

THE Hardwick Gazette

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250 More Hardwick Residents Vaccinated

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – On March 1, Vermont lowered its COVID vaccine age eligibility threshold to 65. On Tuesday, Gov. Phil Scott said largely due to the FDA's approval of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine, "[Vermont] will be able to scale up and move quicker to get more people vaccinated."

Next Monday, the state will open eligibility to those over 55 with high-risk medical conditions, followed by those 16-54 on March 15. In addition, "with these new developments in our vaccine supply, beginning next week, we'll begin vaccination of school staff as well as childcare and early education providers. This includes giving them the option of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine or the 2-dose vaccines through our partnership with Walgreens."

Governor Scott tweeted "By March 15th, all those over the age of 16 who are at the highest risk of severe illness and death, whether due to age or a health condition, will be able to sign up for their vaccine," noting this is one year from his first State of Emergency's declaration.

See **VACCINATED, 5**

Understanding COVID-19 Vaccines

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – Three vaccines for the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 have been approved for emergency use by the United States Food and Drug Administration.

The Pfizer vaccine was approved on December 11, followed by the Moderna

See **VACCINES, 4**



photo by Doug McClure

Harold Martin, accompanied by wife, Florence, got his first Moderna shot from Mary Young-Coathup, a medical-surgical registered nurse at Northern Vermont Regional Health, during the vaccine clinic at the Hardwick Fire Station last Wednesday afternoon.



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Elizabeth Rossano and her husband Griffin Lussier of East Hardwick stand behind their different varieties of potato donuts Monday at Dona's Car Store parking lot. They are in their seventh week of Free Potato Donut Mondays, from 6 to 8 a.m. They give away about seven dozen donuts to people passing through.

Free Donuts Brighten Up the Day on Mondays

by Jenn MacLean

HARDWICK – Free homemade donuts are available at Dona's Car Store on Mondays from 6 to 8 a.m. The donuts are made and distributed by Hardwick residents Elizabeth Rossano and Griffin Lussier, who call the weekly giveaway "satisfying and fun."

Rossano grew up in Woodbury and spent her early adult years in Burlington. She moved back to the greater Hardwick area because she missed the sense of community, she said. She and husband Lussier bought a house in East Hardwick last summer. Rossano currently sits on the Jeudevine Library board of directors and the organizing committee of the Hardwick Community Allies for Safety, Trust and Respect. She also works as a videographer for Hardwick Community TV.

Rossano said she started making donuts during the pandemic because "I couldn't get out as much to get my favorite donuts from Connie's Kitchen." She started with baking cake donuts and then found "an updated recipe" for potato donuts first published in a 1937 issue of New England Magazine and gave them a try. "They have a heavenly texture, like no other cake donut," she said of the homemade potato donuts.

See **DONUTS, 3**

HPD Traffic Stop Data Analyzed, Debated

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – A study released by the University of Vermont (UVM) concludes that the Hardwick Police Department (HPD) has underreported drivers' racial data in traffic stops and "over-stopped" Black drivers. However, an analysis of the quality

and quantity of the data used by the study's authors calls the report's conclusions into question.

In January, UVM released a report, "Trends in Racial Disparities in Vermont Traffic Stops, 2014-19," which included findings that HPD failed to report race during 26% of traffic stops. The report named HPD as second worst

in the state relative to the number of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) drivers stopped.

Report co-author Stephanie Seguíno, communicating via email, said the study "suggested Black drivers are over-stopped [by HPD] relative to their share of the driving population."

At the February 4 select

board meeting, HPD Chief Aaron Cochran pushed back against the report's findings, stating its conclusions were based on "flawed data" caused by widely reported technical issues with the Valcour reporting system.

Chief Cochran also said the study relied on percentages from a

See **TRAFFIC, 2**

Traffic

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small number of stops and could be skewed to support an agenda.

In an e-mail, Chief Cochran said the law requiring data collection went into effect on Sept. 1, 2014 when “most of the year was over.” He added there was a problem with missing data due to technical problems with the Valcour reporting system and state data does not include HPD activity prior to September 2015. “The bulk of the report relied heavily on percentages,” he said. “And using percentages can influence an agenda.”

Cochran released the department’s raw data from 2019 and 2020 for comparison. HPD’s 2019 data and the state’s appeared to match.

In its report, UVM analyzed data originating from the Vermont Criminal Justice Council (VCJC). The VCJC did not respond to questions about how the data was collected or verified.

Chief Cochran is not the only law enforcement professional to question the data’s completeness. The 2017 study “Law Enforcement Data Quality Assessment Project” by the U.S. Department of Justice-funded

Crime Research Group, Inc. stated that “the FBI reports that overall crime in Vermont dropped by 60.9 percent between 2012 and 2015. The accuracy of Vermont crime statistics has been called into question, as the precipitous drop in crime could reflect inaccuracies in reporting.”

The study corroborated Chief Cochran’s claim that serious problems with the Valcour system affected reporting across multiple agencies. “The FBI reports indicated that agencies using Valcour software had been under-reporting crimes,” the report stated. “Many errors were due to problems with the Valcour software.”

Some errors have continued, the study found, due to “inadequate” software training and “an under-appreciation of the importance of complete, accurate, and timely crime data” among data entry workers and supervisors.

As a result of the inaccuracies, the FBI prohibited agencies using the Valcour reporting system from submitting to its national database for several months in early 2017. By May 2017, Valcour reduced its error rate to 2.59%.

The data relied on by UVM in their report is publicly available on the VCJC website. In the years

2017 to 2020 it shows that an average of 8.9% of tickets generated from traffic stops did not report the driver’s race, with the highest instances of nonreporting occurring in 2018. Race was reported on all tickets issued by HPD in 2019. In 2020, race was not noted 7.58% of the time, or 20 stops, with half of the stops not resulting in a ticket.

From 2017 to 2020, a total of 36 Black drivers were stopped by the HPD, or between five and 12 each year. Dr. Seguíno stated that the threshold for data to be meaningful is ten. “A statistical rule of thumb is that an event has to happen at least 10 times for one to be able to make reliable inferences,” Dr. Seguíno said.

In recent years, HPD traffic stops have steadily decreased, with 917 stops reported in 2017 and 264 stops made in 2020.

Chief Cochran said via email in February that the reduction in stops could be explained by a “decline in Governor’s Highway Safety grant money.” The grant disbursement changed, he said, “and we lost grant funding for this program.” The grant was used to fund traffic enforcement specifically, he said, and when it was available “we were a very active participant, showing higher traffic stop numbers vs. lower numbers.”

The years where HPD traffic stop numbers declined corresponded with “declining or no grant money allowing for extra patrols,”

he said. At the February 4 meeting, Chief Cochran said the situation had changed due to efforts by Officer Donnie Jenness and a shift in state priorities. At the February 18 select board meeting, Chief Cochran said because of additional state funding and the department completing its COVID-19 vaccinations, he expected HPD traffic stops will increase.

To estimate the number of Black drivers, UVM relied on the 2017 American Community Survey (ACS) to estimate the Black population in Hardwick or Caledonia County aged 15 or older. The study said the approach was “not without its faults” as “not everyone over age 15 drives a vehicle and not everyone drives with the same degree of frequency.” For example, the report said, whites tend to drive more often than Black people due in part to “wealth disparity.”

UVM also utilized crash data to estimate the number of Black drivers. The study stated a “possible weakness” of the measure was “it may overestimate Black and Hispanic shares of drivers due to racial dynamics in the U.S.” In some cases, the report said, two white drivers involved in a vehicle accident might exchange insurance information without contacting the police, while for accidents involving a black driver, “white drivers may be more likely to involve the police due to potential implicit bias.”

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photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Travis Hill of East Hardwick votes Tuesday at the Hardwick Fire Station.

POLICE REPORT

Hardwick Police Media Log Summary

February 22: Motor Vehicle Complaint, Rte. 15E; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Medical, Hazen Union Dr.; Medical, Maple St.; Suspicious Event, Caspian Ave., Suspicious Event, Vt. Rte. 15/Brown Farm Rd.

February 23: Motor Vehicle Complaint, Harrington Rd.

February 24: Accident – Property Damage, Vt. Rte. 16; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14.

February 25: Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14; Threats/Harassment, Prospect St.; Traffic Stop, Mill St.; Traffic Stop, W. Church St.; Assist – Agency, High St.; Suspi-

cious Event, Elm St.

February 26: Assist – Agency, Vt. Rte. 15W; Accident – Property Damage, Mill St.; Juvenile Problem, Cherry St.

February 27: Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Vt. Rte. 15W; Assist – Public, Village; 911 Hangup, W. Hill Rd.; Assist – Public, Bayley Hazen Rd.

February 28: Accident – Property Damage, S. Main St.; 911 Hangup, Wolcott St.

March 1: Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14; Foot Patrol, S. Main St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Lake Shore Rd.; Traffic Stop, Rte. 15E.

No Insurance, Two Vehicles Off Road

Arretta M. Miller, of Cabot, February 25, 1440, W. Church St., Under Suspension, \$249.00.

Skyler A. Galio, of Topsham, Feb. 25, 2021, 1350, Mill St., No Insurance, \$162.00.

Nicholas E. Smith, of Hardwick, Feb. 24, 1240, Vt. Rte. 14, Cell Phone, \$162.00.

On Feb. 21, at 1113 hours, Police responded to Hardwick Street in Greensboro for the report of a single vehicle off the road. Upon arrival Police identified the vehicle as a 2016 Mitsubishi Outlander. The operator was Katherine Gilmartin of Burlington. Gilmartin was traveling west on Hardwick Street when she went off the road and struck a tree.

On Feb. 24 at 0731 hours, Police reported to a vehicle off the road in the ditch. Upon arrival, the vehicle was identified as a 2017 Kia Sorento. The operator was identified as Addie Salls from Greensboro Salls was the only occupant and was uninjured. Salls stated she swerved to avoid striking another vehicle and ended up in the ditch.

This report is based on information provided by the Hardwick Police Department but is not a full accounting of police activity. Persons named in this report are presumed to be innocent unless they plead or are found guilty in court.

AWARE Report

HARDWICK – AWARE served 11 survivors of domestic and sexual violence from February 21 through February 28. AWARE is a nonprofit organization, established in 1984, dedicated to resolving the causes and effects of domestic violence and sexual assault in the greater Hardwick area.

The 24-hour hotline is 802-472-6463.

Donuts

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Rossano and Lussier began their donut-making venture last September, Rossano said. Their house was formerly a potato shed (until about 1950) and it seemed logical to the couple to make potato donuts there.

At first, friends and neighbors would come by the couple's home to pick up the donuts. But when Rossano had the idea to set up a stand and give them away, Lussier agreed. "It's hard to stay active and vibrant as a community during COVID times," Lussier said. "Even just seeing that things are happening can help people brighten up their day."

"We forget that giving things away is a simple joy that often is even a bigger deal than receiving the gift," Rossano said. "Exchanging money is necessary for an economy to function, but to have a community function, well,

you need as many community connections as possible. Giving gifts helps to create these connections."

Rossano and Lussier said they give away the donuts to "show appreciation for the people who have to get up super early for what is often tough work on a cold dark morning."

The donuts are locally sourced, with ingredients donated by members of the community. Resident Amy Rosenthal donated her second COVID-19 relief stimulus to the effort. "Hearing Elizabeth's idea and seeing her enthusiasm made it an easy decision," Rosenthal said. "Elizabeth is bringing joy and generosity to our community. Her selflessness inspired me to do the same." Rosenthal said Rossano and Lussier are engaged in "philanthropy of the heart."

For more information check out the Facebook group, facebook.com/groups/thepotatoshed.



March 3 - March 9

Extra 20% Off Sale Prices on Jackets & Sweaters Ends: March 31		Insulated Winter Shoes & Boots. Up to 20% Off original price. While in Stock!	
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Cabot Cheese Bars \$1.98 6-8 oz.	Perrier Water 2/\$3 750 ml.	Gatorade 5/\$5 32 oz.	
Duncan Hines Cake Mixes 2/\$3 15.25 oz.	Food Club Canned Corn, Beans, or Peas 3/\$2 14.5-15.25 oz.	Food Club Salsa 2/\$3 16 oz.	
Betty Crocker Scalloped or Au Gratin Potatoes 4/\$5 4.7-5 oz.	Quaker Life Cereal 2/\$5 13 oz.	Quaker Instant Oatmeal 2/\$5 13-15.1 oz.	
Nabisco Family Size Oreos 2/\$6 17-20 oz.	Cheez-it Snack Crackers 2/\$5 9-12.4 oz.	Nabisco Red Oval Crackers 2/\$5 8.8-10.6 oz.	
Cabot Shredded Cheese 2/\$5 8 oz.	Planet Oatmilk 2/\$5 52 oz.	Pepperidge Farm Turnovers \$2.99 12.5 oz.	
Maine Russet Potatoes \$1.48 5 lb.	California Navel Oranges 99¢ ea.	Terrific Trio Potatoes 2/\$5 1.5 lb.	

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Vaccines

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vaccine on December 18, and the Johnson & Johnson (J&J) vaccine last weekend. A fourth, the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine, is expected to go before U.S. regulators in April, when its clinical trials are complete.

Copley Hospital Chief Medical Officer Dr. Donald Dupuis, M.D., along with scientists and experts worldwide, have called for the approved vaccines safe and effective.

