



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 4

WINDHAM, VERMONT

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2005

Support democracy at its best

by Bill Koutrakos

Registered voters of Windham will soon have opportunities to express their views. If you are not already on the Voter's Check List, you are encouraged to register at the Town Office on Windham Hill Road next to the elementary school. Office hours are Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

High School Budget

Leland & Gray Union High School's annual meeting will be on Tuesday, February 1 at 7:30 PM at the high school. Voters of Windham can vote on the budget on the following day, Wednesday, February 2 from 10:00 AM until 7:00 PM by Australian ballot at the Town Office. You may also vote by early or absentee ballot. To participate in this vote, you must be on the Check List as of January 24.

Annual Town Meeting

Town Meeting will be Tuesday, March 1, commencing at 10:00 AM at the Town Meeting House. A warning will be available to all voters approximately 10 days before the meeting with the information and reports to be covered. To vote at Town Meeting, you must be present and you must be on the Voter's Check List as of noon on February 21.

Town Meeting is very important, and the pot luck lunch

is second to none. All townspeople are invited to attend and please bring a main dish, salad, vegetable, pasta, or dessert. Coffee, tea, dishes, silverware, and napkins are provided by your donation of \$1.00 per person.

Petitions for Town Meeting

If you have an issue of community concern that you want addressed at Town Meeting, you must place it on the agenda as an article. Issues cannot be brought forth from the floor.

To have an article placed on the agenda, you first must circulate a petition that is signed by 5% of the town's registered voters. At the time of this writing, Windham has 300 listed voters, meaning 15 people are needed to sign a petition. All completed petitions must be submitted to Town Clerk Carol Merritt no later than Thursday, January 20.

The statement on the petition must be worded exactly the same as the article to be voted upon at Town Meeting. It must relate to Windham's residents and be of a serious nature. Wording should be clear and concise and should state an action that can be enacted. For help with the proper language to use, call the Secretary of State's office at 800-439-8683.

Further Information

For those who may wish further clarification or information, please do not hesitate to call our Town Clerk Carol Merritt at 874-4211.



Valley Cares plans new housing for West River Valley seniors

by Edith Serke

In Windham, like in the rest of the state and the country, we are aging. There is no use denying that. While nationally, the over 65 population is expected to increase by 50% over the next 20 years, in Vermont, projections are for a 69% increase. In this area of the county, there was an 18.3% increase during the last decade.

While all surveys indicate that older persons prefer to stay in their own homes as they age, there comes a time

when it is more and more difficult, both physically and financially, to maintain a home in a rural area like Windham. So, it should come as welcome news that an elderly housing project is in the development stages in Townshend, under the sponsorship of Grace Cottage Hospital.

More than a million dollars have been awarded by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to construct 24 units of

affordable independent housing on a 9.8 acre site near the center of Townshend and Grace Cottage Hospital. The land and a house on the property were donated to the project.

Plans include the development of another 28 units of assisted living, where elders who need assistance with activities of daily living can be safely accommodated. Some of these units will be subsidized by Medicaid, and

(continued on next page)

Valley Cares plans new housing for seniors

(continued from page 1)

some will pay market rate rents. The current Adult Day Services Program at Grace Cottage will move to the new housing site, as will the Valley Health Council. Heins Home, which currently provides residential care to 14 persons, will become part of the new Assisted Living Facility.

The new not-for-profit entity, Valley Cares, Inc., which will operate the project, plans to provide additional

services to the elderly of the West River Valley, which includes Windham. These include congregate meals, social, educational, and health services, as well as care management for persons who need assistance to arrange services in order to remain independent as long as possible.

Construction of the first phase, the independent housing units, is expected to begin sometime early next summer.

The next several months will be spent working on securing additional funding for the project. Public informational meetings have been held in Townshend, Newfane, and Grafton, and the plans have been well received.

For additional information, contact Bob Crego, project developer at Grace Cottage Hospital, or Edith Serke in Windham, a member of the board of directors of Valley Cares, Inc.

State representatives send letters of thanks

I would like to thank the voters of the Windham 4 District (Athens, Brookline, Grafton, Rockingham, Windham, and a portion of north Westminster) for their support on Nov. 2. I am honored by the trust you have placed in me and will work hard for you.

I want to thank all of my supporters and volunteers for the hard work they did. I want to especially thank my husband, Alan, and son, Ben for their support and patience.

