

## Craftsbury Hosts Race to Benefit New Nonprofit Albany Store

by Doug McClure

ALBANY – Albany's General Store currently sits dormant four years after it first closed in 2014. Now, a nonprofit called the Albany Community Trust (ACT) has purchased the property and plans to reopen the store in 2019. This Sunday, Sept. 10, Craftsbury is hosting a race to help support its owners' goals.



With a simple mission "to positively impact the growth and prosperity of Albany, VT," the group sees re-opening the store as a cornerstone of its objective to revitalize the town. Like most Vermont towns, Albany has had a community store as its community core for most of its life. According to the ACT, the town has had at least seven stores, sometimes more than one at a time.

"Since the Rev. Albany, Vt., a town of under one-thousand residents has been without a store, food, friendly faces, baked goods, coffee, gas, beverages and newspapers in a place to gather with family and friends," the ACT website says. In their biographies, the five members of the steering committee of the store all agree on what the store meant to them.

"I got involved with the Albany Store project in a minor support role last December because I'm a fishy selfish person – working full time, my wife is a nurse, and I've been in the area for several years ago, while working around the street, I could walk over and

place, a place to get grocery staples and local products, as well as prepared food," said ACT in a statement. It noted that Albany has received funding support from many sources, including the Preservation Trust of Vermont and Vermont Community Foundation, as well as private individuals. Albany is also a designated Village Center by the Agency of Commerce and Community Development.

Albany and Craftsbury share some outdoor recreation destinations, including parts of Housen Pond and parts of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center's network of trails.

"The ACT said it plans to lease the refurbished store to an operator while maintaining ownership. The adjacent property which fell

victim to fire [last] year has also been purchased for parking and press spaces.

"The store will be a welcoming place for everyone in the community and serve a wide range of customers including Albany residents, commuters, snow travelers, bike tours, tourists and others passing through

Albany. It is a gathering

## Saw Mill Saga Keeps Flowing

by Will Walters

CABOT – The Saw Mill Dam and the old structures of the mill project to keep the mill alive, interested, with between 20 and 30 people attending most of the four or five select board meetings in hope of hearing more about the project.

A growing number of participants said that attendance has increased because they felt that it was not adequate representation in the press and information is only being sporadically supplied to the public. "The information we're getting is like standing on a quicksand," said one.

At the most recent meeting, Matthew Becker, projects manager for sites management of the Department of Environmental Conservation, and Kevin Geiger of two Rivers-Ottawa-Quebec Regional Planning Commission answered questions about the project. Geiger is administering the Community Development and Buildings Grant (CDBG) for the Housing and Urban Development Department.

Select board chair Mike Hogan initiated the discussion by stating that removal is a two-phase process and what is now under consideration is phase one, the purchase of the property. It does not cover the costs of removing the dam, which is the goal of the project.

chemicals and the levels that were found in response to a question from the public. He said one chemical, benzaldehyde, was found in the soil on the east side of the Wisconsin River. This is the site of a tannery. Pollution was also found on the west side of the river. He said the level was above that for the industrial standard, which is a significantly different from that of the residential standard. He explained that if the reading is above the industrial

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## State Police Make Woodbury a Priority

by Michael Bielewski

WOODBURY – In response to tensions between neighbors, including allegations of animal abuse, threats of violence, police visits and, in one incident, shots fired across a lake, the state police have told a select board member that Woodbury will become a priority again.

This was part of the closing discussion to Monday's select board meeting. The board and audience members acknowledged that things are getting a little tense in a few hot spots in the community and increased law-enforcement presence is going to be necessary.

It is expected that one of the next select board meetings, a representative from the Vermont State Police Middlesex barracks will attend to discuss the logistics of such coverage. The state police

are struggling state wide with staffing, budget, and coverage issues, especially for communities like Galois and Woodbury, where they have to travel long distances to respond.

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## 300 Without Power As Hardwick Goes Dark

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – At approximately 5:30 p.m. on September 11, a strange thing began to happen with Hardwick's power. Some appliances mysteriously shut off; desperately needed fans and air conditioners slowed down and then stopped running. And at about 6 p.m., everything went dark. The alarm on the GRACE building started going off. Fire trucks rushed to Hardwick Elementary as its alarm sirens sounded, as well. In the case of the

school, a brownout had caused a piece of equipment to burn out, generating a "very bad smell" but no smoke, according to a fireman at the scene.

The power came back up briefly about half an hour later and then, twenty minutes later, went dark again. It was not until about 7:30 p.m. that it was back on for good.

