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Wednesday, April 30, 2025

hardwickgazette.org

Volume 136 Number 18

Pedestrian Bridge Funding at Risk

by **Raymonda Parchment**

HARDWICK – The select board had an extensive agenda at their April 17 select board meeting, with discussions ranging from a delay in the potential sale of town real estate, the pedestrian bridge replacement, flooding and FEMA matters, to an update from the Jeudevine Library.

Town Manager David Upson reported the environmental review for the vacant town-owned lot adjacent to 9 Main St. has been delayed by the oil spill in recent months. VT Huts,

the prospective buyer, asked for an extension on their purchase option agreement with the town. The agreement has been signed and extended, Upson told the board.

The town does not yet have a notice from USDA to proceed with the pedestrian bridge construction. While USDA has the required documentation, they have remaining questions, said Upson.

He said the town recently received notice that USDA will rescind \$200,000 in grant funding if it's not spent soon. However, Business Manager Casey Rowell said the town was

approved for an extension. The board agreed to follow up on the matter right away.

Road Foreman Tom Fadden said the crew is caught up on grading, having completed Hardwick Farms Road, Hopkins Hill, Mackville and Mountain View Roads. Bridgman Hill and West Hill are in progress. Fadden said they were focusing on the main roads more so than the side roads. Summer hours begin April 28, when the crew begins working four 10 hour days, Monday through Thursday.

Police Chief Mike Henry said Officer Joe
See BRIDGE, 5

Vermont Farm Fund Loans Surpass \$4M

by **Center for an Agricultural Economy**

HARDWICK – Over the past fourteen years, the nonprofit loan program the Vermont Farm Fund (VFF), has made over \$4 million dollars in loans to Vermont farmers and food producers to help build the local agricultural economy.

Originally established by Pete's Greens and the Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) in 2011, the Vermont Farm Fund has operated as a program of CAE since its very first loans following Tropical Storm Irene. Today the fund still provides zero-interest emergency loans to farmers recovering from natural disasters, as

well as low-interest loans to help new or established farms grow and expand. The funding for these loans comes from individual donors and family foundations, and each tax-deductible donation supports a revolving cycle in which payments from one generation of borrowers finances the next. As recipients pay back their loans, funds are replenished for the next cycle of borrowers. The result is a growing community of farmers lending money to farmers when it is most needed, in a timely manner, and without a lot of red tape.

“When a fire destroyed our barn 14 years ago, the outpouring of support from Vermonters was overwhelming. In response, the Vermont Farm Fund was birthed and shortly after Tropical Storm Irene visited our State. VFF has funded farm emergencies and ambitious business building projects ever since. Thanks to our creative farmers, generous donors, and wise board members, VFF is in robust health and ready to help fund Vermont's farming future,” said Pete Johnson of Pete's Greens and VFF Founder

Since inception, the program's total fund value has grown to over \$1.6 million this year, allowing VFF to distribute between \$500,000 and \$600,000 annually in low-interest loans to

See LOANS, 5



Greensboro Town Clerk (left) opens the door at the town hall for the day's first voter Cilla Smith, at 10 a.m., April 29. The vote is on authorizing the Greensboro Select Board to enter into a purchase and sale agreement to sell the former school building. A favorable vote will pave the way for Rural Edge to take further steps to develop the building into 16 to 20 rental apartments, with room for the town clerk to remain in the basement and space for the Giving Closet. A full report on the vote will be in next week's edition. photo by Paul Fixx



Bill Chidsey stands by the rear foundation of the Civic Standard's building at 42 S. Main St. in Hardwick during a tour, April 29. Following the tour, attended by dozens of interested area residents, The Civic Standard's Rose Friedman led a discussion in the Memorial Building where she, Preservation Trust of Vermont representatives and Hardwick's Kristen Leahy shared information about the building's long-deferred maintenance, now requiring paint and a new roof, along with immediate work on the foundation behind Chidsey, undercut by the river during the last several year's flooding events. A full report will appear next week.

photo by Paul Fixx



Pete Johnson, founder of Vermont Farm Fund and owner of Pete's Greens, at his farm in 2014.

photo by Jordan Silverman

How a High-Profile Vermont Murder Case Fell Apart

by **Peter D'Auria, VT Digger**

VERMONT – In April 2022, the stabbing death of Hinesburg transgender woman Fern Feather shocked and saddened the state of Vermont.

In the days after the killing, as the investigation progressed, it emerged that Feather had had an altercation with another man a year prior. a man who, Vermont State Police said, was the son of then-suspect Seth Brunell.

That connection could have added key context to the murder case. But, in fact, the man had no relation to Brunell, and state police retracted the claim a day later.

See MURDER, 5

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WEATHER WATCH



Rain Sunday afternoon turned to heavy snow with giant flakes, then back rain later. photo by Vanessa Fournier

Warming Comes with Thunderstorms, Steady Rain for Friday, Saturday

by Tyler Molleur

EAST HARDWICK – Conditions are sunny as of Tuesday morning and temperatures are already in the mid-60s as of 10 a.m. We are on track to reach the upper 70s; a far cry from where we were on Sunday.