I encourage you to contact me with your thoughts, ideas, or concerns. I can be reached at 1612 Old Cheney Rd., Windham, VT 05359, by phone at 802-874-4182, or by email at hparwel@sover.net. During the legislative session starting in January, I can be reached Tuesday through Friday at the State House at 115 State St., Drawer 33, Montpelier, VT 05633-5201, by phone at 1-800-322-5616, and by email at cpartridge@leg.state.vt.us.

Thanks again for your support.

Sincerely,

Rep. Carolyn W. Partridge

Thank you very much to the people of the Windham 4 towns of Athens, Brookline, Grafton, Rockingham, part of North Westminster and Windham for your support for state representative in the November 2nd general election.

Thank you also to those who donated their time, talents and energy to the effort. Many thanks to my family, friends and employer without whose help and understanding it would be difficult to experience success. I truly appreciate the confidence and trust you place in me and will do my best to represent and serve you.

Do not hesitate to contact me (802-463-3094 or obie@leg.state.vt.us or 72 Atkinson Street, Bellows Falls, VT 05101-1321) with your questions, concerns, ideas or problems regarding state government. Together we govern.

Thanks again.

Regards,

Michael J.

Obuchowski

Be warm, eat well, & support our Meeting House

Need a nice warm sweatshirt or a great cookbook? You can buy either one or both with all sales benefitting the Windham Meeting House.

The sweatshirts commemorate the bicentennial of the Meeting House, built in 1802. All are size XL, so if you're small, there's plenty of room for layers underneath, and if you're not so small, they're a perfect fit as are. They come in two colors, grey and white, and are 95% cotton and 5% polyester. The discounted price: \$15.

The cookbooks contain recipes from Windham residents and include many delicious ideas. If you're tired of same old meals, why not try some of your neighbors favorite foods? The price: \$10.

The sales are offered by the Friends of the Meeting House, a group dedicated to preserving our historic building.

Both items are on sale at the Town Office. Supplies are limited.



We extend warm greetings to these new property owners:

Thomas S. & Judith J. Baronsky
James Graham Jr. & Carol Diette
Scott & Donna Olsen
Sarah E. & William S. Roberts
William B. Sepe
Alan Zanetti

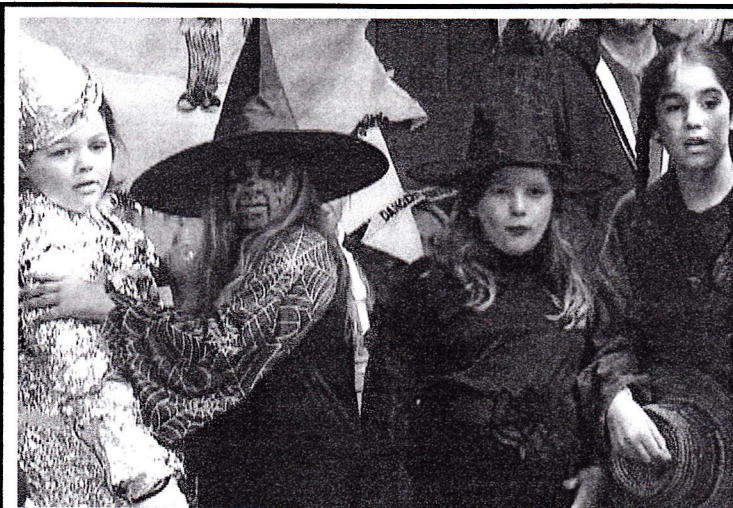
Leland & Gray space examined

Issues related to space at Leland & Gray Union High School will be the focus of a meeting on Wednesday, January 5 at 7:00 PM. You are invited to learn more about the school's needs and to share your visions and concerns for the future of Leland & Gray.

The L&G School Board appointed a citizens' ad hoc committee to review space needs at the school. In June 2004, after 18 months of reviewing educational programs and standards, the committee's recommendations

included the following needs: additional gymnasium space, student computer access, parking and circulation improvements, auditorium space, small group instructional space, and teacher work space.

The school board has hired a consulting team to develop a long-term plan for the facility. Your comments at the January 5 meeting will be used by the current citizens' advisory board to create a facility that best serves the community.



Ernie Friedl's photo captured "characters" at the Windham Fire Department's annual Halloween Party. They are (left to right) Becca Clay, Crystal Clay, Olivia Reilly, and Kayla Farace.

