



SUMMER 2020

WHISTLER: Alison Latham 387-5711 aliemae1@outlook.com

***“Be the bridge,
Reach in Peace toward the other side.”***
From Japanese Garden by Charmaine Aserappa

REFLECTIONS

“TRANSFORMATION”

By Susie Webster-Toleno, Pastor

Greetings, dear community.

When I last sat at my computer to write a reflection for the Whistler, it was February, and we were heading into the season of Lent. My writing that day used as a springboard Thomas Merton’s report of the mystical moment when he became aware of his deep love for all people despite the myth of separateness that we are taught at a very young age. As he wrote in Confessions of a Guilty Bystander, “In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the center of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realization that I loved all these people, that they were mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world.”

When I reflected on those words in February, I never imagined how our Spring would unfold. I never would have pictured us plunging into pandemic, living oddly physically isolated lives while connecting (sometimes deeply, sometimes exhaustingly) via technology. I also wouldn’t have predicted the turmoil we would all experience as a result of a specific act (the murder of George Floyd) and a systemic brokenness (the white supremacy that permeates our national culture whether we feel comfortable acknowledging it or not), though a strong argument could be made that any of us who were truly surprised by what we saw on the video that shocked the world were living in a

protected bubble of our own whiteness. If you’re not sure that’s true, consider asking a person of color in your life if their surprise matched yours. I suspect you’ll find that they were not surprised at all, though deeply saddened and angry.

Our congregation has been addressing our new reality as best as we can. We have attempted to support one another in this time of distancing, honoring the reality of the virus and loving one another by protecting each other through safe practices. As regards racism, I sense a shift in our internal dialogue. We have always been a congregation that has been willing to address and speak against the racism that we see in the world; through tender, difficult practice we are learning to acknowledge and seek to be healed of the internalized racism that lurks within us, as well. A group of us are gathering virtually with Robin Major, who is leading us in new ways of understand how racism has impacted even us, living as we do in a place without a great deal of visible racial diversity. We’re working together to uncover and undo our own subtle (and sometimes not so subtle) hidden assumptions, fears, and emotions around issues of race and the ways we have benefitted from the culture of white supremacy.

As we face the divisions in our country, whether those divisions be about how we should handle reopening our society in the midst of a still-active pandemic or about how we can truly cleanse our own hearts and our national heart from the evil of racism, we each are called to engage in new and challenging ways. As a church, I hope we can be moved by Merton’s vision; I hope we can be converted to love that goes beyond divisions. And yes, his mystical vision of the light emanating from all of the people he saw was a true conversion moment. It was a moment of transformation, and what we all know is that to be transformed, we have to let go of the old way. The death of the old way always and everywhere accompanies the birth of that which is new, and that’s why transformation is so frightening.

I don’t know what’s next for our village and our world as we go through the birth pangs that this age calls forth. I believe that change is possible, and that resurrection does happen to individuals and to communities. I hope that, like Merton, we’ll find ourselves overwhelmed with a sense of powerful, shining love for and radical kinship with all people. Let us support one another in the time of transformation with fearless constancy, a willingness to listen to unfamiliar voices, and reminders of the fact that through it all, we are never alone.

May it be so for you and for me.
Yours in resurrection faith,

Susie

REMEMBERING

Pia Rabin

When we played pretend,
my cousin and I,
in the green woods out back,
we always won,
the rustlers caught and jailed,
the cattle recovered,
the horse rode
who couldn’t be rode,
and Mom would call us
home to supper.

THE WHISTLE BLOWER

The death of former Westminister West resident **Arthur Westing**, on April 30, 2020, was unexpected but somehow appropriately set—as he and his wife Carol were resting after a walk on a trail they had helped to build at Wake Robin, the retirement community they joined in Shelburne, VT. Full obituaries in the Brattleboro Reformer and the Vermont Digger describe Arthur's long and productive life.



Here in the Whistler we'd note his contributions to Westminister West where he and Carol lived from 1966 to 1976, raising their two children who with Carol as teacher were part of the Community School. Arthur served on the Westminister Planning Board, wrote an early version of the Town Plan and represented Westminister on the Windham Regional Planning Commission.