The pesky low-pressure system that brought us a steady rain on Saturday slowed down more than anticipated, leaving us with a dusting of snow mixed with rain showers and some gusty winds to wrap up the weekend. Rainfall ranged from an inch to nearly an inch and three quarters where the heavier shower activity fell at higher elevations during the weekend.

Yesterday's warm air will disappear for a bit and will be replaced by slightly cooler than normal temperatures for Wednesday under mostly sunny skies. Breaks in the cloud cover will persist through most of Thursday, before clouds blanket the sky and lower as a warm front approaches. Overnight Thursday into Friday morning looks to feature a steady rain with some partial clearing possible during the day on Friday. Highs will return to the 70s, with another chance of showers and thunderstorms by mid-to-late afternoon as a cold front approaches.

That front becomes stationary as it moves south and east, leading

to another surge of moisture for Saturday as a low-pressure wave moves parallel to the front. We could see a 48-hour rainfall total of 1-2" by Sunday morning.

Sunday's details remain unclear due to that stalled front. Solutions range from another wave of low pressure developing with rain to a high-pressure system building and bringing mostly clear conditions. We're going to err on the wetter side of the equation. Expect some intermittent showers and near-normal temperatures. Skies will be partly cloudy. Clearing will certainly occur by the start of the work week.

Here are forecast details:

Wednesday: Mostly sunny. High: 52. Low: 31. Northwest winds around 5 mph.

Thursday: Partly sunny, with increasing clouds by evening. High: 64. Low: 44. South winds 5-10 mph.

Friday: Mostly cloudy with rain in the morning, then breaks of sun in the afternoon with showers and thunderstorms developing by 4 p.m. Some storms may produce gusty winds and heavy rainfall. High: 71. Low: 45. Southwest winds 10-15 mph. Gusts to 30 mph in the evening.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy. Periods of rain. High: 58. Low: 42. Southwest winds 5-10 mph.

Sunday: Partly cloudy. Scattered rain showers. High: 53. Low: 37. West winds around 10 mph.

For the record

In the April 9 story, "Saplings to Submit \$1M Grant Application for Expansion," Melissa Jacobs misstated details of the lease agreement signed by Saplings for land on which the childcare center plans a new facility to expand their program. That agreement is between Saplings and the East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church. A provision of that agreement

envisions the possibility that the church might sell the land to Headwaters Trust, which would then own the land and lease it to Saplings. Headwaters Trust is in discussion with both of those organizations about the possibilities, but has not entered into any agreement with either organization, said Linda Ramsdell, Headwaters president.



April 30 - May 6

As April Showers follow us into May, Stop in for Rain Gear guaranteed to keep you dry

Mother's Day is only weeks away, be on the lookout for our Mother's Day Sale

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Ground Coffee
\$6.59 10.3-11.3 oz.

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Cholula
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Old El Paso
Taco Sauce
\$2.99 9 oz.

Rotel
Tomatoes
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Old El Paso
Refried Beans
2/\$3 16 oz.

Kraft
Salad Dressing
2/\$5 16 oz.

Lindsay
Ripe Olives
\$2.79 5.75-6 oz.

Vlasic
Pickles
2/\$5 16.32 oz.

Ghirardelli
Brownie Mix
\$3.49 18-20 oz.

Food Club
Shredded Cheese
2/\$4 8 oz.

Lactaid
Milk
\$3.99 64 oz.

Food Club
Tortellini or Ravioli
2/\$5 19-25 oz.

Swanson
Hungryman Dinners
\$3.49 16 oz.

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POLICE REPORT

Hardwick Police Media Log

April 20: Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Medical, Maple St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Found Property, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Scott Road; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Elm St.; Odor Investigation, Highland Ave.

April 21: Suspicious Event, Wolcott St.; VIN Verification, High St.; 911 Hangup, Mill St.; Trespassing, Vt. Rte. 14 S; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

April 22: Suspicious Event, Carey Road; Traffic Stop, Center Road; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Parking Problem, S. Main St./Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Cottage St.; Juvenile Problem, Dewey St.

April 23: Welfare Check, Kate Brook Road/Vt. Rte. 15; Fire, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Cottage St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Assist – Agency, Vt. Rte. 14 S; Parking

Problem, S. Main St.

April 24: Theft, Elm St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Elm St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Granite St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; DLS, Vt. Rte. 15; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Medical, Maple St.; Wanted Person, Vt. Rte. 16; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

April 25: Assist – Public, Pumpkin Lane; Found Property, S. Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Wanted Person, High St.; Assist – Public, High St.; Accident – Property Damage Only, Cedar St.

April 26: Fingerprints, High St.; Assist – Agency, Cedar St.; Parking Problem, Wolcott St./Main St.; Traffic Stop, Mill St.; Traffic Stop, Hazen Union Drive; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Granite St.

April 27: Alarm, Industrial Park Road; Assist – Public, Keene Road; Wanted Person, Cabot Road; Transport, High St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Granite St.