Stratton Foundation supports school

On November 3, 2004 at Windham Elementary School's well attended Open House, Glenn Boynton of the Stratton Foundation presented a sizeable check to the very grateful new principal, Roberta Stradling.

Dan Reilly, a parent of two students at Windham, applied for funds from the Foundation in October 2004. Dan decided to help out primary grade teacher Sally Newton in her quest to get the whole school on cross-country skis.

Mr. Boynton, in his short comments after presenting the check, solicited new members for the Stratton Foundation, noting with a smile that there were very few members hailing from the Windham community.

A group of local residents and employees of Stratton Mountain founded the Stratton Foundation in 1996. Its mission is to enhance the quality of life and create a sense of community in Southern Vermont. The foundation seeks members, creates events and programs, solicits contributions, and distributes grants to nonprofit organizations in the community.

Many thanks go to all the individuals and organizations that contributed to the funding of the cross-country ski program at Windham Elementary. Due to the leadership of Sally Newton, the fund-raising efforts of Dan Reilly, and the generosity of local residents, every student is now able to cross-country ski!



WINDHAM NEWS & NOTES

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Acknowledgments

Thanks to all who provided articles and photos – their names are noted with their submissions

Thanks also to our advertisers.
Additional ads are welcomed.

Submissions

Windham News & Notes
welcomes submissions.

Send articles and signed "letters to the editors" of 100 to 300 words to the address below.
We prefer emailed submissions.

Next deadline

February 12, 2005

Windham News & Notes

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Windham, VT 05359

802-874-4874

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Helen feeds Windham, body and soul

by Mary McCoy

The crackling of a dispatch radio interrupts the peace in Helen George's living room. It's not what one expects in the lovely home of this grey-haired, Boston-born lady, but then Helen is no ordinary woman.

She volunteered to relay messages to Rodney and Bill, Windham's road crew. When one is working in South Windham and the other in the north, they communicate through Helen, whose home on Abbott Road is in the middle. Helen also helps with 911 by calling the road crew if someone needs to be plowed out for rescuing.

For 27 years Helen has served on Windham's select board. When she began, she knew nothing about roads, which is a major focus of the board's work. She took a course humorously called "Roads Scholar," and was the first woman in Vermont to attend it. She says, "After that I could keep up. I learned things like what type of gravel to buy, which matters, because we have so much clay in our soil."

Helen began serving Windham when she joined the planning board in 1975, not long after moving here. She was in the kitchen during town meeting two years later when someone said, "We women never know what's going on. Helen why don't you join the select board?" She did, becoming the first woman ever to serve on Windham's select board.

Frequently cooking for others, Helen spends a lot of time in kitchens. At the annual BBQ of the Windham Community Organization, she prepares and serves baked beans. She also hosts that group's monthly meetings. "My house is in the center of town, and I love to see people and bake for them."

Helen is an original member of the WCO which began more than 20 years ago. "We wanted to help people, especially in the winter when there are problems paying for the heat or rent or when kids need hats and mittens."

Diana Bauts describes her friend Helen as "gentle and caring." The two like to trade recipes on the phone and shop together. "She's an all-around good lady," Diana said. "A truly nice



person. She's devoted to her family, and they're devoted to her."

Helen has three children, including a daughter in Londonderry. Her granddaughter, Megan Peters, lives nearby on Abbott Road, along with husband Jeremy and Helen's three great-grandchildren. Called "Nana," Helen babysits every work day. "I thoroughly enjoy it!" she said.

Bob, Helen's late husband, was a commander in the Air Force, and they lived all over the U.S. and Europe, moving every three years. Helen acted as big sister or mother to the wives of the crew, sharing her experience in cooking and child care. Although she enjoyed military life, she missed having a permanent place to call home.

In the 1960s, Bob came to Windham on a hunting trip, returning to tell Helen it was a beautiful town that she would love. After Helen visited here too, they bought property. At first it was just a place to escape to in the summer. But before long, they put down roots, literally. "We started a garden," Helen said, "and it was wonderful to be somewhere long enough to see things grow."

But that wasn't all she liked about Windham. "It's was a very friendly town. The old timers were wonderful to us. I loved their dry sense of humor and the way they lived on what they grew. People seemed content, never complaining, always seeing the good side of things. It's still that way."