Two different technologies are used to create the life-saving vaccines. Pfizer and Moderna utilize messenger RNA or mRNA, while J&J and AstraZeneca use technology known as vector vaccination.

Dr. Dupuis said the goal of vaccines is not only to prevent people from getting sick.

“The most important thing is to keep you out of the hospital,” he said. Since the pandemic began,

the number of patients infected with the coronavirus at times overwhelmed healthcare resources such as ICU beds and ventilators. Once placed on a ventilator, the prognosis for COVID-19 patients rapidly deteriorates.

Despite more people being vaccinated, Dr. Dupuis advised continued vigilance to basic safety measures such as masks, social distancing, and hand washing.

“We’re a long way from having enough people vaccinated for us to forget [wearing] the masks,” he said. “I’ve been vaccinated for a month or so now, and I don’t go anywhere around people out in public without wearing a mask.”

Availability of a vaccine can be limited by the vaccine’s durability and viability window. Dr. Dupuis said Copley Hospital started with the Pfizer vaccine, but the doses arrived in 975-unit boxes that needed to be used quickly once opened. The hospital switched to the Moderna vaccine, which comes

in smaller containers which are more suited to the hospital’s needs. Underlying conditions, pregnancy and age also play a role in determining which vaccine is safest to use. Pfizer’s vaccine is authorized for people 16 years and older, while the Moderna vaccine is for adults 18 years and up. There is currently no pediatric vaccine.

While no significant safety concerns have been raised about the approved vaccines, there is insufficient data to demonstrate how long their protections last. Studies have not yet determined the vaccine’s impact on the transmissibility of the virus to the unprotected.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which are fully synthetic, utilize mRNA technology. Although mRNA vaccines have rigorously lab-tested for years, an mRNA vaccine has never been used before.

Dr. Dupuis said, “almost the best part” of mRNA vaccines is their ability to quickly reformulate should a variant of the virus render current vaccines ineffective. He said mRNA vaccines “teach” the immune system to recognize the most unique feature of SARS-CoV-2: its distinctive spike protein.

The spike protein allows the virus to penetrate the body’s cells. Mutations can change the shape of the protein, so the body no longer recognizes it as an invader to be attacked.

“When a foreign protein is in your bloodstream, your body will recognize it and make memory cells to it and antibodies against it,” Dr. Dupuis said. “The so-called spike protein on the outside of the coronavirus, which is actually the thing that makes it stick onto cells, is a great target for these antibodies.” He said the mRNA vaccine instructs the cells to make the spike protein so the body “can learn to recognize it and attack it.” The spike protein by itself is not harmful, Dr. Dupuis said, but “it teaches your body to be prepared for it when it actually sees the coronavirus.”

Chinese scientists released a full sequence of the virus on January 10, 2020. Moderna took two days to develop the set of instructions to make the spike protein recognizable to the immune system’s defenses. Some experts estimate the time to needed to update a vaccine is about six weeks.

While there remain logistical challenges to getting shots into people’s arms, Dr. Dupuis said the technology behind the vaccine is “pretty straightforward.”

“By early summer, we’re going to be awfully good at making this [vaccine] and distributing it,” he said. “I don’t have much fear,

even for the nastiest variants imaginable. The new vaccine technologies are going to give us an effective weapon promptly to deal with it.” Such reformulation would be “extremely hard” for older vaccines, Dr. Dupuis said. He described mRNA technology as an innovation “not quite like cars and horses, but it’s sort of like that.”

The first vaccine approved for COVID-19 was Russia’s Sputnik V last August, which was documented to have 91.6% efficacy in “The Lancet.” Sputnik V, along with the AstraZeneca/Oxford and J&J vaccines, work by using a vector virus encoded with the spike protein’s unique signature and instructing the body to attack it.

According to the CDC website, viral vector COVID-19 vaccines trigger the development of antibodies that “are specific to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, which means the immune system is primed to protect against future infection.”

Sputnik V and AstraZeneca require two doses, while the J&J vaccine requires one.

Dr. Dupuis described the J&J vaccine as “a really different kind of vaccine. It’s a single dose, and really doesn’t need much special storage other than just putting it in a refrigerator.” This could be useful for those being discharged from hospitals and returning to nursing homes “because you give one dose and they’re vaccinated,” he said. “It’s kind of hard to keep track of people going off to nursing homes to give them the second dose sometimes.” He said it could also be useful for those who are homebound.

Dr. Dupuis said the technology behind the vaccine is “pretty straightforward.” Based on what he has read, he described the vaccine’s efficacy against hospitalization and death as “fantastic.”

At his presentation of February 9, Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation Michael S. Pieciak presented data from Israel on COVID-19 infections, severe infections, and deaths. According to the data, almost immediately after receiving the second vaccine dose, the most susceptible 60+ age group showed a steep decline in infections, followed by a drop in severe infections and, two weeks later, a substantial drop in deaths caused by COVID-19.

“There’s a lot of evidence the vaccines work,” Dr. Dupuis said. “The variants are concerning, but the vaccines still seem to work quite well against them” He encouraged everyone to get vaccinated. “They’re safe, and they work great,” he said of the approved vaccines. “Even if you don’t want to do it for you, do it for everyone else.”



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Twinfield Assistant Principal Rachel Hartman checks people in before they go on Twinfield’s first Family & Friends Winter Ice Globe walk on a trail in the Twinfield woods February 18. Organizers for the event were Thom Costello and Matt Hartman. Over 200 ice globes were made and lighted with tea lights with help of staff and students throughout the trail.

Vaccinated

Continued From Page One

State and private entities are working to expand availability of the vaccines, while Health Commissioner Dr. Mark Levine noted the emergence of variants said to be more contagious and resistant to current vaccines.

Northern Counties Health Care (NCHC), in partnership with the Northeast Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH), launched its first two Hardwick mobile clinics at the fire station last Wednesday and Friday. Two hundred and fifty people received their first dose of the vaccine at the site. In the coming weeks, the clinic will be moved to locations prioritized by the state. The next first-dose vaccine session in Hardwick will be April 5. The state announced Wednesday that Walgreens is also offering vaccinations for those who are eligible. Hospitals, including Copley, and other pharmacies, such as Kinney Drugs, provide additional vaccination sites.

NCHC Chief Strategy Officer Christopher Towne said concerns over vaccine supply had not materialized thus far.

“The supply right now is pretty good,” he said. He added that the issues preventing people from being vaccinated are logistical ones related to efficiently moving people through the clinic. “People are there for a significant amount of time,” he said.

Hardwick resident Walter Martin, accompanied by his wife, Florence, came to Wednesday’s clinic to get his vaccine. After being checked in, a staff member took his temperature and directed him to one of the three large tables where healthcare workers waited to administer the vaccines. NVRH medical-surgical Registered Nurse Mary Young-Coathup attended to Martin and told him he was receiving the Moderna vaccine. Then, Young-Coathup directed him to a post-vaccination area, where patients were asked to wait for fifteen minutes in case they developed an adverse reaction to the shot.

The Moderna vaccine has a limited window of viability once opened. When patients “no-show or cancel at the last minute,” Towne said, open appointment slots are filled from a standby list made up of local healthcare providers.

According to Towne, there “has not been a point recently” where age-eligible Hardwick area residents could not get an appointment for the COVID-19

vaccine. “The best way for someone to guarantee an appointment is by registering through the [state’s vaccine] website or calling the toll-free number,” Towne said.

People who received their first dose of the vaccine last week will return to the fire station at the end of March for their second dose.

Walgreens announced vaccine availability last week. Those interested in getting the vaccine can sign up at Walgreens.com/Schedule-Vaccine. A pharmacy technician at the Hardwick Walgreens said the pharmacy offers the Pfizer vaccine. Walgreens only saw a half-dozen patients on the first day, they said, likely because the site had not been publicized. The pharmacy can vaccinate up to thirty people per day, the technician said.

Copley’s Chief Medical Officer Dr. Donald Dupuis, M.D., said Copley could potentially vaccinate more people, but the hospital is limited by supplies and the short shelf lives of the two most widely available vaccines. He said he hoped by April “we’ll move to a ‘more supply, less limited’ situation.

“The number [of vaccinations] we’re doing in a given day vacillates a little bit,” he said. “We did 200 [Thursday], and that was largely what we refer to as an age-band. Right now, we’re doing 70 and older. We’re doing a smaller clinic tomorrow where we’re taking care of some of the remaining extended health care worker lists.” He said at one point the hospital had “a long, long waiting list. And we’re trying to clear that waiting list as we continue to move on through the rest of the population.”

Dupuis said 83 percent of Copley’s staff had been vaccinated. As of now, Copley is using the Moderna vaccine for logistical reasons, namely the ability to obtain smaller allocations of Moderna doses than Pfizer currently offers. The Pfizer vaccine comes in groups of 975 doses, Dr. Dupuis said, and once opened, “the clock starts running” on the vaccine’s viability. “The large centers that are essentially giving a thousand vaccines a time can manage that pretty well,” he said. “But for smaller places, the Moderna [quantity] is a big help.”

Towne said some people seemed “a little anxious and nervous” about getting their first vaccine. “People are waiting

to see if their friends or family members get the vaccine first and then making a decision,” Towne said. But he said interest in the vaccine increased “with the state removing the quarantine requirements if you’re fully vaccinated.”

Dr. Dupuis said while the hospital has no way of knowing how many people opt not to get vaccinated, “I don’t think it’s a wide swath of people. Some people are just nervous about vaccines in general.” He said “current cultural differences” surrounding COVID-19 also factor into the public’s decision-making process. “It was much easier to understand people’s reluctance at first, because the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were ones we’d never given before,” he said. “But we’ve given it to tens of millions of people now. The problems are just remarkably few.”

While some have reported feeling poorly following the second shot in particular, Dr. Dupuis stressed the vaccine is not dangerous. “It makes you pretty darn immune to it, it works, and it’s safe.”




Vaccination progress was slow in the Northeast Kingdom, Dr. Dupuis said, due to the rural landscape, limited access to the internet, and because some people 65 and older are home-bound. “As you get to the more rural parts of the state, you have less fluency with the Internet,” he said. “And even though the state has made a considerable effort to make phone lines available, it could be just that not everyone’s gotten the message.” He said EMS staff are being dispatched “to get people that are in fact homebound and can’t get in.” He described the effort as a “relatively slow process.”

To make an appointment for a vaccine (the current age band is 65 and older), register at healthvermont.gov/myvaccine or call 855-722-7878.

For Vermont Veterans 55 and older, there is a walk-in vaccination clinic at the Champlain Valley Fairgrounds in Essex Junction this Friday. Veterans need to be enrolled in VA Healthcare. If not, call 802-295-9363 ext. 4004 or 5118. For transportation call SSTA Rides at 802-878-1527.


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FCC Announces Emergency Broadband Benefit Program

by Doug McClure

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On February 25, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to establish a \$3.2bn Emergency Broadband Benefit Program.

The start date for the program has not been announced, though the FCC plans to roll it out within the next sixty days.

The program will offer a discount of up to \$50 per month for qualifying households. Additionally, the FCC said in its release “It also will provide a one-time discount of up to \$100 on a computer or tablet for eligible households.” One of each is allowed per household.

In a release, FCC Acting Chair Jessica Rosenworcel said, “This is a program that will help those at risk of digital disconnection. It will help those sitting in cars in parking lots just to catch a Wi-Fi signal to go online for work. It will help those lingering outside the library with a laptop just to get a wireless signal for remote learning. It will help those who worry about choosing between paying a broadband bill

and paying rent or buying groceries. In short, this program can make a meaningful difference in the lives of people across the country. That’s why our work is already underway to get this program up and running, and I expect it to be open to eligible households within the next 60 days as providers sign up and program systems are put in place. I have confidence in our staff that we will do this carefully, swiftly and the right way.”

The FCC has listed the following eligibility requirements: individuals who qualify for the Lifeline program; households that participate in an existing low-income or pandemic relief program offered by a broadband provider; Lifeline subscribers, including those that are on Medicaid or accept SNAP benefits; households with children receiving free or reduced-price lunch or school breakfast; Pell grant recipients; and those who have lost jobs and seen their income reduced in the last year.

The FCC said for those interested to keep an eye out for updates at fcc.gov/broadbandbenefit.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Wolcott first graders (from left) Eloise Farley, Parker Hewston, Thomas Adams, Kezia Warfisch, Stephen Havard and Dylan Hewett, roast marshmallows during a school-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Winter Carnival celebration held February 19 at school.

Cabot Creamery Improves Safety Protocols after Outbreak Last Month

by Brittnay Heffermehl

CABOT – In a Monday afternoon conversation, Cabot Creamery’s director of corporate communications Amber Sheridan stated that the facility was “proud of the actions that we took as an organization to address the recent ‘contained outbreak’ that we experienced.”

The Creamery has, since the start of the pandemic, established a system of Care Team Pods, whose “sole responsibility is to screen employees prior to entering the plants,” said Sheridan in an email.

Employees are required to take a daily temperature check and answer a set of screening questions for any possible risks. If any employee should fail a screening, they are sent home to quarantine until contacted by an HR supervisor clearing them to return to work. The new protocols to keep employees safe include requiring a negative test for anyone who might call out sick.

The Cabot plant has been careful to keep close tabs on contact tracing as well, isolating more than 60 people to quarantine over recent weeks. After the initial outbreak, anyone who tested positive was required to have a second test and

quarantine for 14 days. All those who were asked to quarantine were paid for their time away.