Retiring to Putney in 1990, Arthur picked up his Westminister West connections, doing much of the crucial work of organizing

the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association, of which he and Carol were official founders. The thinking was a group effort; Arthur put the vision into words, drafting the original Charter as well as the Articles of Association and the first by-laws. He wrote its original forest management plan and finally became the first to write its history. His contributions to the Pinnacle Association were tremendous; and his knowledge and apparent love of our landscape was deep.

Photo: Rosalyn Shaoul Text: Libby Mills

Tyler Harlow and his girlfriend Erin spent the last three months sheltered at Amy Harlow's home in Westminister West. They are returning to Los Angeles to resume their work. Tyler has recently been spotted in the latest Taylor Swift video, The Man. It can be seen on YouTube, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqAJLh9wuZ0> He would love a West West T-shirt if there are any left in a large!!

Elena Tansley completed her Bachelor of Science in Clinical Health Studies at Ithaca College in May. She now has two years of graduate studies to earn her Doctorate in Physical Therapy.

Kyle Tansley won the Vermont Center for Ecostudies May 2020 Photo-observation of the month with a photo he submitted to Naturalist of an American Mink moving her kits from one den to another.

Seth Harlow is a police officer in Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard. He and his wife, Bonnie have a little boy named Gunner who is 3 years old. He also has two stepchildren, Cuyler and Christian.

Ryan Harlow works as an After School Program Coordinator in Central Vermont. He has a daughter named, Sonya who is 9 years old. They enjoy kayaking together and have spent a lot of time reading over FaceTime during the pandemic.

Primary elections take place August 11th. You can get an absentee ballot by contacting the Westminister Town Clerk, Ali Biglow,, at 722-4091. They should be sent in before July 28th.

Sheryl Miller is retiring after 39 years as an educator, 35 of them in the public schools, including 20 years with the Westminister Schools, 6 of those at the West School. Over the years, she taught K-6, sometimes 2 or 3 grades combined. After student teaching with Claire Oglesby at the West School in the early 80s, she said: "it was a pleasure to come back as a classroom teacher." Although she will miss working with kids, she feels it is a good time for this transition, as virtual teaching is not nearly as enjoyable as face to face interactions with the kids.

Coby James Levesque, who is 12, graduated from Westminister Center School on June 16th in a drive through ceremony. He plans to attend BF Middle School in the fall. He loves basketball, drawing, animation and dogs

From **Jeanne Bennett**: **Weeze** is a nurse at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston. She usually works in a Cardiac post op step down unit but during the Covid outbreak, her unit was converted to Covid care which she did for 6 weeks. **Henny** just received her PHD from Stamford University where she specialized in cancer biology. She and her husband, Alexander Kupers, will be moving to Toronto in July. Sander will join the mathematics department at the Univ of Toronto and Henny will be doing post doctorate work at the Univ of Toronto

There are 6 graduating seniors from Compass School that live in Westminister: **Ben Allaire** – (UVM), **Liam Mulholland** – (Champlain College), **Jared Atwood** –(UVM), **Sarah Atwood** – (UVM), **Noah Sherrill** – (UVM) and **Kiernon Galandak Cochran**

From **Rick Cowen**. I agree that gardening offers both hope and solace at this fraught moment! I sometimes joke that my therapist is Dr. John Deere. Here we are in a session.

Photo by Lois Barber



Vote! Important School Election on June 25 in Westminister. Absentee ballots are available from Town Hall.



From **Cass Morgan**: My sister gave me this bench years ago, when my granddaughters Magda and Abby were small. Now that they've both outgrown it I decided to restore it and donate it to the Library, Abby helped me replace several of the boards and together we stained the wood and put the whole thing back together. Now it's on the library grounds, where lots of young readers will get good use out of it for years to come. Photo of Cass Morgan with her granddaughter Abby Scharff

Vermont Tech is pleased to announce awards and honor society inductions. **Lucas Saunders**, has been recognized for Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society- Lucas is majoring in Construction Management. Phi Theta Kappa is a national honor society formed to recognize and encourage scholarship, academic excellence, leadership, and service among two-year college students. Requirements for candidacy are a 3.50 cumulative GPA, and working toward a VTC degree with a minimum of 12 credits completed at Vermont Tech.

From **Peter Lefcort**: Since May 20th my cell phone has gotten 70 live calls marketing Medicare plans, no company name. Within the first 10 hours from 8:00 am on the 20th to 6:00 pm I got 31 calls. I answered 3 live calls with one voicemail. I've spoken with the VT Attorney General, the VT Dept. of Insurance Regulation, Verizon, State Police and made complaints with the FCC and FTC through the Traced Act. I have my thoughts of the origin company that's doing this. If anyone has a problem such as mine and wishes to contact me. Peter at PO Box 125, Putney, Vt. 05346. Or email me lefcortp@verizon.net.