"We lost a main line fuse out of Hardwick substation yesterday," said Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Chairman Mike Sullivan. "The crew thought a transformer had failed, but it was

Foreman Brian Foran said the

outage was confined to the village and affected about 300 people. The affected pieces of equipment was a three-phase fuse. When one phase was lost, it caused a brownout before the fuse completely

"I may time out your electric starts flickering like that, you should immediately unplug any sensitive electronics," added Foran. He said one HED had investigated to make sure nothing beyond the fuse had failed – "no squirrels, no birds" – HED brought the power back up.

See HARDWICK, my have See DARK, 4

## Police Add Equipment to Keep Public Safe

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – At the 6 September meeting of the Hardwick Select Board, Hardwick Police Chief Aaron Cochran provided an update on the search for a new police officer, staffing shifts, and new equipment and training to improve public safety and gather data.

Town Manager Jon Jewett brought up an upcoming announcement about Hardwick receiving a national communication and also brought up an interesting matter for the board to review which is at least a century or older.

The select board meeting began with Jewett and select board member Elizabeth Dow going over a map of Hardwick from 1781. Labeled "The Judewine

Plan," the map depicted a layout of Hardwick with equal square parcels laid out in a grid. The mystery of why a two-hundred-thirty-seven-year-old map would start a 2018 select board meeting soon was answered.

"A property owner looking to buy property had discovered their property was designated as leased property, meaning the town owned the property and leased it to pay for schools. Dow said this practice was common at the time and used not just for schools, but other community buildings, such as churches.

Select Board Chair Eric Renick said that as the town had not collected any lease payments for at least a century and the board had transferred ownership multiple times, it

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## OSSU Faces IRS Penalty, \$36,566 Budget Surplus

by Michael Bielewski

HARDWICK – There was a little bit of tension in the room during a portion of the Tuesday Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) board meeting on Thursday evening. Chief Financial Officer John Smith reported on some after-the-fact (AFT) paperwork that was not finished in time and had resulted in a \$32,000 IRS penalty for the supervisory union.

The year of the oversight was 2015. There were two documents that related to making sure everyone was covered with insurance. The employee in question is no longer with the OSSU.

Smith said that there were some hints that the mistake happened with the bus-

ness manager position. This position has changed at least three times in as many years.

Board member Kim Silk asked for more information about what's been done to ensure it doesn't happen again.

"I cannot speak to how the problem started, because I was not there," Smith said, who was employed at the OSSU that time.

The answer did not suffice for Silk.

"Unfortunately, that's not a good enough answer, but keep going," Silk said. Smith has a lawyer who is working on completing the missing documents, as well as a cover

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The Albany Community Trust has purchased the Albany General Store and plans to re-open it in the near future to serve the needs of the town.

photo by Doug McClure

get a nice cup of soup and a sandwich for lunch. I noticed how the store was an attraction for good food, friendly faces and the latest gossip. How I have missed that. I hope to get involved even in a minor role to see it open and thriving... and I want some soup!" said Emily Wilder, one of the town's Justices of the Peace.

Albany Select Board member Chris Jacobs said, "To me the heart of Albany always is the store. I've very concerned to see it operate again and serve our community."

The ACT said it plans to lease the refurbished store to an operator while maintaining ownership. The adjacent property which fell victim to fire [last] year has also been purchased for parking and press spaces.

photo by Vanessa Fluhare

The Craftsbury Village Store and the Craftsbury Outdoor Center are sponsors of the race which is a fundraiser to benefit the Albany General Store. The 10-mile run will take dirt roads from the Craftsbury Village Store to Albany's store, with lunch provided by the Craftsbury Village Store at the finish. Registration is \$25 and closes at 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 15. Interested runners or those wanting to volunteer can go to runreg.com/geny-tenny for information.

The 1972 Greensboro Bend Railroad Depot. This structure was one of the town's first. The arrival of the railroad ushered in a heyday for the Bend. The photo is taken from the north looking to the south on the village center.

photo by Vanessa Fluhare

freight cars and various personal items outside the Hardwick Elementary School September 4 after being pulled out around 5:30 p.m. The gym ventilator motor overheated and caused some smoke in the gymnasium. School view is captured the following day.

photo by Doug McClure

The 1972 Greensboro Bend Railroad Depot. This structure was one of the town's first. The arrival of the railroad ushered in a heyday for the Bend. The photo is taken from the north looking to the south on the village center.

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