The plant continues to require mask coverings at all times, except when employees eat on their breaks. Shared spaces are continually sanitized and kept clean. After the outbreak, employees were encouraged to wear the KN95 masks purchased by the company. “We have also started to cohort our employees when possible to ensure that if there is a potential exposure, it will limit the number of individuals we may need to guarantee with our contact tracing process,” says Sheridan.

In an interview, the Cabot emergency town management director, Jennifer Miner, said, “They had made sure that everyone was quarantined appropriately. They did so out of an abundance of precaution . . . working aggressively to protect our community, as well as the creamery staff.”

The Creamery continues to take steps to keep its employees and staff from potential COVID exposure and is updating its methodologies to keep everyone safe. The Creamery was recognized by the Vermont Department of Health for its efforts to combat the virus.

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Nursing Home Reports No COVID Cases

by Brian Labelle, Elizabeth Daniels and Diane Mitchell

GREENSBORO – The Greensboro Nursing Home have no confirmed cases of COVID-19, no presumptive cases of COVID-19, and no cases of a new set of three or more residents and staff with new onset respiratory symptoms within a 72-hour period.

Currently at Greensboro Nursing Home, 91% of residents have received the full course of the Pfizer vaccination for COVID-19 and 90% of our staff have also been fully vaccinated.

Connecting with family members is important to residents of the home, and family members are encouraged to connect with their loved ones through video chat, calling, texting, or on social media.

The nursing home is doing what it can to limit the spread of COVID-19 within the home and is in close communication with local and state health officials to ensure that the staff is taking all appropriate steps under current circumstances.

The facility continues to take daily steps based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to reduce the spread and impact of COVID-19 and will contact families directly if a resident is suspected or diagnosed with COVID-19.

Verbal screening is required by telephone previous to sit-and-chat visits and window visits. When calling

to preschedule a visit, a staff member will screen according to recommendations from the federal and state government guidelines. The screen is pertinent to questions that help mitigate the spread of the COVID-19 virus and should take only a few minutes to complete.

Connecting with family members is important to residents of the home, and family members are encouraged to connect with their loved ones through video chat, calling, texting, or on social media. The home has a sit-and-chat area where residents can sit inside building and family can sit outside building for visits.

The Greensboro Nursing Home has a process in place for outdoor visitation, as required by Governor Scott's order. Family members of residents will receive an email, a letter or a phone call notifying them of the procedure for outdoor visits.

If bringing nonperishable items for residents, families should call in advance if possible. If not able to make contact first, a drop off box will be available by the front door. Items should be labeled with the resident's name. For perishable items, the home must be contacted in advance. Fresh cut flowers can now be brought to facility and left outside the front entry door, but a call to the facility to inform when flowers will arrive is appreciated.

Families may call (802) 533-7051, or email dmitchell@vtgbnh.org for updates on the status of a resident.

[Editor's note: Brian Labelle, LNHA, is the administrator; Elizabeth Daniels, RN, is the director of nursing; and Diane Mitchell, LPN/ICN/SDC, is responsible for infection control at the Greensboro Nursing Home.]



photo by Vanessa Fournier
A Black Lives Matter flag joins the American flag and the Vermont flag after a ceremony held at Twinfield School on February 19. The Twinfield Student Voice group have been leading an effort for six months to raise the flag.

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Wolcott Residents:
Effective Saturday, March 6, the Wolcott Transfer Station will have new operating hours. It will be open **SATURDAYS ONLY** from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union Preschool Registration

Children who will be 3, 4, or 5 by September 1st, 2021, living in Craftsbury, Greensboro, Hardwick, Stannard, Wolcott, or Woodbury qualify for 10 hours of preschool education a week for 35 weeks (in a public or private Universal Pre-K Program) at no cost to families!

OSSU is now accepting registrations for public school preschool programs AND universal Pre-K programs! Packets can be picked up at any elementary school location (and Craftsbury Academy) or online at: ossu.org/resources/registration/act-new-166.

Contact Jessica Lamberton at jlamberton@ossu.org or 802-472-2584 for more information.



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Australian Ballot Entices More Voters

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY – The usual attendance at an in-person town meeting has been 170 to 200 voters, according to Town Moderator Jeanine Young. Select board chair Bruce Urie, Town Clerk Yvette Brown, and Young all anticipated a larger turnout of voter response with this year’s ballot voting.

Brown reported that as of Monday night, 316 absentee ballots had been requested, with a return of 183 before the polls opened on Tuesday morning. She anticipated 375 to 400 voters; the town has about 900 registered voters.

In a Tuesday morning interview, Urie said, “I am surprised. But, we’ve been hearing for a number of years that people felt left out and not being able to come to town meeting.”

The board has placed an advisory article on this year’s warning about future Australian ballot voting.

Referring to the Zoom and limited in-person informational meeting, Urie was disappointed that more hadn’t attended; Young echoed the same feeling.

“They have the town report,” he said, “and I’ve had a few calls for clarification. But most have made up their mind. I’m interested to see how the process works.”

Having information before voting was a concern that Young expressed. She noted only 40 people had attended the Zoom meeting and haven’t “listened to or had a chance to hear debate.”

“Town meeting is pretty special,” she said. “It (Australian ballot) takes away from something.” Young noted that when the North Country Union Regional School went to an Australian ballot,

the informational meeting had only three people in attendance. Some members of the 15-member board didn’t even attend; the school district has 12 towns in it. Even when Derby (where she was a village trustee and water commissioner) went from a day town meeting to a night meeting, attendance was down, she noted.

When people don’t discuss in person, she felt that they haven’t heard the information.

“You don’t know why someone is voting in a certain way. What the reasons are; what is it you don’t like about something. Why did someone want to vote No or Yes.”

Pointing to the North Country experience, Young said, “Even if you have an information meeting, they (voters) don’t come.”

Young was a Derby village trustee and water commissioner for a decade before moving to Craftsbury. She has served as the town’s moderator for the last ten years.

In response to a question about Australian ballot challenges, Town Clerk Brown said a downside of the Australian ballot is “having every article on the ballot, which, in turn makes for a very long night counting the ballots. The ballot

clerks are the best and getting them home after a long day is important.”

On a positive side, she noted, “Our vote count should be more as we are seeing that this year. I love that more people can vote.”

She is an advocate of Town Meeting Day being a holiday so people were able to attend.

All three -- Young, Brown, and Urie -- concurred that having more people voting was a positive. Having a venue in which people could attend remotely and still vote was inclusive of those who couldn’t get to the meeting in person.

“The downside,” Brown said, “is that you do not have the social aspect and getting the people to hear what is going on. I did like the Zoom meeting and would hope this could be a tool to use with the elders so they could get information and comment if they wish, where groups could watch and listen and comment. Do both for the information hearing and town meeting.”

Brown advocated for town meeting day as a holiday “so people can come to town meeting.”

“Increase education in our towns and schools so our young people will become involved. Use

this wonderful world of technology.”

People coming together to discuss issues, as well as socialize, is something special about town meeting, Urie expressed.

“The ability to meet together and talk over different issues is always an important part of town meeting. But some people are not able to take the day off.”

The town’s 44-article ballot doesn’t have any controversial issues, except for one select board race, he noted. One reason for the high participation this year, he thought, “could be that people are so sick of being in the house and this captured their interest.”

A select board race between incumbent Susie Houston and challenger Mike Martin is the only contested town position. Officials in a contested race cannot count ballots.

A test run was done of ballot counting and found it took between 2-1/2 to three minutes for each ballot, Urie said.

“If there are 400 ballots, that is a lot of minutes. We agreed if it’s too late (Tuesday), counting will stop and continue in the morning (Wednesday).”

Polls opened at 9 a.m. on Tuesday and closed at 7 p.m.




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Reviewing Attendance Brings Questions For Fire Department; Open Positions

by Tyler Molleur

WOODBURY — Thursday night's contingent of voters received a warm welcome from Steven Freihofner, the town's moderator, as he acknowledged the record-breaking turnout for an informational meeting which preceded the Australian ballot vote.

"You could be anywhere else on the internet tonight, and nobody would blame you, but you're here and that's great," he said, further suggesting the use of Zoom as a permanent tool to encourage attendance.

As Freihofner read the list of positions up for election, several candidates ran unopposed on the ballot, with discussion of write-ins nearly nonexistent. The positions of town clerk and select board member are being vacated by Diana Peduzzi and Brian Shatney, respectively. Select board members Michael Gray and Paul Cerutti offered their appreciation for the long-time community officials in the work they performed.

Two open positions existed for auditor, a three-year term and two years that remained on a second three-year term. When Freihofner announced the openings, no nominations were provided. Gray said the select board hoped a candidate would become clearer through the election process or post-election appointment.

"If there are any of these positions that remain unfilled, the select board will probably be doing some arm-twisting after Town Meeting," he said. A similar position where no printed candidates were identified were two openings for cemetery commissioners.

Discussion through the remaining articles continued to be brief until the Woodbury voters pursued questions on funding requests from the Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department, which were fielded by Chance Payette, the assistant fire chief and president of the non-profit organization.

The fire department's requests spanned three articles this year, including an ongoing request to pay off the truck replacement fund in the amount of \$17,850; \$105,297 in funding for operations and capital replacement; and \$85,000 to begin funding a \$1.2 million fire station and emergency operations center with 4,000 square feet of new space in the village on a property across from Shatney's Garage.

Article 6, pertaining to the new fire station, drew the most attention, as voters fielded questions to Payette.

Matt Peters asked about the total impact the new proposal would

have on taxes and if the costs for such a project could be shared with Calais. Payette reported the fire department currently bills Calais only for the operational expenses and contributions for equipment replacement, as there would be challenging ownership questions to settle if the fire department were to dissolve, leaving the station vacant.

"Asking them to purchase a building that's in the town of Woodbury just doesn't seem right," Payette said. For insurance purposes, he added that much of Calais lies outside of the five-mile distance from the station, which places most of the town in a different ISO classification.

If approved, the project is expected to increase taxes by \$60 for every \$100,000 of property.

Ann Peltz asked how the future funding of the fire department would be planned out, such as the town voting on the same amount each year. Payette said that since the fire department is not a municipal agency, the town would have to come back every single year to vote on the contribution once the bond

See QUESTIONS, 9



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Mae (Robinson) Jowers turned 100 years old on February 25. The originally planned party could not happen because of COVID-19, so her family organized a surprise drive-by parade from the fire station to the K of C Hall parking lot on Feb. 27. After the parade, Mae said that "I felt I was Queen for a Day." She has lived in Hardwick for over 50 years and in the former Bemis Block on Main Street for 22. She received 170 birthday cards.

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The Cabot Select Board: An Opportunity and a Challenge

by Maggie Lee

CABOT – Town meeting day is here and, in a year when Zoom meetings and mail-in ballots are the norm, the make-up of both the voters and the candidates is changing.

There are two seats on the Cabot Select Board up for vote this year. One is for a term of two years and the other for three. Three candidates are vying for those two positions: Ian Ackermann, Ruth Goodrich, and Mike Hogan. The two who come out of Tuesday's vote victorious will join Fred Ducharme, John Cookson, and Matthew Nally on the board. Ackermann is the only non-incumbent in the race, as Hogan and Goodrich currently hold seats going into Tuesday.

Ackermann is running for a position on the Cabot Select Board because he wants to see a change in how the town is run. Ackermann says he usually attends town meeting. He sees town meeting as "a gathering spot for everybody to get together."

Questions

Continued From Page Eight

had been set. Payette also hoped private donations and fundraisers would assist in reducing the cost of the payment.

Several residents asked Payette about the certainty regarding the expense for the new fire station remaining at \$1.2 million. Resident Peter Peltz asked about how the increase in the price of wood from Canada would impact the project expenses, while Larry Ferno asked about apparently missing items in the opinion of probable costs relating to permitting, land acquisition, and ledge removal.

Payette felt that the estimate, which was performed less than three months ago, reflected some of the increase in expenses of supplies, such as wood. He said once the project went out to bid, there would be better determination if the project is feasible, suggesting the project could not be performed if the lowest bid came in higher than the requested bond and the request could be returned to a general fund.

Fire Chief Paul Cerutti added that the reason for blank spaces in estimated expenses included the prior acquisition of the land and ability for the department to get some permitting and waivers on the project in motion. Both fire department representatives acknowledged that existing space would still need to be utilized, but the need for a larger space is significant.

Brainstorming of a new space for emergency services is not new to the town. The original work on



courtesy photo
Ian Ackermann is running for an open seat on the Cabot Select Board. He is shown here with his family.

Despite the changes this year, Ackermann believes that the sense of community rooted in town meeting will persist.

Ackermann, 33 and a life-long Cabot resident, took over

planning a new fire station began in 2014 with a \$2.2 million proposal that was withdrawn after being deemed too expensive and slated for a location not central to the town.

Many members of the community stated their questions were meant to propel the fire department's success.

"The fire department is a huge, important part of our village," said Mary Clark, who wanted to ensure the department considered COVID grants as a possible source of funding. Payette agreed money from COVID grants might also be available for the project but acknowledged most of the grants are asking for a project that is "shovel-ready".