From **John Foster**: (with apologies to any unwilling witnesses). A first for the village...A World Naked Bike Ride event was held in the village on June 20th hosted by **Andrea Capron and myself**. Seven participants, in various stages of undress, rode. There was a lunch, first, then body painting for those who wanted such 'clothing' and the then the ride. The village supported the ride with Oona, Esmé and Finnegan Pucciarello creating wonderful signs giving motorists, the heads up, that they would encounter nude bikers ahead. The ride was to support your legal right to be naked in Vermont and to promote acceptance of all body types in a non-sexually context.

Westminster Cares has canceled this year's Garden Tour Fund Raiser. Although this event has sustained challenging weather including heat waves and downpours, this will be the 1st time the event has been cancelled since it started in 2002

VIRTUAL WILDFLOWER WALK TURNS INTO VIRTUAL ANIMAL AND BIRD SIGHTINGS

This year's Pinnacle Wildflower Walk was called off, but was turned into a virtual, interactive experience. Liz Bergstrom of Bobolink Communications had a great idea about how to make this work on WHPA's Facebook page. Folks were invited to submit photos of wildflowers they had seen. It was a successful run with many photos posted. Now we can continue a similar form of engagement with the public by posting weekly animal or bird sighting as we move into the summer.

Please submit a bit of information on your animal or bird of interest, and include a photo, if you have one, to Liz Bergstrom at lizhbergstrom@gmail.com.

Below are two photos sent in by Arthur Westing. Top is bloodroot and lower is spring beauty with trout lily.



WESTMINSTER WEST CHURCH SERVICES

Sunday worship begins at 10am – via ZOOM

To access Zoom go to our website, www.westminsterwest.org and it's at the top of the homepage.

THE CHURCH IS OPEN BUT THE BUILDING IS CLOSED

At a recent virtual meeting of the church Deacons and Trustees, some decisions were made about how we will worship together for the time being, given the restrictions that Covid-19 has placed on all gatherings of groups. The meeting covered a number of topics, but this is the upshot for how it pertains to the church and the wider community:

1. We WILL continue with Sunday morning services by Zoom for the foreseeable future, as many within our community have been finding those services to be meaningful and enriching, even though we all know they are not the same joyful worship that we have always before shared together. Until we are able to meet in person with confidence that we are not endangering anyone, we will maintain virtual ways of worshipping together.
2. We will NOT be opening the church building for public use at this time (church or otherwise) due to health concerns and our inability to assure safety with proper intensive sanitization between uses. This includes not using the bathrooms even if/when the outside grounds are open for use. We are a small church, and we have neither the personnel nor the funds to assure that sanitation is handled with the immediacy that scientists assure us is necessary.
3. Relative to #1 above ~ an alternative to Zoom: We know that Zoom worship services are not accessible to everyone, and further that there are those among us who do not feel that they meet their worshiping needs. After much discussion, it was agreed that we could try outdoor services (additional to the Zoom morning worship gatherings) to try to address the spiritual needs that are not being met by Zoom. The plan we are going to try out is this: starting in mid-July and going as long as feasible relative to the weather, we will hopefully offer twice-monthly outdoor services in the evening. These services will necessarily involve masks being worn, distance being maintained, and instrumental music (or possibly a solo singer, but definitely not congregational singing, as it has been shown again and again that congregate singing is a fast track for Covid-19 spread).

An Important Caveat: You'll note that I said *hopefully* we'll do this. That's because we agreed that we will only hold these services if conditions are as safe as we can imagine: specifically, the Deacons & Trustees agreed by vote that **the outdoor services will only happen if there are no Covid-19 cases in Windham County for 2 weeks prior to the service.** The Vermont Department of Health has been doing a good job of maintaining and publishing data on a daily basis, and we are committed to using the data to make our decisions. In addition, all state guidelines about acceptable numbers of participants, spacing and the like will be scrupulously followed. If at any point it becomes obvious that things are trending towards a less safe situation, we will immediately stop offering in person gatherings; truly, loving our neighbors is what Jesus named one of the two primary commandments, and if loving our neighbors means not meeting in person, that's what we will do.

