMMUNITY

The First Congregational Church of Westminster

We welcome you to join us each Sunday at 10 a.m. There is a children's message at each service and fellowship after. We are located on Rt. 5. Rev. Richard O'Donnell is the Pastor.

First Congregational Church of Westminster
 Jan 5 Service at 10
 Jan 6 Special budget meeting 5:30 pm zoom
 Jan 7 Women's Fellowship Lunch
 Jan 8 SOUPer Wednesday Starts 12-2
 Jan 8 Bible study. 6:30 pm in person and zoom
 Jan 12 Service at 10 with Communion
 Jan 15 Bible Study 6:30 pm. In person and zoom
 Jan 19 Service at 10:00
 Jan 20. Standing Committee 5:30 on Zoom
 Jan 22 Bible Study 6:30 pm in person and zoom
 Jan 26. Service at 10 Congregational Annual Meeting to follow in Hall

Start the new year our right and join us for worship or events. We welcome you and hope to see you! Join us at 3470 Route 5 in Westminster if you are interested.

The Congregational Church of Westminster West
 Worships every Sunday at 10 a.m. We are using Facebook Live to stream our weekly services. Just go on Facebook to the church's page. If you are with us in person, we ask you to wear a mask when conditions warrant it. Masks are available at the church. 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.

Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno keeps office hours either in the office itself or by visiting parishioners on Thursday afternoons and is available by appointment at other times. She keeps Mondays as her Sabbath observation. She can be reached at susiewt@gmail.com com or (802) 579-8356.

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.

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.

Accessible Gentle Yoga with Lisa Nigro
 New classes starting in August.

Gentle Yoga with Lisa Nigro Aug.19-Oct. 21 - 10 weeks \$130, \$15 drop in (if space is available)
 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 with Ronnie Friedman, Karen Walter
 On line - Mondays & Thursdays 722-3607

Tai Chi Class Tues. 9:45 a.m.-10:45 a.m.
 Class Tues. 11 a.m.-noon Class Thursday 6-7 p.m.
 Westminster Institute

Souper Wednesdays
 Homemade soups at Congregational Church Rt. 5 January through April 12-2 p.m.
 For deliveries Tina 802-376-7330

Putney Contradance
 Last Sunday of month at 3 p.m.
 Pierce's Hall, 121 East Putney Falls Road
 Vaccinations, boosters & K95 masks
 contradanceputney@gmail.com

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

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

Zumba Fitness at Westminster Institute: Latin and world rhythm music, set to easy-to-follow choreography, with a focus on cardiovascular and muscular conditioning, flexibility, and balance. 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 by ZOOM every 4th Thursday at 7:15 p.m.

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
 1st Wed., 4:30 p.m., Westminster Institute on-line & in person

Westminster Historical Society Board
 3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m. Town Hall 2nd floor

Westminster Institute Board 2nd Tues. 6:30 p.m., Westminster Institute jimmatteau@gmail.com

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

Westminster West Library Board 802-387-4682
 2nd Wed. 7 p.m. at the WW Library

Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association
 3rd Thurs. 7 p.m. In-person or Zoom
 Contact: coordinator@windmillhillpinnacle.org

The Living Earth Action Group most Fridays at 5 p.m. Westminster West Congregational Church
 Contact: Caitlin Adair pcadair@sover.net

WVFD Prudential Committee meets on the 3rd Sunday of the month, at 10 a.m. at the Westminster Fire Station.

WESTMINSTER GAZETTE

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Feb. Deadline

The deadline for the Feb. 2025 Issue of the Westminster Gazette is Wednesday, Jan.22
 Publication Date is Wednesday, Jan. 29
 To Contact the Westminster Gazette
 E-mail: westminsternews@gmail.com

WATERSHEDS & WATERWAYS OF WESTMINSTER - PART 2

By Rachael Shaw

In the first article in this series (see November 2024 Gazette issue, p.7, available online on the Town's website), I discussed the interesting fact that Westminister's land feeds into four different sub-watersheds—the northern part of the town drains into the Saxtons River, most of the central area feeds directly into the Connecticut River, the southwest corner ends up in the Sacketts Brook, and the west side of the western most ridge in town heads down to the Grassy Brook.

Each of these sub-watersheds is made up of many small streams and rivulets which become consolidated by gravity into the larger rivers and brooks. They all eventually drain into the Connecticut which heads to Long Island Sound and out into the great Atlantic. It's fascinating to realize that some of the rain and snow that fall here end up in the ocean, and then come back to us again in the form of more precipitation.

Over in the southwest corner of our town, there is a spot where a spring emerges from a hillside and feeds the Sacketts Brook. In the first article, I mentioned that there was a special drinking glass left there by a Mr. Kerr in the early part of the 1900's.

He had a herd of cows on the hillside nearby at the time. The glass was kept under a rocky outcropping near the spring. I got a tour of the area this past November from Dan and Richard Crocker (my late friend Joanna Crocker's two sons, who live right nearby), and we discovered that the glass was no longer there.

The way they remember it, it had been there for many

decades but was eventually left right side up and exposed to the elements by mistake. It had filled with water which froze and broke the glass.

Someone had removed it for safety reasons and it has yet to be replaced. Thus, the mystery of the Sacketts Brook drinking glass is solved, if not very satisfyingly—I was hoping that the glass would still be there!

On Saturday, Dec. 21, members of the Westminister Conservation Commission did a hike in the Westminister Town Forest, parts of which border the beautiful East Putney Brook.