"We can't be in the beginning stages," he said. Freihofner, as a point of order, noted that Article 5 relating to the fire department's operating costs, while accurate in verbiage on the town report and website warning, noted a fiscal year starting on July 1, 2022 on the physical ballot. He recommended the town consider a special town meeting after the vote to redact the erroneous question and substitute it with a corrected article.

Appropriations, the municipal budget, and the highway budget were also up for consideration in the town, which typically conducts business from the floor, allowing townspeople to propose amendments. The Gazette will have follow-up on what Woodbury voters decided on these questions in next week's edition.

operation of his family's dairy farm with his brother right out of high school. With this experience, Ackermann has a focus on budgeting. "I've been running business for 16, 17 years," he says. "So, I feel like I have the know how to help with that." Currently, he runs a sugaring operation in Cabot which he started with his wife. He says he appreciates the flexibility of making his own hours, but knows the challenge it is for other folks in town with regular nine-to-five jobs to make it to the traditional in-person town meetings.

While Ackermann values the age-old annual gathering for the opportunity to bring the community together, he has some ideas for changes that could involve more of the town: "I was telling my wife the other day, how cool would it be to have a town meeting day in the summertime? Like on a Saturday and try to get the whole town out with like potluck and stuff and talk about things." While some might balk at this deviation from tradition, perhaps Ackermann is on to something, trying to maintain the core of town meeting in a rapidly changing time — the opportunity to gather as a community and make decisions.

This year, that core value of direct democracy was tested by the pandemic. The public hearing held last Tuesday on Zoom told a different story. Despite not having an actual floor to debate on, there were lively conversations and respectful disagreements aplenty. Despite the relative convenience of Zoom and a later meeting time, however, only about 30 people logged on, several of whom were select board members who were running the meeting. The population of the town is around 1,400. Hogan, an incumbent

candidate for the Cabot Select Board, has been attending the various meetings on Zoom over the past year and says, "it's really hard to have that personal touch, that human touch that you have hearing people come up and speak disagree with you."

Goodrich, the other incumbent candidates for the Cabot Select Board, has lived in the town since 1979. She married into a family that has been in the town since the early 1800s and lives on the family farm in East Cabot. Goodrich is excited about Ackermann's candidacy, and encouraged him to run. "It's been great to see young people getting on board and getting involved; they've got a long future ahead of them here in town," she says. But Goodrich also knows the challenges new members present, contending that, "Every time you have changes in the board you have new ideas coming in. That's not a bad thing, but sometimes you can just end up repeating the process as you train new members."

Ackermann, however, feels ready to hit the ground running. He explained, "I've been listening in on meetings since December just so if I did get in, I'm not way behind and I kind of know what's going on a little bit." For Ackermann, that participation has been a commitment, one he knows others can't make, asking, "Anybody that has a regular job, how are they supposed to do that?"

When the dust settles at the end of this year's town meeting season, Ackermann, a self-proclaimed family man, has one hope if elected. In a year of turbulence and confusion amidst change, he wants to "bring people together, rather than tear them apart because the world's getting kind of crazy."



photo by Vanessa Fournier
Election official Jean Hackett enters absentee ballots into the vote tabulator at the Hardwick Fire Station March 2. Because of COVID-19, an actual town meeting was not held this year and voting was done by Australian ballot.



photo by Vanessa Fournier

A Barred Owl is seen resting on a pipe coming out of the old sugar house at Hazen Union on a bright sunny day February 25.

OUR COMMUNITIES

Town Party on March 9

HARDWICK -- Hardwick Area Neighbor to Neighbor will host a Hardwick area virtual town party on Tuesday, March 9, from 7 to 7:45 p.m. The party host, local resident Brent McCoy of Vermont Vaudeville fame (better known as Charlie), will help brighten mud season spirits.

During the party, every three minutes, participants will randomly paired (online) with a neighbor to answer questions like "What is one thing that made you smile today?" or "Who are you missing the most right now?"

This event is for free and for everyone and will take place on Zoom. Those interested may register at nektownparty.com/ and for a link and directions.

The NEK Virtual Town Party model was developed by Carey Crozier of Craftsbury. She has shared the blueprint with Hardwick Area Neighbor to Neighbor and other NEK communities.

For more information, email hardwickneighbors@gmail.com or call (802) 441-3301 for more information.

ACT 250 NOTICE MINOR APPLICATION #7C0718-1, 7C0718-2 10 V.S.A. §§ 6001 – 6093

On December 7, 2020 Gravel Construction CO, Inc., PO Box 78, Wolcott, VT 05860 filed application number 7C0718-1 for a project generally described as (i) an extension of time to operate the existing sand and gravel pit, with new deadline to close and complete all reclamation by October 15, 2021; (ii) a 12' x 70' modular office with on-site wastewater disposal and water supply; (iii) 32'x60' equipment maintenance garage; (iv) 20'x32' salt shed, (v) 10'x12' shed (vi) three 8'x45' trailers for equipment storage; and (vii) concrete block bins. The improvements are to support use of the site for the operation of Gravel Construction Co., Inc., and for sales and service of snow plowing equipment. On February 10, 2021, Gravel Construction Co., Inc., filed application 7C0718-2 for a project generally described as a 2-lot subdivision. The 7C0718-2 project includes improvements at the existing driveway from Vermont Route 15, and removal of a portion of existing earthen berms. The projects are located at 2142 VT Route 15 W in Hardwick, Vermont.

No hearing will be held and a permit will be issued unless, on or before March 18, 2021, a party notifies the District 7 Commission in writing at the address below of an issue requiring a hearing, or the Commission sets the matter for a hearing on its own motion. Any person as defined in 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1) may request a hearing. Any hearing request must be in writing to the address below, must state the criteria or sub-criteria at issue, why a hearing is required and what additional evidence will be presented at the hearing. Any hearing request by an adjoining property owner or other person eligible for party status under 10 V.S.A. § 6085(c)(1)(E) must include a petition for party status under the Act 250 Rules. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law may not be prepared unless the Commission holds a public hearing. The application and proposed permit may also be viewed on the Natural Resources Board's web site (<http://nrb.vermont.gov>) by clicking "Act 250 Database" and entering project numbers 7C0718-1 and/or 7C0718-2. If you have a disability for which you need accommodation in order to participate in this process (including participating in a public hearing, if one is held), please notify us as soon as possible, in order to allow us as much time as possible to accommodate your needs. For more information contact Kirsten Sultan at the address or telephone number below.

Dated at St Johnsbury, Vermont this 26th day of February, 2021.

Kirsten Sultan, P.E., Coordinator
District #7 Environmental Commission
374 Emerson Falls Road, Suite 4
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819
802-751-0126
kirsten.sultan@vermont.gov

OBITUARIES

NORMAN R. MOQUIN

CLAREMONT, N.H./WALDEN -- Norman R. Moquin, 93, passed away February 22, at the Sullivan County Healthcare Facility in Claremont. He was predeceased by

his wife, Beverly, in 2005. A spring burial will be held in the Vermont Veterans Cemetery in Randolph. The des Groseilliers Funeral Home is in care of arrangements.

MARCIA ANN (RIXE) (MURPHY) GOFF

COTTONWOOD, Minn. -- Marcia Ann (Rixe) (Murphy) Goff, age 75, died on Saturday, February 13, at Field Crest Assisted Living in Cottonwood. Marcia and her husband, Ron Goff, were teachers in Cabot. A service for family

and friends will be held in Little Falls, when the lilacs bloom, with a private burial in Graceville. Arrangements are by Sunset Funeral and Cremation Association, Echo, Minn. (sunsetfuneral-association.com).

RICHARD L. SMITH

WALDEN -- Richard L. Smith, 81, passed away February 27, at St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center in St. Johnsbury after a long fight with diabetes.

Richard was born in Jeffersonville, on July 9, 1939, to Carroll R. and Mary C. Smith. In 1944, they moved to Greensboro Bend where they farmed. Richard spent most of his life either farming or driving trucks. Richard is survived by two children: Michael L. Smith and his life partner Sandra Neuman of Lyndonville, and Connie Hope and her husband Elihu Goodell of Hyde Park. He also leaves behind his sister,

Bonnie, and her husband Gary Langdell of Wolcott, as well as five grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren. Richard was predeceased by his daughter Gail and grandson Jason Goodell. Grandchildren and great-grandchildren were always the light of his life. Richard is survived by two very close friends, Frank and Elsie Patoine of Walden, with whom many hours were spent playing cribbage, Thirty-One, and just visiting.

The des Groseilliers Funeral Home is in care of arrangements. Memories and condolences may be conveyed to the family at dgfunerals.com.

CHERIE WILLIAMS

CRAFTSBURY -- Cherie Williams, 84 years old, passed away peacefully at her home in Craftsbury on Sunday, Feb. 21. Cherie was born and raised on the Young farmstead by her loving grandparents Josephine and Fred Young and her mother, Irene Smith. She attended Craftsbury Academy and became active in sports, becoming a star basketball player earning awards for her prowess on the court.

On November 17, 1954, Cherie married Edmund T. Williams, her high school sweetheart, and settled in Craftsbury to raise her family. Cherie and Ed were together for 66 years and the proud parents of two lovely daughters, Gail and Lori.

Cherie enjoyed spending time with family and friends and reveled

in the simple pleasures of country drives and family gatherings. She was an avid reader of books and celebrity magazines and enjoyed the antics of all God's creatures at her many backyard bird feeders.

Cherie is survived by her husband Ed, daughters Lori Williams and Gail Williams and her husband Tom Boyle, her brother Mike Smith and his wife Debbie, her sister-in-law Nancy Smith, and close friend Susie Courchaine. She was predeceased by her brother, Sam Smith.

Services will be held at the convenience of the family. On-line condolences at curtis-britch.com. Arrangements are entrusted to the care of Curtis-Britch-Davis & Bouffard Funeral Home, Craftsbury Common.

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ANOTHER OPINION

A Call of the Wild: Wildlife Management Amidst Winds of Change

by David F. Kelley

GREENSBORO – Vermont's House Natural Resources Committee is considering reforms to wildlife management. It is about time.

In Vermont, wildlife is a public trust. Like any trust, the trustees have a duty to avoid waste and to act in the best interests of the beneficiary. In this case the beneficiary is the public. Management decisions should be in the public interest and should be based on sound science. Today they are not.

Much of the final decision-making power over Vermont's wildlife doesn't rest with the professionals at the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. That power rests with a volunteer board appointed for six-year terms. That board is chosen in an opaque, closed door process, without public input or review. Qualified applicants frequently don't even get an acknowledgment of their application.

It is a wildlife management scheme left over from another era, and it is impervious to change. The board has refused to end killing contests. It has refused to end no bag limits on some wildlife. It has refused to end the 24/365 open season for some species.

The board ignores the advice of experts on critical issues such as moose hunts. It willingly extends trapping seasons for river otters, despite the fact that river otters in Vermont are listed as a "Species of Greatest Conservation Need." The board continues to allow bears to be hounded by packs of dogs, even while cubs are still nursing. Today it is a board that doesn't even represent the interests of many hunters and fishermen, much less the public.

As the human footprint gets bigger, our economy, our climate and our culture are all changing. Worldwide, wildlife populations have shrunk by two thirds in the last fifty years. Here in Vermont, there are now 36 animals designated as endangered and 16 animals designated as threatened. Our Agency of Natural Resources says Vermont is losing over 1,500 acres of "significant wildlife habitat" every year. As technology evolves, "smart" rifles, drones, GPS systems, radio collars and live action trail cams make it even more imperative that we begin an open, transparent, and public conversation about our rules concerning wildlife.

I grew up in a Vermont family,

steeped in Vermont's hunting and fishing tradition. Among genuine Vermont hunters and fishermen (I should say fisherpeople because my wife fishes as much as I do), respect for the animals whose lives we take to feed ourselves is the eleventh commandment, and wanton waste of wildlife is a cardinal sin.

Whether we hunt, fish or just observe wildlife, almost all Vermonters have an abiding appreciation for wildlife. We passed an endangered species act a year before the federal government. According to data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the amount of time Vermonters spend hunting, fishing and wildlife watching is second only to Alaskans.

Even funding to support wildlife management is changing. The sale of hunting and fishing licenses today accounts for about a quarter of the state fish and wildlife budget. As important as that contribution is, a similar amount now comes from the general fund. But the largest share comes from federal taxes, the vast bulk of which are generated by the sale of gas, pleasure craft, yachts and other products that are unrelated to hunting and fishing.

Vermonters sense these winds of change. In a recent poll the University of Vermont's Center for Rural Studies asked: "Should regulations that impact wildlife that is trapped, hunted or fished be made by a volunteer board appointed by the governor, or by professional staff from the Department of Fish and Wildlife?" The overwhelming majority favored regulations established by the professional staff of the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

It is time for the Fish and Wildlife Board to become advisory, like other boards. The process for selecting members to serve on the board should be open and transparent. The board should reflect the diversity of all Vermonters, including the diversity within the angling and hunting community. It is time to recognize the need for new policies shaped by sound science, professional wildlife biologists, and the public interest. During the civil rights movement Phil Ochs sang, "What's that I hear? It's the sound of freedom calling. It's the sound of old ways falling." Now it is also the sound of wildlife and wildlife habitat calling. Fortunately, some Vermont Legislators are listening.

[Editor's note: David Kelley is a member of the Board of the Vermont Wildlife Coalition.]



photo by Anna Kolosky

Cabot School school nurses and some others in the school have received the COVID vaccine, but others in the school await the state roll-out for educators that will depend on the vaccine supplied to the state.