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Due to our church building being closed for the time being, our pastor, Rev. Susie Webster-Toleno, is not holding on-site office hours. That said, she reserves Thursday afternoons for visits to people's homes or outdoor walks when requested, and appointments for other times can be made via email susiewt@gmail.com or phone call or text: (802-579-8356).

BUILDING USE: Tom Griffith 387-569

tgriffith@hilltopmontessori.org

DEACONS: Charlotte Gifford 387-4145

gifford@languagehead.com

TRUSTEES: Guy Payne 869-2600

Gpaynevt@gmail.com

WEB SITE: www.westminsterwest.org

INTERFAITH PRAYER CORNER and ONLINE PRAYER OPPORTUNITIES

Sometime over a decade ago, we spruced up the corner of the church that's to the far left as you enter the sanctuary. We were given a lovely menorah by Eshagh and Rose Shaoul, and later decorated it with a beautiful plaque bearing the words from the prophet Isaiah: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all people." (Isaiah 56:7)

Though our building is not open due to Covid-19, we still want our community to know we welcome all pray-ers and all kinds of prayers. On an at-least-weekly basis, Susie opens the church Facebook page to livestream prayers and reflections, and all are welcome to listen and send in prayer requests. (She usually starts prayers at 1:30 on Thursday, but sometimes other duties call her to delay. If you miss the live moment, you may send her prayers on the church Face Book page or via email: susiewt@gmail.com.)

MANNA OFFERING or HUNGER SUNDAY

The Second Sunday of each month is Hunger Sunday at the church. On this day we receive our monthly Manna Offering benefiting Our Place in Bellows Falls. Each dollar that is given can be used by them to purchase \$10 worth of food from the VT Food Bank. The deacons suggest that people consider offering the cost of one meal for their household. Donations can be made out to CCWW, with "Manna Offering for Our Place" in the memo line, and mailed to the church, 44 Church St..

AN ANXIOUS PERSON'S PRAYER

published in "An Ignatian Book of Days":

O Holy Spirit, give me stillness of soul in you.

Calm the turmoil within, with the gentleness of your peace.

Quiet the anxiety within, with a deep trust in you.

Heal the wounds of sin within, with the joy of your forgiveness.
Strengthen the faith within, with the awareness of your presence.

Confirm the hope within, with the knowledge of your strength.
Give fullness to the love within, with an outpouring of your love.

O Holy Spirit, be to me a source of light, strength, and courage
so that I may hear your call ever more clearly
and follow you more generously.

~by William Browning, OP

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
OF WESTMINSTER WEST, UCC
44 Church Street, Westminister West, VT 05346

June 18, 2020

Dear Neighbors and Friends,

*"Raindrops keep fallin' on my head..." WHAT?!? Wait!
Where's that water coming from?*

Luckily, we haven't reached that stage. The church roof still keeps the water out, but has shown signs of its age with the occasional shingle piece falling to the ground. The writing is on the ...well, ground. To avoid any disasters and even more costs we have decided to replace our 30 year old shingles with a standing seam roof.

Your ongoing support through the years (and our squirreling away of your donations) has made it possible for us to go ahead and schedule this huge and costly maintenance job. The church space provides so much for our community. We all have enjoyed the quiet peace of the sanctuary - the art show at the Fair comes to mind - or the raucous cacophony of a Village Harmony concert. Or perhaps you have enjoyed a Cabin Fever Supper or contra dance or met there with friends to stay fit or do the business of a local non-profit. The church is a vital community hub which, someday soon we all hope, will spring back to life. Please join me in making a donation to this project.

We thank you very much for contributing in past years, and request that you give again now. Please send a tax-deductible donation to the Congregational Church of Westminister West (or CCWW) at 44 Church Street, Westminister West, VT 05346, attention Barbara Rogers, Treasurer in the amount of \$500, \$240, \$100, \$50, \$25 or whatever other figure you feel moved to donate.

The Trustees of the Congregational Church
of Westminister West



Photo by Michael Wells from Tony Coven's property

Dear God

Thank you for this building,
With its warm pink walls
And high windows.
For its view of granite stones
And village houses.

For this simple, open space
That molds to joy or sorrow
Writing these memories into its silence.

Without a bell, we hear its call
And are drawn here with a mop,
A hammer, or a covered dish.