Helen credits the people of Windham with consistently demonstrating positive qualities, including the ability to take a joke. Yet she has seen the town change in other ways. "A long time back we wanted to have 100 voters. Now we have 300." There were also two new town offices, a new dam on Burbee Pond, and an expanded town library.

The biggest changes relate to the roads. Windham Hill Road was paved section by section over the course of eight years, as money allowed. This made it possible for residents to get around during mud season. More recently, Highway 121 was re-paved after the flooding in 2003.

When Helen speaks of these accomplishments, she praises the others involved. She says we're lucky to have Rodney and Bill as our road crew. Bev Carmichael has really helped the library. The select board works well because Walter Woodruff is great and Margaret Dwyer is wonderful. Town Clerk Carol Merritt keeps everything running smoothly.

What do others say about her? "She's smart, very conscientious, and a delight to be around," says Carol. "I've rarely seen her get irritated. Even then, she's polite in her wording."

Is there anything Helen George would fight without compromise? Yes, replacing our Town Meeting with the Australian ballot. She explained, "Town meeting is the one time we get to see each other in the winter, and of course we have our potluck lunch. We like to eat together in Windham, and I love that."

What's in your water?

by Marcia Clinton

Water can contain naturally occurring impurities, or it can become contaminated by human activities such as the improper use of fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides; improperly built or poorly sited septic systems; leaking underground storage tanks; and improper disposal of wastes. Consequently, regular testing of all drinking water supplies is essential to assure human health and safety.

The Vermont Department of Health recommends the following testing schedule for private water supplies: Total coliform bacterial test – every year; inorganic chemical test – every 5 years; gross alpha radiation screening

test – every 5 years.

Kits to evaluate your water are available through the Department of Health Laboratory. They offer the following:

Total Coliform Bacteria (Kit A) \$14 – Coliform bacteria are a large group of soil and intestinal bacteria that can be a sign of water contamination. These bacteria do not necessarily cause illness, but can indicate the presence of other disease-causing organisms.

Inorganic Chemical Test (Kit C) \$90 – This test determines levels of arsenic, chloride, copper, hardness, iron, lead, manganese, nitrate, sodium

and uranium in drinking water. In addition to this, if young children are drinking the water, fluoride levels should also be measured. Inorganic chemicals can create nuisance problems and, in some cases, cause illness.

Gross Alpha Test (Kit RA) \$45 – The gross alpha test is a screen for natural mineral radioactivity in water. While water normally has some radioactivity, this screening will help determine if the levels are high enough to warrant additional testing.

To order water-testing kits, call 800- 660-9997. They will take VISA or MasterCard credit cards with telephone orders.

Library offers something for everyone

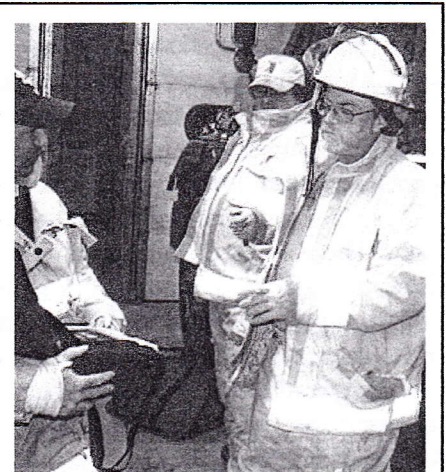
by Beverly Carmichael, town librarian

The Windham Town Library continues to be open every Wednesday afternoon from 3:00 to 5:00 PM for the convenience of our patrons. We add new titles to our collection on an ongoing basis.

We recently added a book called, "Vermont Genealogy," printed in 2003 by the Genealogical Society of Vermont. This book lists in alphabetical order the names on the stones in three of Windham's cemeteries: North Windham Cemetery, West Windham Cemetery, and John Woodburn Cemetery.

Our reading group continues to meet the first Wednesday of every month. We are always happy to have new readers join us. Our knitting class meets the second and third Wednesday of the month, followed by a writing group on the fourth Wednesday. Nancy Dyke is our writing instructor. These classes are library sponsored, free of charge, and all are welcome.

Again I will ask you to return any overdue library books during these library hours, and please take a minute to look over our many new selections.