Cabot School Waits for Vaccine Roll-out

by Anna Kolosky

CABOT – With COVID cases rising in Vermont, Cabot school has yet to receive any vaccines for its faculty or staff.

"There has been no vaccine roll-out yet," Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (CCSU) Superintendent Mark Tucker said. "School staff in Vermont were not prioritized because of the limited vaccine supply."

The CCSU includes a number of schools alongside Cabot: Twinfield, Barnet, Danville, Peacham, Waterford, and Walden. Over the summer, these schools spent a great deal of time developing reopening plans that realistically focused on getting students back to school safely, Tucker added.

According to Tucker, the state opted to focus on healthcare workers and persons in confined care, followed by an age-banding strategy. This strategy would be to supply vaccines to people 75 and older, then 70 and older, and then 65 and older, Tucker added.

"Under this scheme, the only school staff who have received vaccination are school nurses and certain others whose work makes it difficult for them to maintain social distancing," Tucker said. "Any of those persons would have registered for vaccination through the local hospital, and I don't actually know who has been vaccinated."

In Gov. Phil Scott's inaugural address, he expressed his hope to have students completely back in school for in-person instruction "sometime in April." According to a Strong and Health Schools Survey by the Agency of Education,

56.85% of schools are still using hybrid learning, while 13.65% are completely remote.

According to Tucker, the operational guidelines from the Department of Health and Agency of Education included social distancing restrictions of three feet in grades PK-6 and six feet for grades 7-12.

"Each school, in looking at their physical classroom layouts and number of students in each grade, had to determine if they could conform to these distancing guidelines," Tucker said. "This worked for the elementary grades PK-6, in some cases for grades 7-8, in no cases for the three high schools."

Cabot and the other schools in the CCSU currently function with a mix of operational modes, with students alternating between in-person and remote classes, Tucker said.

According to Tucker, the only way to achieve full in-person instruction is to have the state amend the distancing guidelines and get over the school staff vaccination hurdle. With a lack of vaccines and room, school officials are skeptical over attaining the governor's goals while also maintaining the safety of both students and parents.

"This discussion of having kids back for in-school instruction is a weird situation of aspiration colliding with reality," Tucker said. "We do have most of our kids attending in-person, and even if we said tomorrow that all students can return, we will likely still have parents who do not want to do this, and we will have to continue some level of remote instruction."

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Thursday, March 4

JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

GRACE FREE VIRTUAL COMMUNITY WORKSHOP. Free online art class every Thursday, 1 - 3 p.m. Join at <https://meet.jit.si/GRACECommunityWorkshop>. Free materials kit available for pickup or delivery. Information: carol@wonderartsvt.org or 802-472-6857.

RECYCLE RIGHT: From Blue Bin to Beyond, a free webinar in the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Sustainability Series, 4 - 5:30 p.m. Register at cvswmd.org/workshop-registration. Participants will be entered to win a free recycling bin.

MONTHLY PARENT CAFE SERIES, hosted by Healthy Lamoille Valley, the first Thursday of each month, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. on Zoom. These will highlight a community resource or parenting skill and encourage conversation with other parents/caregivers. Information and pre-registration at healthylamoillevalley.org/parent-cafe-series.

Friday, March 5

BLACK LIVES MATTER/Peace and Justice Vigil, 5 - 6 p.m., Fridays, Peace Park, Hardwick. All welcome.

JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

ets at highlandartsvt.com.
EVERYONE EATS PROGRAM, free frozen meal, Fridays, 3:30 - 5:30 p.m., Wolcott United Methodist Church, 4023 Vt. Rt. 15. No pre-registration needed. Information: ereid@capstonevt.org.

GREENSBORO FREE LIBRARY'S annual Chili Dinner Fundraiser, 4:30 - 6 p.m. Heat-and-eat dinner, curbside pick-up, at the church on Wilson St., 7 p.m. Online premiere show of local youth talent. Information: 533-2531, greensborofree@gmail.com.

Saturday, March 6

BLACK LIVES MATTER/Peace and Justice Vigil, 3 - 5 p.m., Saturdays, South Main at Wolcott Street, Hardwick. All welcome.

Monday, March 8

CELEBRATE RECOVERY, Mondays, 6 p.m., Touch of Grace AG Church, 104 Vt. Rt. 16, E. Hardwick. Men's Addiction Group. Information: 802-279-2185.

GRACE presents free, virtual weekly art prompts. Each week GRACE will post a piece of art

from their "Outsider Art" collection for people to use as inspiration for their own original creation. These will be available on Mondays at <https://graceart.org/virtual-art-community/virtual-art-prompts/> with responses due by Sunday evenings. Email responses to AmeriCorpsVista@WonderArtsVT.org.

Tuesday, March 9

JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

THE DADS' GROUP, every Tuesday, 8-9 p.m., on Zoom. A great place to connect with other Dads. Information and link to the Zoom meeting: Rob at rcary@LRCVT.org or 802-730-3000.

THE MOMS IN RECOVERY Support Program, tailored to support pregnant and parenting mothers and their families. In person, every Tuesday, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Suite 2, Morrisville. Information: crystal.morrissey@ncvrc.com, 802-635-0084.

HARDWICK AREA VIRTUAL TOWN PARTY via Zoom, 7 - 7:45 p.m. Register at <https://nektown-party.com/>. Sponsored by Hardwick Area Neighbor to Neighbor.

Wednesday, March 10

JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY, 122 School St., Rm. 2., Marshfield, Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m. Curbside service only. Home deliveries available for senior citizens within a 10 mile radius. Information: 802-426-3581 or jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com.

EAST HARDWICK GRANGE SUPPER, a free meal for the community, Wednesdays, 5 - 6 p.m. Caledonia Grange #9, 88 East Church St., East Hardwick. A curbside dinner for the whole family to enjoy. Information or delivery: easthardwickgrange@gmail.com or 472-8987.

GRACE presents free pre-k art classes, Wednesdays at 11 a.m. <https://meet.jit.si/GRACEFreeFamilyWorkshop>. Free kits available with materials to cover the series. carol@wonderartsvt.org to arrange pickup.

Exhibits

HIGHLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS, Greensboro, 2875 Hardwick St., outdoor art experience. Ski or snowshoe at your own pace, and on your own time, in and through artwork by Vermont artists. The 1.8-mile trail begins at HCA and loops to the neighboring Wilson Farm. Open daily, weather permitting from dawn to dusk. Social distancing and masks required. Register online at highlandartsvt.org.

RECENT PHOTOGRAPHS of Michael Sardina: Reflections on the Northeast Kingdom. The Parker Pie Gallery, West Glover, through April 17.

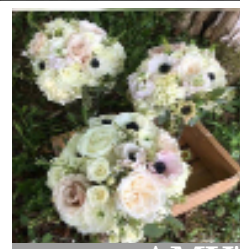
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ANOTHER OPINION

Healing America

by Joe Benning, State Senator, Caledonia District

LYNDON – On my first full day as a Vermont State Senator, the Senate broke for lunch. Veteran lawmakers went off to wherever they'd learned to go, but as a newbie I wasn't quite sure what to do with myself. Another newbie remained right in front of me as the chamber emptied out. He suddenly noticed I was behind him. I was surprised when he unexpectedly said: "Hey, want to do lunch?"

Although I'd never met Philip Baruth before, I'd heard of him. I knew him as an urban Democrat/Progressive from the state's most populous county, a liberal blog writer and commentator on Vermont Public Radio. He was, and is, a very good writer. As a Republican from one of the most rural parts of Vermont, I knew we were very different politically. His question thus caught me off guard. But at that moment I had no idea what to do with myself until the senate reconvened. Any hesitancy on my part evaporated when he said: "I'll treat."

That lunch in January of 2011 turned out to be a wonderful education for both of us. Prior to COVID-19, we'd endeavored to lunch together once a week during sessions, even when debating against each other on bills that brought much emotion. Press reporters did double takes when they'd see us chatting and laughing together in Montpelier's restaurants, having just witnessed those debates. Our friendly banter didn't compute.

Our wives once joined us on a trip to Miami for a national legislative conference when Philip was majority leader and I was minority leader. Former Governor Jim Douglas was one of the conference speakers. Philip had picked on Governor Douglas in his previous media life, so I was a little nervous when the Governor asked to have dinner with us fellow Vermonters, but it turned out to be a wonderful time.

The above stories are why I remain optimistic that, with work, we can heal this divided America. Each of us must first recognize the work begins with a hard look in the mirror. As a Republican who believes in a limited and frugal government

protecting our constitutional freedoms, I see these concepts as critical to any legislative debate seeking to solve problems. But for me to achieve connection with a debate audience, that audience must first believe I come from a moral high ground.

At present, my party's uncomfortable image is clouding their view. To clear that view, my party must absolutely divorce itself from those promoting intolerance, conspiracy theories, bigotry and hate. The extremist mentality which led to the unfortunate events of January 6 cannot go unchecked.

Conservative ideas will fall on deaf ears if that image remains. Republican leaders must erase it.


At the same time, I hope my friend Philip and his liberal colleagues recognize a growing image problem on the left. Coordinated extremists shouting down speakers they dislike, physically breaking up rally-goers gathered for a cause they disagree with and randomly destroying property are not petty concerns. They are harbingers of the very same "ends-justifies-the-means" intolerant mindset now infecting extremists on the right. Democrat/Progressive leaders must recognize that liberal ideas will also fall on deaf ears if that image continues to grow. Liberal leaders must erase it.

The best antidote to division in America is the isolation and suppression of extremists within. Violence and destruction, whether conducted by those frustrated by a lack of government attention or those frustrated with an overreach of government attention, cannot be tolerated or excused. Extremism, whose objective is complete annihilation of the other side, will never heal America. Downplaying your own side's sins by pointing to the other side's sins is a defense tactic that scuttles any ability to move forward. Finally, each side's leaders must drill home the fact that consensus is not treason. Indeed, it is the only intelligent way to solve human-made problems.

We are not the first generation to face a divided America. We will not be the last. It will take strength and courage from leaders on both sides to bridge the current divide, but it can, and will, be done. Maybe we should all start with a good lunch.




photo by Vanessa Fournier
Snowmobilers enjoyed ideal trail conditions in Hardwick recently.



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YANKEE NOTEBOOK

It Smelled Bad, Anyway

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – A little after six each morning, I greet Monsieur Café effusively, pour him a carafe full of fresh water, and add a couple of heaping soup-spoonfuls of fresh coffee. I call in Kiki from her morning yard patrol and, while I check my e-mail, inhale deeply the wonderful aroma that suffuses the house. All will be well with the world that day.

My earliest memories of coffee, from before the war, have as much to do with sound as aroma. My parents lightened and sweetened their java with Red Cross condensed milk, which poured slow as molasses from the larger of two holes my father punched in the small, rimless can. It was the stirring that I remember. Both parents were deaf and couldn't hear the tink-tink sound of the spoon on the cup – especially my father, who'd aspired briefly to be a pharmacist like his father, and believed in a thorough mixing of ingredients (decades later, it drove my wife nuts). They never offered me a taste. It was a drink for grownups, and it smelled bad to me, anyway.

During the war, when it was apparently very hard to come by, they switched to Postum, the American version of the German Ersatz. I did try that. One taste was enough for me.

I drank tea instead. But then, in the late fall of 1957, I was dating a coed at Bennington College. Saturdays after work I swung my old Plymouth southward from the Adirondacks and toiled down Route 22 in the early darkness to the promise of a warm welcome and a hot shower. One evening, dog-tired, I stopped on the way at a truck stop in Eagle Bridge, New York – famed as the home of Grandma Moses – went in for a cup of tea, and sat down on the only empty stool, right in the middle of a long row of truckers. “What’ll it be?” asked the counter girl.

I looked left; I looked right – and met the interested gaze of about a dozen very burly men. “Coffee!” I declared. “Black!” And since that evening I’ve never looked back.

The origin of coffee is, as the saying goes, shrouded in myth; but there seems to be general agreement that it was discovered in medieval times in the Kingdom of Sheba – now parts of Yemen

and Ethiopia – by a goatherd who noticed that his animals were a lot peppier after they ate the berries of a particular bush. Naturally, he told his priest (an abbot, actually), who made a potation of crushed berries and was delighted to find that it kept him awake during evening prayers. He shared the new drink with his monks. The sleepy old monastery was sleepy no longer.

The name for coffee, first Arabic, changed as it became Turkish, and then Dutch, following the rapid spread of its use from the Arabian Peninsula into Europe, where it had arrived by the 17th century. Naturally, like many popular new things, it was greeted with suspicion by religious authorities. When it reached Venice, the pope was asked to rule if it was indeed mephistophelean. He sipped a cup and uttered the papal equivalent of, “Hmm. Not bad!”

It would be hard to exaggerate coffee’s popularity in Europe. By 1650 there were already over three hundred “coffee houses” in London. One hundred years later, during the heyday of one of literature’s fiercest and most erudite conversationalists, Samuel Johnson, all the great issues of the day were debated there. Johnson, owing to chronic penury, rejoiced that he could argue all day for almost nothing, in what became known as “penny parliaments.”