We rejoice in this throbbing place,
The heart of a town
Beating with the lives that flow
In and out of its doors.

Thank you for its persistent rebirthings
For its patience with labor pains
And aging discomfort --
A leaking roof,
A Stubborn oven door
A temperamental vacuum,
And clumsy folding chairs
That scratch and grate across its tender floors.

For ALL that is inexplicable and intangible
Yet makes us feel your presence and comfort here,
We thank you.

By Leslie Turpin, Spring 2001 West Parish Whistler

PINNACLE NEWS

WHPA is sad to say good-bye to retiring trustees, Jim Jordan, Susan Roman, Andy Toepfer, and Sarah Waldo after many years of dedicated service. We thank them for their countless hours of work and energy to ensure the fulfillment of our mission.

We welcome the following new trustees and are looking forward to working with them to further our work on the Pinnacle Ridgeline, Athens Dome, and the Bald Hill Reserve: Zachary Aldrich of Cambridgeport, Schuyler Bush of Bellows Falls, John P. Gregg of Westminister, Jay Maciejowski of Athens, Lisa Merton of Westminister, and Erin Rodgers of Brattleboro.

Due to the on-going concerns with regard to Covid-19, the July 12th Healing Walk with John Foster has been cancelled. The Holden trail parking area has been closed, as well as the cabin and the outhouse due to state guidelines on Covid 19. All other Pinnacle trails are open and we encourage you to get out and explore our trail system. Check our website at www.windmillhillpinnacle.org for updates on our programs starting in September or to look up other trails to visit.

TIME TO CLEAN UP YOUR BOOKSHELF



Clean up your book shelf in order to free up space for this year's book sale. You end up with new reading material and help your local library by donating those books you know you are never going to read again. It's a win win situation. Please make sure your books are clean and in readable shape. We do not take textbooks or encyclopedias. Bring your books to the Westminster West Library and leave them in a box by the back door. This year's book sale will be Saturday September 12th.

A PANDEMIC PRAYER

O Lord, to whom hygiene belongeth:
Hear the cry of thy servant's when they call.
For we lie in self isolation:
And there is nothing on TV.
For lo, the nation is adrift:
The princes of the people have cast us from the pub.
Thy people do run about the shops in panic:
They stockpile all the loo roll and the bakèd beans . . .

O Lord who hast now delivered us from a visit by the in-laws

ALAS, COMMUNITY FAIR IS CANCELED

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and per order of Governor Scott, we sadly will not be able to gather in-person for the annual Westminster West Community Fair in September. This event is a wonderful opportunity to gather together as friends and neighbors, honor members of the community, have fun and share talents with each other. It also provides a significant financial contribution to the annual budget for keeping our village church and community gathering center in good repair and available. The fair usually raises about \$8,000!

So, in light of that, members of the Community Fair planning committee will be organizing alternative events that we hope will provide safe opportunities to stay connected, while also raising some very-much needed funds! The next issue of the Whistler (August-ish), will likely list a number of these opportunities, so stay tuned!!

In the meantime, we do hope to have virtual options for 2 aspects of the fair. If you have item(s) or services that you might be able to contribute to a virtual silent auction or raffle that you think would sell for at least \$10.00, please contact Alison Latham at alimae1@outlook.com or call (802) 387-5711 with a brief description and, when possible, a photograph of your items. Someone will get back to you with appropriate next steps. We will miss seeing you, but better to keep you healthy.

LOCKDOWN

Richard Hendrick, OFM (Order of Friars Minor)
March 13th 2020

Yes there is fear.
Yes there is isolation.
Yes there is panic buying.
Yes there is sickness.
Yes there is even death.
But,
They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise
You can hear the birds again.
They say that after just a few weeks of quiet
The sky is no longer thick with fumes
But blue and grey and clear.
They say that in the streets of Assisi
People are singing to each other
across the empty squares,
keeping their windows open
so that those who are alone
may hear the sounds of family around them.
They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland
Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.
Today a young woman I know
is busy spreading fliers with her number
through the neighbourhood
So that the elders may have someone to call on.
Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome
and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary
All over the world people are slowing down and reflecting
All over the world people are looking at their neighbours
in a new way
All over the world people are waking up to a new reality
To how big we really are.
To how little control we really have.
To what really matters.
To Love.
So we pray and we remember that
Yes there is fear.
But there does not have to be hate.
Yes there is isolation.
But there does not have to be loneliness.
Yes there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes there is sickness.
But there does not have to be disease of the soul
Yes there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