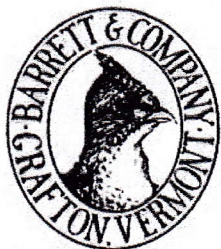


Fire Crew learns defibrillator

John Boynton discusses the new defibrillator with Jeremy Peters and Nathan Boynton. All members of the Windham Volunteer Fire Department are being well trained in how the equipment should be used. Photo by Bill Koutrakos

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New holiday tradition lights up Windham

The first annual Tree Lighting & Carol Sing, held at the Windham Meeting House, was a huge success. More than 60 people enjoyed hot chocolate, cold cider and homemade cookies. The children chose the carols they wanted to sing, then the group

put on their coats and went outside to light the Christmas tree with a full moon and clear skies above. It was awesome! Many thanks to Bob Kehoe of Sparky Electric for putting the lights on the tree and to Michael Longo for maintaining the tree on a yearly basis.

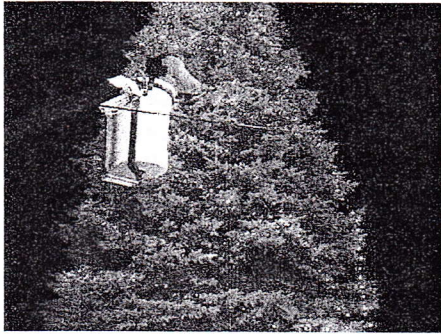


Photo by Bill Koutrakos



Photo by Beverly Carmichael

Left: Bob Kehoe places lights on the tree. *Right:* Adults and children sang carols, including (left to right) Kathy Campbell, Lilith Dyke, Jennifer Campbell, Joey Campbell, Megan Peters, and MacKenzie Peters.

Remembering My Christmas Past

by Margaret Woodruff

I am working on my 80th Christmas this year, but I still vividly remember some from long ago. Going back to the early 1930's, when we were still in the worst of the Depression, the children from the South Windham School used to gather in the vestry of the South Windham Baptist Church. The women of the Ladies Aid group would work with us to make some treats from popcorn. The children would string popped corn and make garlands from paper strips to decorate the Christmas tree inside the church. And the women would fill cheese cloth bags with popcorn.

In some years, if someone was rich enough, they would buy some walnuts, and then each bag would have one walnut in them. And in very good times, we would each get an orange. Now that may not sound like much, but it was a very big treat for us, and something we never had at other times of the year, not like today. It only happened when someone could scratch up the money for them.

In some years there would be a collection of some ten-cent toys and little trinkets, and then they would draw names to see who would get them. I remember being very disappointed one year, when my name wasn't called. Then when I went back to school after Christmas, there was a little comb set, sitting in my desk at school, which was a wonderful surprise!

When school closed, the school children would put on a Christmas play. After it was over, Santa would come and hand out our presents – the bags of popcorn, sometimes with a walnut, sometimes with an orange, etc. Mind you, popcorn was not exactly a treat for my family. We grew corn and had big bowls of popcorn for our Sunday supper almost every

week. Sometimes we added milk and ate it like cereal.

At home, we didn't always have a tree. I remember being given a choice by my parents – did I want a tree or my stocking behind the stove? I would usually get a \$1.00 present, something like a dress or slippers, and it wasn't a surprise, since I was always asked to choose before the money was spent.

For many years, I wanted a sled in the worst way, but sleds cost too much. I pestered and pestered, and finally my parents said that a neighbor owed them \$3.00, and if I could get the money from that person they would buy me my sled. Well, I went right to that house and asked for the money. Funny thing was, I got it! My parents were only half serious when they said that, they never thought I would really get the money, but I did, and they kept their word, and I got my sled, and they were rather embarrassed!

The sled was really long, about six feet from end to end. We used it in the fields and on the roads, since there were very few cars. Back then the roads were still rolled, as there were no snow plows. You could play on the road with no fear, since most people who did have cars would put them away for the winter. Those narrow tires on Model Ts, which were the most common kind of cars back then, just couldn't be on the snowy roads, not like cars today.

We didn't have a special Christmas Eve or Christmas Day service at the church, we only had service on Sundays. And while we didn't have much, I think we probably enjoyed our school Christmas vacation just as much as kids do today, and I know we treasured our small presents for the rare treats they were.

Are you a couch potato?

by Mary McCallum (Council on Aging for Southeastern Vermont)

Are you a senior whose exercise consists of walking to the car, the mailbox, and the bathroom? Nearly 45% of elders will answer yes.