As a child, I often heard that coffee would stunt my growth. As an adult, I read that people who drink coffee black and whiskey neat, and shower in the morning (all of which I do), are among those most at risk for developing psychopathy. I’d rather give up my sanity than my habits, so I’ve been resigned. But suddenly, good news: According to studies cited in the February 26 issue of ‘The Week,’ folks who drink two or more cups a day of caffeinated black coffee enjoy a 30 percent decreased risk of heart failure, compared to those who drink none at all.

This month, as the air temperature rises, and the immunity to COVID spreads with vaccinations, I long for the day the morning sun at last breaks over the parapets on the south side of State Street and floods the tables on the sidewalk outside the coffee shop. Then I will sit with my chums as we convene our penny parliament and solve the world’s problems over a cup of joe – black!

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Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



“WHAT KIND OF CONSPIRACY THEORY ARE YOU HARBORING?...”

ANOTHER OPINION

Heartened by Candidate Support

by Eric Remick

HARDWICK – Kudos to the Gazette for interviewing candidates for the select board. This is even a greater public service than usual because options to meet in person are so limited during the pandemic.

I was heartened to read that all three candidates support the upgrades to the sewer plant. The sewer plant is a critical piece of infrastructure that supports the town's ability to attract and retain businesses and residents. Investing in the plant upgrades is a smart move for the town.

There was a general theme across all three interviews of supporting economic development, creating opportunities for young people, and creating and retaining jobs in our area. Given the general enthusiasm for promoting economic development and creating opportunity and jobs, I would like to highlight the Yellow Barn's role in accomplishing these objectives.

The Yellow Barn project will create 50 new jobs in the first three years. Projections from the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development indicate that in the first five years the Yellow Barn will cause a net increase of over 100 jobs and a net personal income growth of \$8.1 million in our area. The project will rehabilitate the historic barn at the Western entrance to Hardwick, sprucing it up on the outside and re-purposing it on the inside into a retail store for Cabot Creamery. The project also includes a new building on the same property to house a cheese aging facility for Jasper Hill Farm, a new food hub space for the Center for an Agricultural

Economy, and space for two more businesses yet to be determined. There will be patio space on the back of the barn, facing the rail trail and open to the public. Two of the three anchor tenants (CAE and JHF) are already filling open positions in anticipation of expansion. And this is only the beginning.

The Yellow Barn project is a public-private partnership over three years in the making in which both the public and the private aspects are necessary for success. Under town ownership, the project has been able to garner unprecedented local, state, and federal support. These grant funds are already leveraging private investment: the anchor tenants are investing significant resources to fit the buildings up to meet their specific needs. The combination of this public and private investment will bring a state-of-the-art facility to Hardwick that will be an economic engine which creates jobs and opportunities for youth (and the more advanced in age). Once built, the project will be completely self-supporting. Under town ownership the Yellow Barn will not be on the grand list. However, the project will make payments to the town in lieu of paying a municipal tax bill.

The Yellow Barn project is one example of the town taking an active role in working to attract and retain businesses in our community to create jobs and opportunities. In the same way that investing in the sewer plant is an investment in the future of our town, investing in the Yellow Barn is also an investment in our future. For more information visit nvda.net/yellow_barn/.

[Eric Remick is the chair of the Hardwick Select Board.]

LETTERS FROM READERS

Updates on Key Bills Available

To the editor:

Since we won't be meeting in person at town meeting this year, I've published a mid-session update on key bills and how they could impact you. Top priorities: COVID-19, broadband, childcare, higher education, reappointment, and the budget. Read the mid-session update at katherinesimsforhouse.com/report.

I also want to check in: Are we addressing your priorities? What's most important to you this year? I want to know, so I've created the priorities poll: katherinesimsforhouse.com/poll.

house.com/poll.

Please join me to share your ideas and get answers to your questions during my office hours every second Sunday of the month from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. Learn more and sign up at KatherineSimsforHouse.com.

If you need assistance or want to discuss your priorities or needs, please reach out anytime. I look forward to connecting with you.

Katherine Sims
State Representative,
Orleans-Caledonia
802-673-7376 (c)



NCHC is hiring for the following positions:

Behavioral Health Specialist – (32-40 hrs/wk) Hardwick Area Health Center

Are you a new Behavioral Health graduate seeking a paid opportunity to obtain experience and hours towards licensure? NCHC is seeking a Master's level social worker or mental health counselor to work as our Behavioral Health Specialist at the Hardwick Area Health Center. The Behavioral Health Specialist provides coordinated team care including triage, assessments, crisis management and short-term counseling. This is a full-time 32-40 Hour Position. The opportunity involves working in the primary care settings to provide integrated behavioral health services as part of our patients' care delivery team. Addiction experience a plus. License eligible Master's degree required. Supervision provided towards licensure. Competitive benefits package including Health, Vision, Dental, LTD, Life, 403b, and generous earned time.

Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner – (Full/Part-time) Northern Counties Health Care

Northern Counties Health Care is looking for an energetic Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (Adult or Family) to help us achieve our goal of providing excellent healthcare to under-served populations within our federally qualified health centers. As a provider at Northern Counties Health Care you will have the opportunity to provide psychiatric services necessary for prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of psychiatric disorders; you'll work with an integrated Behavioral Healthcare team; you'll be involved in strategic planning and quality improvement. We offer the ultimate work/life balance with flexible scheduling and 80% clinic time to 20% administrative. The ideal candidate will have a current license to practice as a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner in the state of Vermont and will be certified in BLS. Clinical supervision is provided. Competitive benefits package including Health, Vision, Dental, LTD, Life, 403b, and generous earned time.

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IN THE GARDEN

The Basics of a Garden Library

by Henry Homeyer

CORNISH FLAT, N.H. – I know that many people, especially gardeners under the age of forty, use the internet to find the answers to their questions. That is fine, but the internet is full of fake news and spurious assertions. I do use the web, but if I want to learn about something in-depth, I reach for a book. People who write books generally write about things they know. Garden books are written by gardeners.

Some years ago, I taught a class in sustainable gardening at Granite State College, part of the University of New Hampshire system. I asked my students to buy *“The Garden Primer”* by Barbara Damrosch. This paperback is a compact 800-pages of readable, educational information about nearly every aspect of gardening. It came out in 2008 but is still in print. Everyone could benefit by owning it.

For a book on vegetable gardening there is none better than Vermont’s own Ed Smith’s *“The Vegetable Gardener’s Bible.”* With more than a million copies sold, this book goes into detail

Armitage: *“Herbaceous Perennial Plants: A Treatise on their Identification, Culture, and Garden Attributes.”* This book came out in 1989 and it is now its fourth edition, which came out in 2020. My goal for the winter is to read it, or the relevant parts, cover to cover. Why? Because I can learn from a man who is not only a Ph.D. professor, but a hands-on gardener of many decades.

There are plants in the book that I absolutely lust for. Unusual plants that will fill niches in my diverse garden beds. It also tells me why some plants I have tried have died out. It informs me about named varieties to look for that have special attributes.

Dr. Armitage is opinionated and often funny. I like that. It has some photos, but certainly not



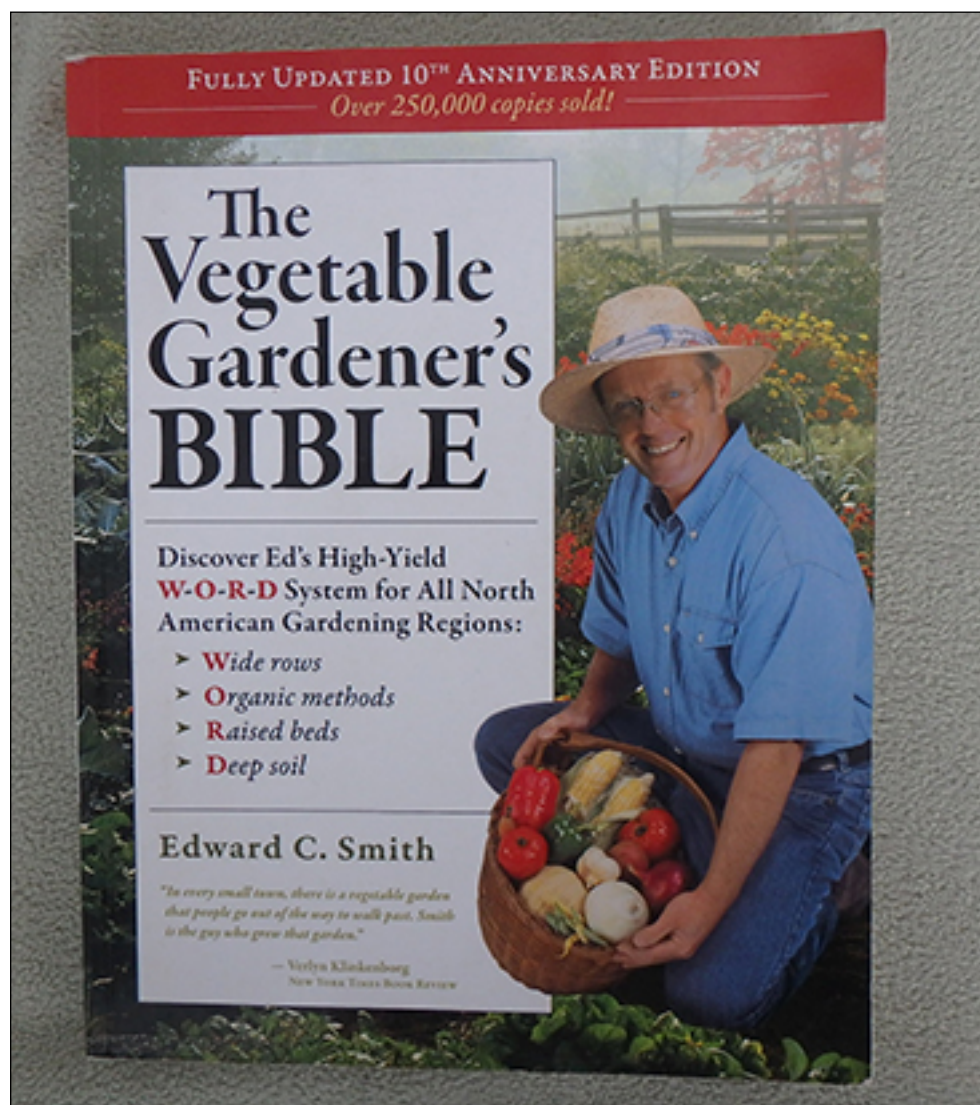
courtesy photo
I will never have too many gardening books.

one for every flower mentioned. This is not a coffee table book, but a book for plant collectors, landscapers - and fanatics. At just under \$80, I think it’s a bargain.

Trees? The most prolific and best-informed expert, in my opinion, is Michael Dirr. I use his *“Manual of Woody Landscape Plants: Their Identification, Ornamental Characteristics, Culture, Propagation and Uses”* every week of the year. It has informed me about any tree or shrub I want to know about. Now in its 6th edition, it sells new for \$81.80, but it is available used for much less (usually earlier editions).

Professor Dirr also has written many other books, several of them with terrific color photos (in contrast to his Manual, described above, which has only drawings). I spent one winter going through his *“Dirr’s Encyclopedia of Trees and Shrubs”* with its descriptions of 3,700 species and cultivars and 3,500 photos.

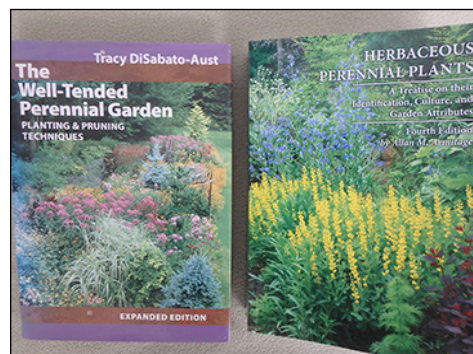
Pruning is key to keeping your woody plants looking good. My favorite pruning book is by Lee Reich, *“The Pruning Book.”* With both diagrams and photo-



courtesy photo
Ed Smith’s book on vegetables should be in your collection.

graphs, this book covers many species and their specific needs. His book, *“Grow Fruit Naturally”* is another excellent book you might want.

Soil is the key to good



courtesy photo
Two fine books on perennial flowers.

gardening, but a topic that is usually boring and scientifically described. Want an easy explanation of how it works? Try a book by Dianne Miessler, *“Grow Your Soil: Harness the Power of the Soil Food Web to Create Your Best Garden Ever.”* It explains very well how soils work, what soil test results mean, and how to correct deficiencies. You don’t need to be a scientist to read this one. (\$16.95 in paper).

Stone is a key element in many gardens, part of the bones of a garden. Dan Snow, a Vermont dry stonewaller and stone artist, has written a number of fine books on using stone. *“Listening to Stone”* and *“In the Company of*

Stone”, both offer practical and philosophical advice and share many fine photos of his projects.

Gordon Hayward, a Vermont landscape designer and prolific author, also has an excellent book on how to use stone, *“Stone in the Garden: Inspiring Designs and Practical Projects.”* Want to build a stone path or a retaining wall? Hayward simplifies the process. As with Dan Snow’s books, the great photographs are full of ideas.

Sydney Eddison is another prolific garden writer with many fine titles. Her *“The Gardener’s Palette: Creating Color in the Garden”* taught me a lot about the use of colors in the garden. Her advice is always practical and nicely explained.

So, invest in some books this winter, curl up in a comfy place and see what you can learn that will help you, come spring.



courtesy photo
Two of my favorite books by Sydney Eddison.

on every veggie you could grow – when and how to plant, how long seeds last, when to harvest, and much more.