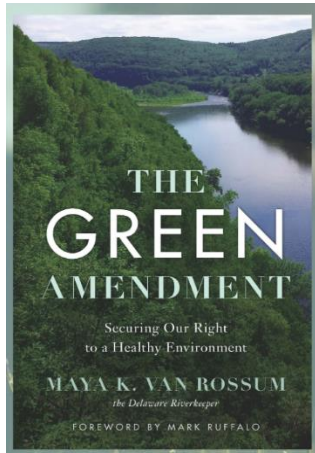
The Westminster West Library book discussion group will meet on Monday July 13th at 7pm via zoom to discuss "The Underground Railroad" by Colson Whitehead.

GREEN AMENDMENT ZOOM MEETING JUNE 26th

On June 26th at 5pm, join the Living Earth Action Group in welcoming Vermont Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman to join activist, attorney, author and founder of the Green Amendment movement, Maya van Rossum for a virtual presentation and discussion on environmental rights. Learn how you can be a part of the effort in Vermont to protect your inalienable rights to pure water, clean air, a stable climate and healthy environments. Maya will be speaking about her book, *The Green Amendment: Securing Our Right to a Health Environment* and the growing efforts to secure constitutional level protection of environmental rights for all the people of Vermont.

The founder of the Green Amendment movement, a dynamo named **Maya van Rossum**, lives in Pennsylvania, a state that passed a Green Amendment in the 1970s. It was not used until van Rossum, who is the Delaware Riverkeeper, and others activated it to stop fracking. They have been hugely successful! An amendment, says van Rossum, is much stronger than environmental laws that can easily be changed or ignored by different administrations. Amendments take longer to pass (three years?) but are stable and virtually permanent.

Register on Zoom at <https://bit.ly/VTGreenAmendment-LEAG>. You can also direct people to our [website event page](#) or share our [Facebook event](#). I hope many of you will join this call and learn about a dynamic, growing movement to add a Green Amendment to State Constitutions that will protect our environment. This movement is already happening in **18 states**, including Vermont. You can find out about it at www.forthegenerations.org



ECOPSYCHOLOGY

ECOPSYCHOLOGY invites you to read this special issue dedicated to bringing forward insights from wisdom traditions, such as those from Indigenous peoples, and those from contemporary science, to more clearly inspire and guide actions that care for the Earth. The issue was co-edited by two leaders in their fields. **Cheryl Charles** is Co-Founder, President, and CEO Emerita of the Children & Nature Network, and an educator, author, and long-time advocate for connecting people of all ages with nature. **Gregory Cajete** is a scholar, educator, author and elder in his Indigenous tribe, Tewa, and served for many years as director of Native American Studies at the University of New Mexico.

Note: there are articles from David Mulholland and Cheryl Charles, plus Larry Littlebird who spoke here last year.

Special Issue on Wisdom Traditions, Science and Care for the Earth

Guest Editors:

Cheryl Charles *Children & Nature Network*
Gregory Cajete *University of New Mexico*

Enjoy free access through July 12, 2020:

To read an article press Control and click on any link

[Wisdom Traditions, Science and Care for the Earth: Pathways to Responsible Action](#)

Cheryl Charles and Gregory A. Cajete [Read Now](#)

[How Traditional Tribal Perspectives Influence Ecosystem Restoration](#)

Jonathan W. Long, Frank K. Lake, Ron W. Goode, and Benrita Mae Burnette [Read Now](#)

[Weaving the Dream](#)

Greg Sarris [Read Now](#)

[Water-Womb-Land Cosmologic: Protocols for Traditional Ecological Knowledge](#)

Patrisia Gonzales [Read Now](#)

[Harvesting Good Medicine: Internalizing and Crystallizing Core Cultural Values in Young Children](#)

Angela Lunda (Koogak'aax) and Carie Green [Read Now](#)

[Indigenous Nature Connection: A 3-Week Intervention Increased Ecological Attachment](#)

Angela M. Kurth, Darcia Narvaez, Reilly Kohn, and Andrea Bae [Read Now](#)

[Environmental Views of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians](#)

Erin Hines, Brad Daniel, and Andrew J. Bobilya [Read Now](#)

[In Our Seasons of Living](#)