Physical inactivity is a national epidemic among all ages, but for our nation's 35 million seniors it cause decreases in energy, strength and self-esteem which can lead to debilitation and depression. Sedentary living also contributes to diabetes, heart disease, high blood pressure, arthritis, obesity and osteoporosis.

Yet even a moderate exercise program can bring improvements to all these conditions. And it is never too late to start one. Physicians recommend regular exercise for increased flexibility, bone strengthening, weight loss, and cardiovascular fitness.

It is the heart that health experts tell us most needs to be exercised regularly. Cardiovascular fitness can be achieved through a daily habit of 20 minutes of vigorous activity, 30

minutes of moderate activity, or 60 minutes of light activity.

Aerobic exercise makes the heart and lungs work at a higher rate to supply oxygen to muscles. Examples of aerobic activities are brisk walking, jogging, swimming, biking, dancing and cross-country skiing. More moderate types of aerobic activity include yoga, calisthenics, Tai Chi, water aerobics and even vacuuming. If your schedule won't permit 30 minutes of solid exercise, the same benefits can be gained through several short periods that add up to a half hour.

Every day include some stretching exercises. When done consistently, stretching allows you more freedom of movement in all your daily activities. Stretch slowly, hold for up to 30 seconds, then relax. As you become more comfortable doing stretches, push yourself a little farther, but never to the point of pain.

The form of exercise program you

choose is less important than the time you choose to begin: Now! Check with your physician before embarking on a program, and remember to increase your intake of water or other non-caffeinated beverages.

Exercise moderately at first, then build up to longer periods and more challenging activity. Over time you will notice improved stamina and strength, higher energy levels, and elevated moods. Having a regular walking buddy or joining a walking club are good ways to motivate yourself to enjoy the easiest and cheapest form of exercise there is.

Results take time, so don't quit before you have the chance to experience the rewards of increased fitness, better health, and enhanced mental well-being. Make exercise something you do without thinking, a habit like brushing your teeth.

Still sitting on the couch? What are you waiting for?



Carolyn Partridge and Peggy Grimm prepared the squash for Harvest Supper.

Harvest Supper serves community

by Donna Koutrakos

The members of the Windham Community Organization thank everyone who attended our Harvest Supper on November 13, 2004. Also a special thank you to the musicians who donated their time and talents to make the evening both very successful and enjoyable! The proceeds from the dinner will be added to our account and used in our town to help with various projects such as donations to local food pantries, help for neighbors in need, donations to school projects, and more as they arise. The members of the Windham Community Organization wish to send you our best wishes in the New Year!



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signed letters and articles
(300 words max). Send them to
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email to wnandn@vermontel.net

**GET INVOLVED
IN WINDHAM!**

— *Community Calendar* —

Every Sunday – **Windham Congregational Church** has
worship services at 10:00 AM; everyone is invited.
Communion first Sunday of each month.

Monday, January 3 – **Elementary students go
to the opera** in Weston to see “Amal and the
Night Visitors.”

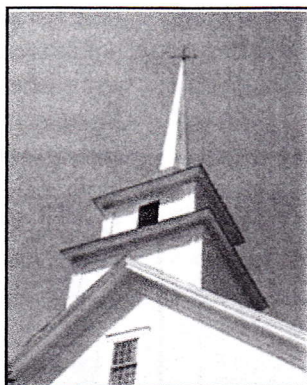
Wednesday, January 5 – **Leland & Grey’s
Public Vision and Concerns Meeting**
regarding space needs at the high school (*see
article page 3*).

Thursday, January 20 – **Last day to submit
petitions** for articles at Town Meeting (*see
article page 1*).

Thursday, January 27 – **Arts Festival at
Windham Elementary** featuring student
talent, including musical concert, art work display, poetry
reading, martial arts demonstration. All welcome.

Performance begins at 7:00 PM.

Tuesday, February 1 – **Leland & Grey’s annual meeting** at
7:30 PM at the high school.



*Windham’s Meeting House
and Congregational Church*

Wednesday, February 2 – Vote on **Leland &
Grey’s budget** 10:00 to 7:00 at the Town
Office.

Friday, February 4 – **Report card day for
Windham Elementary.**

Monday, February 21 – **Last day to register
for Check List** to vote at Town Meeting.

Monday, February 21 - Monday, February 28
– **Windham Elementary School vacation.**

Tuesday, March 1 – **Windham’s Town
Meeting** 10:00 AM at the Meeting House. Everyone is
encouraged to attend.