Are you interested in flower gardening? My first choice of books would be Tracy DiSabato-Aust’s book *“The Well-Tended Perennial Garden: Planting & Pruning Techniques.”* She is obviously a well-experienced gardener and designer, and one who has learned to get her flowers to re-bloom, or bloom at a shorter height, and who knows how much sun and water each needs. Staking? Dividing plants? It’s all there and more.

For the serious flower gardener or landscape professional, I would recommend an 1,100-page book by Allan M.



courtesy photo
Michael Dirr is the author of several fine books on trees and shrubs.

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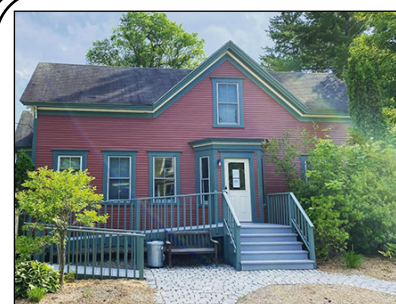
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*photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Elizabeth Rossano (right) hands Karen Broderick (left) of Hardwick a free potato donut on Monday. Broderick was on her way to work at Copley Hospital.*

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SPORTS



photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Craftsbury Charger Sadie Skorstad (#15) moves the ball toward the basket past Morgan Reeve (left) and Gracie Beck (right) of Peoples during play in the World War II Memorial Gymnasium Thursday. The Chargers fell to the Wolves 57-16.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Ella Gillespie of Craftsbury (#23) races past Emma Courtemanche of Peoples Academy February 25. The Wolves beat the Chargers 57-16.

Lady Chargers Fall to Peoples in Season Opener

by Ken Brown

MORRISVILLE – In its first varsity girls’ basketball game in over three years, the Craftsbury Academy Lady Chargers fell to Division III power Peoples Academy at home last week.

Shelby Wells scored a game-high 18 points to lead the Lady Wolves to a dominant 57-16 road win Thursday night. Gracie Beck added 11 in the win as PA improved to 4-0 on the season. Ella Gillespie led Craftsbury with seven points and Savannah Boyce chipped in with five in the loss.

“Our season opener was against a very talented team, so it was definitely challenging preparing for all the different types of athletes they can throw at you. We’re essentially a brand new team starting from scratch at the varsity level. A lot of the girls are great teammates having played together on the soccer field, but it will take some time to learn everyone’s tendencies on the basketball court. I thought the girls played amazing in the first quarter and I loved how our starting five came out and challenged them. We look forward to competing against them again this week,” said head coach Gabriela Silva.

Craftsbury paused their varsity girls’ program after the 2017 season due to lack of participation numbers. The Lady Chargers made it to Division IV Final Four at the Barre Auditorium that season.

Craftsbury traveled to Peoples Academy for the rematch on Tuesday and is scheduled to host Twinfield on Saturday.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
 Craftsbury girls take a time out in a match against Peoples Academy February 25: coach Gabriela Silva (center), players (from left) Ade Gillespie, Sophia Augsberger, Ida Eames, assistant coach Mariah LeVangie, Ella Gillespie, Sage Sweeney and Savannah Boyce.

SPORTS

SKI REPORT

Craftsbury Boys Tie U-32 for 1st in Cross Country Ski Race



The Craftsbury team heads out on course in a mass start.

by Eric Hanson

CRAFTSBURY – After postponing the race twice because of cold weather and no indoor facilities due to COVID, seven high school teams raced on February 24 at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center. Harwood Union was the official race host. The Craftsbury Academy (CA) team went out first at 9 a.m. under ideal snow conditions. In a team mass start, the boys and girls paced off each other. Harwood, U-32, St. Johnsbury, Lamoille Union, Peoples Academy, and Montpelier raced on the hour with Montpelier wrapping things up at 3 p.m. The snow slowed as temperatures approached 40 F by mid-day, so the early teams (CA, Harwood, and U-32) skied when conditions were considerably faster.

In the boys' 5 km varsity race, CA's Cormac Leahy (12:18) and Charlie Krebs finished one-two, with

Greensboro's Leo Circosta (independent) third. U-32 skiers took the next four spots. Other CA skiers included Aiden Casey (eighth), Alan Moody (ninth), Linden Stelma-Leonard (16th), Orion Cenkl (17th), and Aidan Moffatt 38th of the 50 skiers entered.

CA and Harwood tied for first with 18 points each for the team score, followed by Harwood (top four skiers). In the girls' varsity 5 km race, CA's Camille Bolduc (13:36) won by almost a minute ahead of Julia Thurston of Harwood. Several CA eighth graders tried their ski skills in the varsity race with Amelia Costa (independent), Ruth Krebs, and Anika Leahy placing 5-7 and finishing within seconds of each other. The U-32 girls edged out Harwood for the top team score. CA did not have enough girls for a team score. In the 2.5 km JV girls' race, CA's Sadie Skorstad (9:17) had her first-ever

win, finishing two seconds ahead of teammate Ava Purdy. Emily Kimball (Peoples) placed third. Hazen's Charlie Kehler won the middle school 2.5 km boys' race (6:18).

Craftsbury Academy is co-hosting the Vermont State High School Championships on March 8 and 10 at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center. The races will be held with a much different format than normal, with boys racing on March 8 (Division 1 in the morning and Division 2 in the afternoon) and the girls on March 10 (Division 2 in the a.m., Division 1 in the p.m.). The athletes will race a 3.8 km classic race and then, an hour later, ski a 3.5 km freestyle race. In a normal year, the classic and freestyle races are held on separate days and include a relay component. No spectators will be allowed.

Local Skiers Take on the Henchy Cup Races

CRAFTSBURY – On Feb. 20 and 21, young and old raced the Ruthies Run trail as part of the weekend of Bill Henchey Memorial Cup races.

Bill Henchey, a ski trail groomer, race official, ski instructor and general promoter of skiing, passed away unexpectedly in January while out on a ski after work. Although saddened by his passing, we celebrate his life and passion for skiing. And those racing

this weekend honored him.

On Saturday, the ladies started the weekend with the U16 (under 16) race. Julia Thurston from Mansfield Nordic Club won in 23:26, with Craftsbury Nordic Ski Club (CNSC) skiers not far behind: Amelia Circosta (3), Anika Leahy (5), and Ruth Krebs (7). In the 15 km master's race, CNSC coaches showed proof of what they teach with Anna Schultz and Audrey Mangan going 1-2. Alison Van Akkeren placed tenth overall (first in M7 age group).

With no national races this year, the Craftsbury Green Racing Project (GRP) skiers showed their prowess, with Caitlin Patterson winning by over 2-1/2 minutes (40:44) ahead of teammates Margie Freed (2) and Michaela Keller-Miller (4). CNSC skier Camille Bolduc was seventh overall (first U18). Adrienne Remick was 27th. Patterson spent the first half of the winter racing in Europe for the U.S. Ski Team.

On Sunday, the U16 boys took to the 7.5 km course, which is longer than they usually race. Fin Bailey from Stratton Mountain School won in 19:45, followed by Craftsbury skiers Charlie Krebs (8), Leo Cirosta (10), Charlie Kehler (11th overall and first U14), Alan Moody (19), and Sage Grossi (20). In the men's masters' 20 km, CNSC coach Jeff Tucker (49:27) outpaced former GRP skiers Nils Koons, Alex Howe, and fellow coach Jake Barton. Also in the mix were Ethan Dreissigacker (11), Damian Bolduc (20), Adrian Owens (22), and Eric Remick (27). In the men's open 20 km race, Craftsbury GRP skiers took the top three spots, with Adam Martin first (45:27) followed by Braden Becker and Akeo Maifield-Carucci. The Craftsbury young men had a fine showing, with CNSC skier Aiden Casey leading the way in seventh. Casey started 30 seconds ahead of Green Mountain Valley School's Aidan Burt, who caught him mid-way through the race. Casey hung on to Burt the rest of the way, having one of his better races. Casey is a student at Craftsbury Academy. Other CNSC skiers included Jack Young (9), Cormac Leahy (15), Tzevi Schwartz (21), and Linden Stelma-Leonard (37).



photo by Dominique Dubuque

CA's Cormac Leahy finishes strong down the stretch.

SPORTS

Lady Trojans Edged by St. Jay Academy

by Ken Brown

PLAINFIELD – St. Johnsbury Academy’s junior varsity edged the Twinfield/Cabot girls’ basketball team last week, evening their record at 1-1 on the season.

Emma Greenan scored 10 points to lead the Lady Hilltoppers to a 31-28 road win over Twinfield/Cabot Thursday night. Eighth grader Jorga Washburn paced the Lady Trojans with nine in the loss.

“We led the whole game except maybe two minutes down the stretch, but we’re young and still learning. They’re a big school with big athletic kids, so there were probable some nerves early, but the

girls did a nice job of settling in,” said head coach Jason Cushing. Alice McLaine and Ginger Klarich added six points apiece for Twinfield/Cabot. The difference in the game came down to the Lady Trojans struggles at the free throw line, where they converted only 8-25 attempts.

“We definitely have some things to work on and free throws is one of them. It’s still early, but we need to get better in our offensive sets, as well. The girls are doing a nice job of executing our defensive pressure and that creates some easy buckets, but late in a game we struggle to run our half-court offense,” said Cushing.

Twinfield/Cabot travels to Oxbow on Wednesday and will travel to Craftsbury Academy on Saturday.

Northfield too Much for Depleted Chargers

by Ken Brown

NORTHFIELD – The Craftsbury Academy boys’ basketball team struggled with lack of depth and a talented Division III Northfield team last week, falling to 0-3 on the season.

Ethan Miller led Northfield with 14 points in a dominant 72-24 road win over the Chargers Friday night. Caiden Crawford-Stempil added 12 and Preston Lilly added 8 as the Marauders took advantage of a CA team that dressed only six players for the game.

“We had a rough first half and dug ourselves a hole against a good team. The guys started to run the offense a little better by the fourth quarter and I’m

proud of how the guys fought and never gave up despite only having one sub,” said head coach Tyler Gillespie.

Freshman Dylan Washburn continues to be a bright spot for the Chargers as he poured in a game-high 16 points. Logan Lanphere chipped in with 6.

“It’s impressive how big Dylan has stepped up for us so far as just a freshman. He has good leadership qualities already and I look forward to seeing how he leads this program over the next few years,” said Gillespie.

Craftsbury’s challenging schedule continued with a trip to Winooski on Monday and another road trip to red-hot Twinfield on Thursday night.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
An entry in the East Hardwick Neighborhood Organization Snow Creation Challenge is this hitchhiking snow lady made by Cheryl and Gary Michaels of East Hardwick. For more information on the contest, which will run until March 15, email ehneighborhood@gmail.com. First, second and third place prizes will be awarded.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
One of the four families that participated in the Winter Shelter Build event stand by their Quinzee (from left): Ben Gonyaw, Liam Wood, David Gonyaw and Finn Wood, all from Derby Line. The event was held at the Highland Center for the Arts on February 20. The instructors were Sterling College outdoor education students Bryan Emery and Anna Dye.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
Wolcott facilities manager Phil Cardinal disinfects sleds after every recess, following COVID-19 protocol.

SPORTS



photo by Vanessa Fournier
Hazen senior Isaiah Baker drives past Colton Fordham of Randolph during action in the Wildcats den February 23. Won 67-48.



photo by Vanessa Fournier
Hazen senior Ethan Shopland heads for the basket guarded by Cole Jacques (left) and Chase Higgins (right) of Randolph Tuesday.

Wildcats Pass Early Season Divisional Test

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – The Hazen Union boys' basketball team blew past divisional power Randolph and defending Division III champion Thetford last week to improve to a perfect 4-0 on the season.

Isaiah Baker scored a game-high 27 points and Ethan Shopland added 12 to lead the Wildcats to a 67-48 home win over Randolph on 'Senior Night' last Tuesday. Jadon Baker chipped in with 12 of his own and Tyler Rivard pulled down double digit rebounds as Hazen broke open a close game in the third quarter and never looked back. Levi West led the Ghosts with 20 as they fell to 2-2 on the season.

"They have a ton of size and athleticism, but our added physicality proved true again and Tyler was key for us in this game. He works so hard for us inside and is just a great communicator for us on the floor," said head coach Aaron Hill.

Baker and Shopland were honored on "Senior Night" in what normally would have been a packed house at the Cat Den. Their mothers, Erica Baker and Amy Shopland, partnered with Hardwick Community Television to set up a virtual tribute and halftime montage for the senior stars that saw an outpouring of messages come in from former Wildcat players, coaches, as well as fans and alumni from all over the country. The senior duo has played organized basketball together their whole lives and Coach Hill sees them as role models to follow on and off the basketball court.

"We have been so fortunate here at Hazen to see so many great players come through who have built this program into what it is today, and Isaiah and Ethan have added themselves to that list. They don't just put the time in to be better players, they dedicate and take pride in the program and the

"We struggled a little early and they did a nice job of breaking our man press, but we switched to a zone and the guys did a nice job of executing it the last three quarters."

community that they represent and that is so rare in this world these days. You see so much 'me, me, me' nowadays and the focus on the individual, but Ethan and Isaiah are not built like that and I think it is just awesome to have kids like them be leaders for your program and be role models for our community," said Hill.