Larry Littlebird [Read Now](#)

[Trees in Early Irish Law and Lore: Respect for Other-Than-Human Life in Europe's History](#)

Tina R. Fields [Read Now](#)

[Experience Oneness with Creation: The Pathway to Universal Consciousness](#)

Joseph Cornell [Read Now](#)

[I Am One-Drop, Not-Enough, Walking Through "Not-My-Land"](#)

David W. Mulholland [Read Now](#)

[Indigenous Knowledge and Techno-Scientific Modernity: "Hierarchical Integration" Reconsidered](#)

Jonathan Coope [Read Now](#)

IMPORTANT BALLOT INFORMATION FOR WESTMINSTER, ATHENS AND GRAFTON VOTERS

Public Elementary School Students in Westminister, Athens and Grafton Special School Election June 25, 2020

A special election by Australian ballot of voters in Westminister, Athens and Grafton is scheduled for June 25, 2020. **District school board members urge townspeople to vote Yes on the budget and related articles.**

Westminister voters may vote by absentee ballot or in person at the Westminister Fire House on June 25. Absentee ballots may be requested by phone, mail, or email. Athens and Grafton voters may also request absentee ballots. In-person Athens voters will meet in front of Town Hall. Grafton in-person voting will take place at the Grafton Fire Station.

Here are a few responses to frequently asked questions about this special election.

What about the impacts of COVID-19? All school board members are deeply concerned about the current and potential damaging impacts of COVID-19 on our schools' children and families. It is not yet clear what school will look like for our communities' children in the fall. This budget, while conservative and reduced from the previous year, still allows for full support for educational services and programming with no reductions in staff or programs.

Is this a level funded budget? No, this budget is reduced by \$167,458.72 from the previous year's budget. No personnel or program cuts were made. **Was this budget developed in collaboration with the school principals?** Yes.

Were additional cuts recommended by the school principals? No. Significant cuts were made to the Athens-Grafton school budget last year. This year the Westminister principal was asked by administration to see if he could cut \$200,000 from the budget. It was not the principal's recommendation to make those cuts which would have severely impacted programs for students. The board unanimously approved the budget recommended by the school principals.

Did the Westminister principal suddenly decide to resign? No. The Westminister principal, Doug Kussius, told the school board on February 3 that he had an unexpected opportunity to interview to be the elementary school principal in the Vermont town where he and his family live with their young children. Were that job offered to him, he would no longer have a commute to Westminister of more than one hour each way. The school board learned on February 20 that he was offered, and accepted, the job in his home community. Plans occurred immediately to find a new principal.

Who is the new Westminister Community Schools principal? Liz Harty, principal of the Athens-Grafton Elementary School, was offered a lateral transfer to become principal of the Westminister School. Liz is a Westminister resident with children of her own in the school. She is delighted to serve in this role in the town where she lives, while holding great affection for the students, teachers, and community members in Athens and Grafton.

IMPORTANT BALLOT INFORMATION FOR VOTERS IN WESTMINSTER, ATHENS AND GRAFTON WINDHAM NORTHEAST UNION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Special School Election June 25, 2020

By Jack Bryar, Chair, and Cheryl Charles, Vice Chair, Schl Bd

The text of each of the ballot articles appears below. The Note that follows each Article is explanatory information from the Board and does not appear on the ballot.

ARTICLE 1 To elect the following members of the district from among its qualified voters, to serve a term beginning July 1, 2020 and concluding June 30, 2021 – or until the Supreme Court of the State of Vermont reverses the order of the consolidation order of the State Board of Education, whichever comes first: -Moderator -Clerk -Treasurer

Note: Candidates for each role are listed on the ballot.

ARTICLE 2 Shall the voters of this District note for the record, that this proceeding is being undertaken under protest; that it continues to support the "Athens" lawsuit seeking to overturn the Vermont State Board of Education Report and Consolidation Order of November 20, 2018; that no actions taken at this meeting are intended as an affirmation or agreement with the legality of that order.

Note: The case is in the hands of the members of the Vermont Supreme Court.

ARTICLE 3 Shall the assembled voters of the Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District appropriate the sum of \$6,792,186.51 (Six million, seven hundred ninety-two thousand, one hundred eighty-six dollars and fifty-one cents) which is the amount that the Board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing year? It is estimated that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in education spending of \$18,734 (Eighteen thousand, seven hundred thirty-four dollars) per "equalized pupil" under the current state formula for calculating this figure.