The East Putney Brook starts up above the Westminister West village wetlands and gets bigger as it flows south and east, eventually emptying into the Connecticut River a few miles north of Putney village. We had a day of perfect weather for a hike: cold and clear with good walking conditions. **Pictured** are members of the Commission, Jim Calchera, Kestrel Craig, and Rachael Shaw, near a sign in the Town Forest which specifies no motorized vehicles on the logging trails. This is to prevent erosion in the forest and damage to the trails.



Do you have a memory or story that occurred on or near one of Westminister's many waterways that you would like to share in a future Gazette article? Please email it to westministervtconservation@gmail.com.

Interested in all things nature and conservation? Consider attending a Westminister Conservation Commission meeting. We are currently looking for a couple energetic new members! We meet on the fourth Thursday of the month at 7 p.m., alternating between a Westminister Center and a Westminister West location. For more information, email us at the address noted above.

JESSIE HAAS - JAN 28

PRESENTATION ON WESTMINSTER

The Westminister Inclusion Committee has been learning a lot about Westminsters and its citizens.

Looking for some history of Westminister and Westminister West and how they came to be, they approached Jessie Haas who provided information about not only two --but three Westminsters!

Haas is the author of *Westminister West*, a story for young adults, *Westminister, Vermont, 1735-2000: Township Number One, Revolutionary Westminister: From Massacre to Statehood*, and countless children's books, many of which include horses.

As the first in a series dedicated to understanding the many peoples and histories of Westminister, the Inclusion Committee is collaborating with the libraries of Westminister and Westminister West, to host a talk and book signing on Wednesday, Jan. 28 from 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the Butterfield Institute

It is free and open to all and refreshments will be served.

Haas will also bring books for sale and offer a chance for book signing.

WESTMINSTER LAND WEEK JAN. 14 - 17 WHO OWNED MY LAND?

Land records in Westminister go back to 1780, and are held in large hand-written ledgers which are kept in Town Hall. They are public records, but it is not easy to read the old-fashioned writing or figure out who sold what to whom.

Ruth Grandy solved this problem during the years when she worked for the Town of Westminister by copying over 30,000 (!) records by hand, and creating a searchable database.

Our Libraries, Butterfield and Westminister West, will now have copies of the database so that the information is easy for people to find. The Grandy Database will be available on the libraries' computers, making it much easier to research the history of homes and farms from 1780 - 1960.

Westminister Land Week will take place from Jan. 14 to 17 at the Butterfield Library, the Westminister West Library, and the Westminister West Congregational Church.

Ruth Grandy and Mary Scherbatskoy will give two workshops on how to use the database, and explain what it can do:

- Tuesday, Jan. 14 at 7 p.m.; Butterfield Library in the Westminister Institute
- Thursday January 16 at 7 p.m., the workshop will repeat in the Westminister West Library.

Westminister Land Week will also feature the early history of the West Parish and rediscovery of Crook's Mills, the original Westminister West village. Mary Scherbatskoy has been studying the site (known to Westminister historians Bob Haas, Randy Major and others) with the advice of local archeologists Chris Bergman and Gail Golec. She will give a talk on Wednesday Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. in the Westminister West Library on the Rediscovery of Crook's Mills

The exhibitions Village Treasure - the West Parish between the Wars and Crook's Mills - How to Find a Ghost Town will be on display all week from Tuesday, Jan. 14 through Friday, Jan. 17 in the Westminister West Congregational Church from 2pm to 6pm each day.

The Libraries and Church are pleased to make this part of our history available to all. Please drop in!



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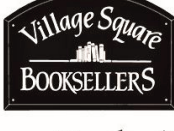
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JANUARY BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: SAVINGS BANK OF WALPOLE



THE SAVINGS BANK OF WALPOLE CELEBRATES 150 YEARS AS A COMMUNITY BANK

In an age where bigger often means better, Savings Bank of Walpole (SBW) stands as a refreshing exception. For 150 years, SBW has remained true to its roots, prioritizing customers and giving back to the community.

Founded in 1875 by a group of Walpole business leaders, the Bank was created with a clear mission: to serve their neighbors and foster the growth of the community.

The first branch opened its doors on October 1, 1875, on Westminster Street – adjacent from the Bank's current Village branch (a second branch is located at North Meadow Plaza). Today, SBW continues to operate as a mutual bank, meaning they answer to their customers, not shareholders. This commitment has shaped their approach to banking, where exceptional service greets every customer who walks through their doors.

Over the decades, SBW has grown alongside the Monadnock Region. With seven locations, it is the only bank in the area with this many branches – a true testament to its dedication to being accessible and local. Yet, despite its growth, the Bank has never lost sight of its founding values.

The Bank's connection to the community goes far beyond banking services. SBW is deeply involved in supporting local nonprofits, initiatives, and events.

One of its most beloved contributions is the annual Summer Concerts on the Green, which has become a cherished summer tradition in Walpole. For more than a decade, these family-friendly events have brought residents together to enjoy music, food, and the vibrant spirit of the Monadnock Region.

This year, SBW will celebrate its 150th anniversary with special events and activities to thank customers and the community for their trust and partnership over the years. While proud of its history, the Bank remains focused on the future.

"As we celebrate this milestone, we're reminded of what makes SBW unique – our unwavering commitment to our customers and community," says Mark Bodin, President of Savings Bank of Walpole. "We've been here for 150 years, and we're just getting started!"

To learn more about Savings Bank of Walpole's history, services, and anniversary events, visit walpolebank.com.

Christopher Hinds
LICSW, ACSW

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