Isaiah Baker kept his hot hand Friday night, pouring in 28 and dishing 5 assists to lead the Wildcats

past Thetford 78-59. Sophomore Jadon Baker had another solid game with 18 points as Hazen Union outscored the Panthers 57-39 in the final three quarters. Eli Dunnet paced Thetford with 23 as the defending champs fell to 1-3 on the season.

"We struggled a little early and they did a nice job of breaking our man press, but we switched to a zone and the guys did a nice job of executing it the last three quarters. I'm really happy with our versatility and ability to change and adjust throughout a game so far this season. We still have a lot of work to do and we definitely haven't played our best basketball yet this season. We probably have the biggest test in a few years ahead of us in Montpelier. We're a little banged up, but we are excited for the challenge," said Hill.

The Wildcats traveled to 5-0 Division II Montpelier on Monday and will stay on the road in a rematch with Randolph on Friday.

SPORTS



Senior Gavin Fowler (#33) of Twinfield looks to pass around Stowe's Luke Farley February 26 on Twinfield's new court. The Trojans won 57-52.



Twinfield freshman Meles Gouge (right) aims for the basket over Lucas Modica (#12) of Stowe during play at Twinfield on February 26. The Trojans edged the Raiders 57-52.

Trojans Stay Perfect, Roll Over Oxbow

by Ken Brown

PLAINFIELD – Showing little effects from an eleven-day layoff, the Twinfield/Cabot boys' basketball team rolled over Oxbow and Stowe last week to run their record to 3-0 on the season.

Eighth grader Kerrick Medose scored a career-high 18 points to lead the Trojans to a 63-45 home win over Oxbow last Tuesday. The newly minted point guard guided the Trojan offense to an eighteen-point cushion at the break and a 48-32 lead heading into the final period.

"It isn't every day that you ask an eighth grader to handle the ball and run your offense, but Kerrick has been around the program since he was a little kid and we could tell this past summer that he could really play. We had to replace most of our backcourt heading into this season; Kerrick got an opportunity to compete for a spot and he has definitely made the most of it. He's really smart and understands his role, along with everyone else's and he's played with a lot of composure out there so far," said head coach Chris Hudson.

Gavin Fowler (15 points 15 rebounds) and Cutler Gladding (11 and 9) dominated the paint for the Trojans and the backcourt kept high-scoring Bryce Ilsley in check for most of the night with 25 points. The loss dropped the Olympians to

1-4 on the season.

"Ilsley is a great scorer and he's going to get his points, but you just can't let him go crazy and our guys did a great job of making him work hard for everything. Everyone was excited to get back out on the court, we had good energy, and it was a good win," said Hudson.

Gavin Fowler poured in 20 points and muscled down 20 rebounds to lead Twinfield/Cabot to a 57-52 home win over Stowe Friday night. Lucas Roberts was hot from the outside, adding 14 as the Trojans survived despite an ankle injury to Cutler Gladding. Lucas Modica led the Raiders with 14 as they fell to 0-4.

"Gavin was dominant and showed why he is probably the best 'big' in our division, but when Cutler went down it changed the whole complexion of the game. They were able to double on Gavin and we stalled a little bit. Lucas has really improved as a player through a lot of hard work and he was getting some great looks and knocking them down with confidence tonight. It was good to grind out the win and hopefully Cutler will continue to get treatment and be back soon," said Hudson.

The Trojans are scheduled to host Craftsbury Academy on Thursday in what will be 'Senior Night' for Fowler, Gladding, Henry LoRe, and Yachifne Aziz.

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SPORTS

Hazen Girls Reflect on the Meaning of Playing this Season

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – The Hazen Union Wildcat girls are having a tough basketball season so far. The afternoon before their decisive 64-30 victory over Richford, three of the girls sat down to discuss the meaning of getting to play after weeks of uncertainty about whether there would be a season.

Abigail Ainsworth, Macy Molleur, and Natalie Geoffroy are all seniors. This is their final year of high school sports. Due to an injury, Ainsworth did not get to play last year. All three have been playing together since they were little. Ainsworth said she and Geoffroy had played together since elementary school. Molleur said, “I’ve played since middle school, and I actually started playing with these two [girls] in AAU [Amateur Athletic Union], I think in like fifth or sixth grade, so we’ve played together for a while.”

2020

Last year’s Lady Cats sailed into the quarterfinals before losing to West Rutland, 51-40. On March 13, 2020, the Vermont Principals’ Association pulled the plug on the remainder of the season before the championships, due to COVID.

Molleur said, “When we were playing regular season, we weren’t really worried about losing any games. And then playoffs came around and it was like, whoa, we might not get to play, but we did end up getting to play. And I remember watching the news and when they announced that the finals weren’t going to happen and I was like, yikes.”

Between COVID and what the three said was a perennial problem of getting enough girls to play, summer came and went without the usual open gyms. Molleur said the team only has 11 girls, and there is no junior varsity team.

Fall

Returning to school gave Molleur and Geoffroy a glimmer of hope. Both play soccer, and those games went forward, albeit on an abbreviated schedule. But it would turn out that with a fall surge in cases, that brief glimpse of normal would be fleeting. Both described that time in the same word: “nerve-wracking.”

Molleur said, “I think when we first got into school, it was soccer season, so that was kind of the focus. But then soccer was over and usually, we start basketball right after soccer. And so it was weird to

not start and also not know what was going to happen because it was still up in the air so late in the year. It was a little nerve-wracking because it would really suck if we didn’t get our senior year.”

Geoffroy agreed. “It was soccer season, so I thought we would just be able to play basketball since we were able to play soccer. Then the Governor announced, probably at the end of November, that we weren’t able to start and it was delayed for a while. It was nerve-wracking to not be able to know if we were going to be able to have a season at all.”

For Ainsworth, she said not getting a senior season would have been even worse. She was out all last season due to knee surgery and was not able to play soccer this year, either. “I was really focused on hoping that basketball would happen. And like Natalie said, finding out at the end of November that we weren’t going to have it, and then it always getting pushed back or stopped. And I guess it really upset me because basketball is something that I love, and I didn’t get to play my junior year. So, I really wanted to be able to play this year.”

“I knew that basketball probably wasn’t going to happen by just how bad the numbers were getting. But then once they started going down a little bit, I was kind of more hopeful.”

The Team Gets the News

The first eight scheduled games of the already-delayed season were canceled due to COVID, forcing a month-long postponement of the season’s late start in January.

Molleur said “I definitely did not think we were going to have a season, I figured it was going to get pushed back to spring or something when the numbers got high around here. But then we started out practicing, and that was definitely weird. Because when we first started practicing, we couldn’t do contact practices, so we had to stay away from each other. And that was definitely weird.”

She said once it was official that games could begin at first, “I was definitely excited and ready to start playing games. Our first game was scheduled for the first week of January. But then every week they just kept getting canceled, and canceled, and canceled. And it was just really disappointing, I felt like we were going to lose our whole season.”

Geoffroy said, “I was very happy when they announced we could have games, because now our season’s like cut in half, we have nine games instead of twenty, which sucks, but

at least we can play some, I guess.”

Ainsworth said that “even though the games are getting pushed back, I was still happy to be able to practice just to get something in, but it really sucked when we lost [playing] all those games because like Natalie said it went from twenty [games] to nine. It works out in the long run just to have something and then going into playoffs.”

“I was really excited that we were able to have a season this year because of [being out last year], but at the same time, I was nervous because of my knee injury to be actually playing. So, the first game was kind of hard for me, but after that game, it was better. I just kept playing and just hope that we get through the regular games and then go into playoffs.”

The First Game

“[The first game] was very exciting,” said Geoffroy. “It definitely felt weird because there’s no fans. We all had to wear masks. It was just weird and different.”

Molleur said “It was the complete opposite of a normal basketball game. It was awesome to finally be able to play for real, but it was also not as exciting for me personally. Just because fans are a part of what makes basketball games so exciting for me. Not having anyone there just kind of felt like a scrimmage or a practice. But it was definitely good to start playing.”

Geoffroy said without the fans, “It’s just so different. Like when our team’s not doing great, when we’re all sluggish, the fans seem to bring us up with all their cheering and stuff. It just feels so different.”

Molleur said while “it’s definitely weird to not have anyone rooting for us or cheering for us, I know that a lot more people can actually my games now because of them being online. It makes it easier to access a game. HCTV does a really good job, so that’s nice, but it’s definitely not the same.”

Ainsworth said, “it was just, season or no season. Fans being there didn’t really matter to me.”

Both Molleur and Geoffroy said that they got used to wearing masks in soccer, and none of the three said the masks frustrated gameplay or communication much. Molleur said, “I barely even notice it.”

Going Forward

With the season underway, all three knew that it could still end abruptly if COVID took a bad turn. “I think about it every game,” said Molleur. “I’m like, wow, this could be

our last game, I’d like to make the most of it.”

Geoffroy said, “Same for me, we could get canceled at any point. So it’s once we have games, we just make the best of it.”

The three said that Hazen and the team were taking the precautions seriously. Geoffroy said, “I don’t really know what my teammates are doing outside [the games] but I don’t think they’re just going randomly to random places. I think we all try to be as safe as possible so we can have a basketball season because you don’t want to ruin it for everyone else.”

Molleur said, “Especially because we have a very young team, and we have five seniors. Seniors know the importance of our last season, and the younger girls I think definitely respect that.”

For Ainsworth’s part, she said, “I do see that COVID’s still out there, it is always in my mind, like we played a team and two of their girls didn’t have to wear masks. That was kind of like, what if they have COVID, am I going to get it? But I know that our team is being safe, so I guess if I go to practice or I’m with my team I don’t feel [nervous] that way, but if it’s against another team it kind of feels like that.”

She clarified the two girls who did not wear masks had medical exemptions. Molleur said “You can be careful yourself, and I know that my team is being safe but we come across so many different players and we have no idea how they’re dealing with COVID and how seriously they’re taking it. [Those girls without masks,] that was a little nerve-wracking. I wasn’t necessarily scared that they had it. It was also a little frustrating because, well, we all have to wear [masks].”

All three said no matter what happened, just being able to play was significant. Ainsworth said, “I was really excited to have the season, and even though we’ve only played like four or five games as of tonight if it had to end tomorrow, I’m glad we got what we got.”

Molleur said, “I agree with Abby. I mean, you have to take what you get and I’m thankful for even being able to practice with my team because it is nice to see people and it is nice to play.”

Geoffroy said, “I’m just glad we got anything. I mean, we’ve all been playing basketball since we were young, so we all love the game, and it would have been really disappointing not to have anything for a season.”

SPORTS



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Hazen's Alexis Christensen (#4) charges up the court past Madison Boylan of Richford February 22. Following the play is Tessa Luther (center). Hazen defeated their opponents 64-30.



photo by Vanessa Fournier

Lady Cat Tessa Luther (center) aims for two guarded by Rockets Aubrey Fadden (#14) and Sierra Derby (#20) February 22 at Hazen. The Lady Cats took victory over their guests 64-30.

Shorthanded Lady Cats Notch First Win

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – Without their key cog in the middle, the Hazen girls' basketball team still earned their first win of the season against Richford last week before getting edged by BFA-Fairfax, putting them at 1-4 on the season.

Senior Natalie Geoffroy poured in a season-high 20 points to lead Hazen to a decisive 64-30 home win over Richford last Monday. Playing without leading scorer Alleigh Gabaree, Harley Papineau stepped up with 13 points and freshman Tessa Luther had a strong game with 10. Sierra Denby led Richford with 13 points as they fell to 1-2.

"The girls came out strong early and we got a nice lead. We did a good job of building on it throughout the game. Having that cushion allowed us to work on our offense sets and be patient with some things we've been struggling with. It was nice to get our first win and a lot of the girls stepped up without Alleigh in the lineup. Natalie had her best game of the season. She's a little banged up, as well, and she did a nice job of fighting through it," said head coach Tim Whitney.

We probably win that game if Alleigh was healthy able to play, but I think this week has brought the team together a little more and they understand what everyone's value means a little better in order for us to be successful. let it loose a little more.

Madison Murphy scored a team-high 14 points to help BFA-Fairfax eke out a 52-48 road win over the Lady Cats Thursday night. Sophomore Alexis Christensen buried six 3s on her way to an 18-point effort. Hazen had several chances late to steal the win, but couldn't get over the hump. Macy Molleur added 13 points for Hazen and Harley Papineau had another strong game with 10. The Lady Bullets improved to 2-1 on the season with the win.

"They're a good team, but we matched up really well with them. It's disappointing that we didn't capitalize on some chances down the stretch, but I'm mostly encouraged by how the girls fought back twice from double digit deficits, never gave up, and played together. We probably win that game if Alleigh was healthy able to play, but I think this week has brought the team together a little more and they understand what everyone's value means a little better in order for us to be successful. It was nice to see Alexis break out and shoot the ball with confidence and I'd like to see her let it loose a little more. We have a tough schedule coming up, so hopefully we can get everyone back healthy and work toward playing our best basketball of the season," said Whitney.

The Lady Cats hosted a 5-0 Vergennes team, coached by former Cabot legend Billy Waller, on Tuesday. They welcome Williamstown on Friday night before hosting Division II Spaulding next Monday on 'Senior Night'. Spaulding is now coached by Tanya MacAuley, who skippered the Lady Cat program to back-to-back 19-win seasons and a trip to Barre Auditorium in 2018.