Note: This amount was unanimously approved by the school board to take to the voters, with recommendations from the school principals, on February 20, 2020. The total budget is \$167,458.72 less than the 2019 – 2020 budget.

Even with some cost savings, at a time when health insurance costs have risen, the budget still includes full staffing, the popular Studio Y program that serves students in all three towns, and a full-time principal for Athens-Grafton as well as for Westminister. It also includes funding for paraprofessionals hired at the local level.

ARTICLE 4 Shall the Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District apply the sum of \$100,000 (One hundred thousand dollars) from fiscal year FY19 surplus to create a Tuition Reserve Fund to be used to cover allowable variations in charges incurred when tuitioning our District's Middle school children, and to authorize the Board to expend such funds?

Note: A difference of only a few students can cause deficit spending; this is a precautionary measure.

ARTICLE 5 Shall the Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District apply the sum of

\$24,166 (Twenty-four thousand, one hundred sixty-six dollars) from the fiscal year FY19 surplus to create a Capital Reserve Fund to be used to deal with building, facilities or unanticipated capital expenses, and to authorize the Board to expend such funds?

Note: This is a precautionary measure; funds would not be spent if not warranted.

ARTICLE 6 Shall the voters of the Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District authorize the District, through its Board, to borrow funds, as needed, consistent with the budget as approved, on the credit of the District for its current expenses, in anticipation of tax revenues and receipt of money due from state aid and other sources?

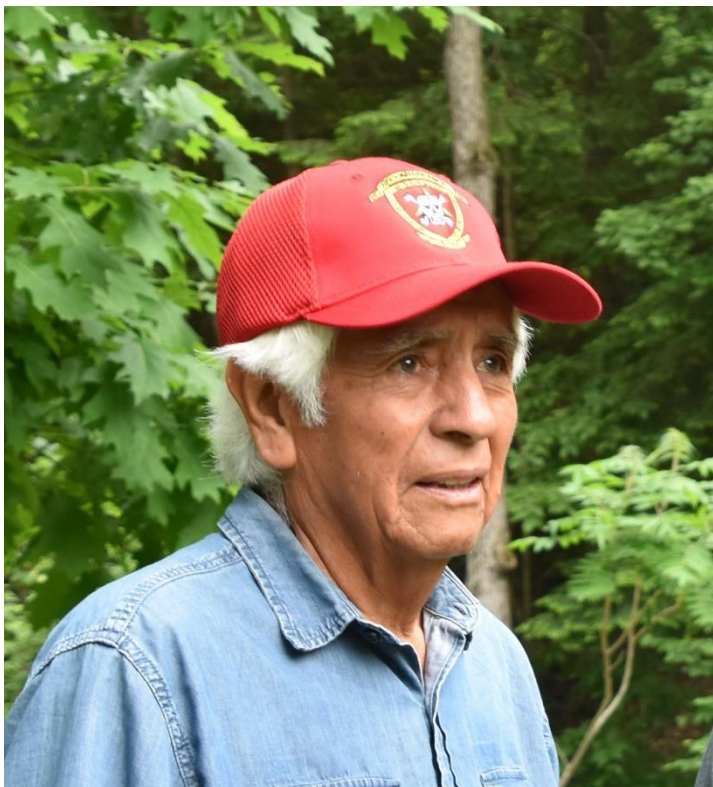
Note: This is customary language.

ARTICLE 7 Notwithstanding the objections of the Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District and its constituent School Boards to the forced consolidation of the Westminster, Athens, and Grafton School Districts; and without prejudicing the right of those districts to resume operations in the event of favorable court decisions, and then to modify or replace these terms of office or any provision of the Interim Articles of Agreement at their discretion, voters are asked to elect Board members of the district; to serve either for the terms stated, or until the State Board of Education's Consolidation Order is vacated by the Supreme Court of the State of Vermont.

Note: The full list of candidates appears on the ballot. Voters in all three towns are to vote for board members from each of the towns.

ARTICLE 8 Shall the District defer annual compensation for Board members for the year, beginning July 1, 2020 in light of the state of the local economy and the medical emergency?

Note: The Directors voted unanimously to take no compensation for their service during this coming budget year.



**Larry Littlebird, one of Writers in *ECOPSYCHOLOGY*
Photo by Cheryl Charles**