

## Greensboro Select Board Has Busy Agenda

by June Pichel Cook

GREENSBORO—Town Hall painting, radar speed signs, driveway plowing, Town Hall signage, and road repair were on the select board's agenda at its last meeting. Despite unseasonable weather, snowplowing private driveways is lurking in the future. Residents who needed to improve their driveways to avoid being taken off the new list were sent letters. Town Clerk Kim Greaves said about 25 residents received letters. Most have now been sent letters. The town took no action on three opposing a painting contract for two sides of the Town Hall. Action

was presented, ranging from \$75,000 to \$16,500. Gary Salsbery of Craftsbury had the lowest bid at \$7,500. Danham Brothers of Cabot, \$18,500, and Blake Jenkins of St. Johnsbury, \$14,950.

Board Chair Sue Wood noted the wildly varying amounts, and said she was not comfortable with awarding any of the bids until more investigating and researching references was done.

"It's not comfortable making a decision on any have here," Wood said while looking around the room. "I'm looking for a select board member to do this." Board member Michael LaParra agreed to look into the bidding, research, and ensuring bids are awarded. Greaves said that Jennifer Wood approved a bid for the town. The board agreed they would meet in December.

See AGENDA, 4



Route 2 construction continues with the setting of the supports for a new bridge at the Folsom Farm bend in the road. The new bridge replaces the temporary one, which has been in place for over 10 years.

## Supreme Court Hears Appeal On Negotiations

by Will Walters

MONTPELIER—The California Central Supervisory Union (CCSU) negotiating committee filed an appeal on October 11 with the state Supreme Court over the question of the state's open meeting law and negotiations with the professional staff and support staff in the supervisory union. The appeal is a

California Superior Court decision relying on a Franklin Superior Court decision. The California Central Education Association (CCEA), representing the staff, is the defendant in the original case brought by the supervisory union committee in the Superior Court.

Based on a Franklin Superior Court decision, the California Su-

premier Court found that the Vermont Labor Relations Board jurisdiction under the Vermont Labor Relations Law dominated the claim on that basis. The labor board made a similar ruling in the Washington-Northeastern University Union complaint against the Twinfield and Cabot Education associations.

See APPEAL, 10

## Craftsbury School Board Approves Spain Trip

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY—The Craftsbury School directors approved a world language trip to Spain at its recent meeting. World language teacher Sarah Miller sought the board's approval before fundraising. She estimated between 14-16 students would be involved; to take grade point average.

Orlinda Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) Superintendent

Joanne LeBlanc reported the school's insurance does not cover travel outside the United States and Canada. Special insurance to protect everyone would be needed. Having other chaperones besides Miller was raised. LeBlanc and the board agreed a group of 16 young people could be taken to Spain, given the fact some may never have traveled or gone through customs.

"I want to be overly cautious," LeBlanc said. "I would be remiss not to bring up all these issues."

Miller explained the program tests the host families. She wanted to ensure that everyone had a good experience. She said that the organizers have a lot of time for fundraising and planning. The young people would stay with a host family, attend classes in the morning, and take part in some afternoon activities. At least three people from the program would always be with the group. She would be in contact with the students on a daily basis and have lunch with them.

Board member John Rowell said what provisions there would be for someone who really wanted to go, but was unable because of financial difficulty. Miller indicated she would ensure that all students are able to go. They will fundraise and are looking at creating a small independent group to help large fundraisers. The estimated cost is \$2,900 per student. The students' spending money, incidentals, passports would be their own responsibility.

The board unanimously authorized moving forward with planning the world language trip. The board issued a warning for the voting of two policies: (1) Prevention of Conflict of Interest in Procurement. Capitalization of Assets, and Travel Reimbursement. (2) Wellness Policy. The policies are available on the OSSU website.

The board noted that students under 18 should not be using power machinery at the school's woodlot. The district's transfer recommended anyone under 18 should be doing any clearing. Anyone volunteering should not be using school equipment. Collaborating with the Town Center was recommended, as they have the specialized insurance required.

Board member Anne Morse said that some of Sterling students had done some clearing and suggested the boardwalk require could be done on.

See TRIP, 4

## Narrow Escape From Hurricanes Leads To Cabot

island, St. John, was severely damaged by Hurricane Irma. His former school, Griffith Hill School, had to close for repairs. It is a private school on St. John, the smallest of the three U.S. Virgin Islands. He said Griffith Hill is about the size of Cabot School.

Morton is staying with a family friend who lives in Cabot. Morton was evacuated from St. John on a U.S. Navy ship and taken to Puerto Rico just before Hurricane Maria struck. He expected to be on Puerto Rico for a night and then planned to take a flight to Boston. Maria approached, flights became hard to come by, and he would not be able to leave the island before the hurricane struck.

"I was sure I wasn't going to get out of Puerto Rico. There were no flights." However, someone called the management of an airline for him and Morton did get on one of the last flights of the island and arrived in Boston.

See ESCAPE, 5

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CABOT—"I really want to get into college. If you can find anyone who can help, that would be perfect," said Tyrone Morton, a United States Virgin Islands resident who is a senior at Cabot School this year.

Morton wants to stay on the island after graduating from Cabot and would like to get a bachelor's in fine arts, engineering or product design. "There are so many things I want to study... I can't do all of it."

Morton came to Cabot after his

## Budget Process Could Get Ugly

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK—It's school budget season again and once again school boards will be starting the process from an unfortunate starting point. Last year, school districts had to accommodate a budgeting error within the supervisory union. This year, the problem is statewide.

An October 4 memo from Rebecca Holcomb, Vermont's Secretary of Education, to superintendents, business managers, and school board members stated that: "We will be entering the next budget cycle with an almost \$50 million Education Fund budget gap, due in large part to use-of-one-time money to reduce the tax rate. We face uncertainty regarding what reductions in federal funds will occur, although some population driven appropriations are already declining. We know that the majority of Vermonters have not experienced

growth in their real incomes over the past decade, and thus have constrained capacity to support increased in education."

Superintendent Joanne LeBlanc talked about the latest state budget woes.

"By now you've seen the press and have realized the biggest piece of that is the state is about \$47 million in a deficit," she said. "That impact on the state-wide property tax is going to be anywhere from 7 to 9 cents. I think they may have settled at 8 cents now."

LeBlanc said those numbers are still a bit in flux, but that an 8-cent increase is a safe estimate to start working from. The least emphasized that, unlike the steep budget challenges the board has faced in recent years, this time there is the plausible deniability that this is a state-wide situation.

See UGLY, 6

photo by Will Walters

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The new bridge replaces the temporary one, which has been in place for over 10 years.

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