Hardwick Police

Active Arrest Warrants

HARDWICK – On April 24, Crystal Lee Davies, of Milton, was stopped on Vt. Rte. 15 in Hardwick. Davies was operating a vehicle without an interlock device, which is a requirement of her reinstated license. She was issued a citation to appear in Caledonia Superior Court, Criminal Division on May 12 at 8:30 a.m.

On April 24, at approximately 8:49 p.m., Cassandra Rich was located at a residence in East Hardwick. Rich had an active arrest warrant to be cited and released to appear at Washington County Court. Her appearance was set for the following day, April 25, at 12:30 p.m.

On April 25 at 10:34 p.m., Hardwick Police, Fire and Rescue responded to Cedar Street in East Hardwick for the report of a single vehicle crash. The vehicle, a Buick SUV, had gone off the road and sustained significant damage with the operator unable to exit the vehicle. Emergency responders were able to stabilize the SUV and remove the operator, identified as Joshua Torrez, of Hartford, Conn. Though shaken up, Torrez was able to move out of the vehicle under his own power and was subsequently

transported to the hospital for examination.

On April 25, just before 5 p.m., the Hardwick Police stopped a vehicle on Wolcott Street near Lamoille Valley Ford for a motor vehicle violation. One of the passengers in the vehicle was identified as Danielle R. Silver, of East Hardwick. Silver had an in-state warrant for her arrest. She had failed to appear in Caledonia County Court for a March 24 DUI arraignment. Silver was arrested without incident and brought to Northeast Regional Correctional Facility on the warrant.

On Sunday, April 27, at approximately 4:30 p.m., Hardwick Police arrested Colin Mercier of Hardwick on an outstanding federal arrest warrant. Mercier was taken into custody at a residence in Walden. Mercier was transported to Northeast Correctional Complex in St. Johnsbury where he was held without bail.

The Hardwick Police Report is based on information provided by the police and is not a comprehensive list of police activity. Individuals named in the police report are presumed to be innocent until they plead or are found guilty in court.

Cabot Fire Department SCBA Training

CABOT – On April 23, Cabot Fire Department members trained on how to use, clean and maintain SCBA's (Self-Contained Breathing

Apparatus). The SCBA's is considered by the department as one of the most important parts of equipment they have.

Vermont State Police

Missing Man Found, Crash

CRAFTSBURY – The Vermont State Police Derby Barracks is currently conducting search operations in the area of Wild Branch Road and Vt. 14 for David Linck, of Craftsbury. Linck is a white man, approximately 5'8" and 140 to 150 lbs. with short white hair and was last seen wearing blue sweatpants, a gray jacket and a green-blue long sleeve flannel shirt. Linck was last seen at his residence on Wild Branch Road around 12:30 p.m. April 24, departed in an unknown direction and has not been seen since.

Units in the area assisting with the search include the Vermont State Police Search and Rescue Team, Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program, K9 Unit, Derby Barracks Patrol Troopers, the Craftsbury Fire Department and local volunteers.

Members of the public are requested to report any sightings to VSP Dispatch at (802) 334-8881.

Update: Linck was located at approximately 6:50 p.m., in a wooded area off of Wild Branch Road by troopers being assisted from above by an aircrew from the Vt. Army National Guard who had responded to assist in the search. He was extricated from the woods by uniformed troopers and troopers assigned

to the search and rescue team, and evaluated by Hardwick Rescue personnel as a precaution.

The Vermont State Police thanks the members of the public and various assisting agencies who contributed to bringing a safe end to this search.

CABOT – On April 22, at approximately 10:37 p.m., troopers from the Berlin Barracks were dispatched to a reported single vehicle crash on Vt. Rte. 215 in Cabot. Troopers determined a Volkswagen Jetta was traveling north when it exited the east side of the roadway. The Volkswagen struck a guardrail before coming to an uncontrolled point of rest.

The operator was not located at the scene and did not notify law enforcement of the crash. Troopers located the operator, Ryan Lay, of Marshfield, at his residence and observed signs of impairment. Lay was administered Standardized Field Sobriety Tests, at the conclusion of which he was placed under arrest for suspicion of DUI.

Lay was transported to the Berlin Police Department for processing. He was later released on a citation to appear in Washington County Criminal Court, May 8, 8:30 a.m., to answer to the charges of DUI No. 1 and Leaving the Scene of an Accident.

Hardwick Fire Department Fire Department Hosts Extrication Training

by Hardwick Fire Department

HARDWICK – Saturday, April 26, Hardwick Fire Department hosted vehicle extrication training for the 45-hour introductory school to fire service. Fire departments all had apparatus on hand to assist with the training.

The course was developed around 15 years ago and is

AWARE Report

HARDWICK – Fifteen people used AWARE services between April 20 and April 27. The AWARE 24-hour hotline is 802-472-6463.

A non-profit established in 1984, AWARE serves Hardwick and the greater Hardwick area in preventing and healing the trauma of domestic and sexual violence.

taught by volunteer instructors who put in countless hours developing and updating the course. It is a huge asset for local volunteer fire departments and their newer members in Lamoille, Caledonia, Orleans, Washington and Franklin counties.

All Metals Recycling in Hardwick donated the cars that made the hands-on training possible.

AWARE provides help during immediate crises, as well as advocating for on-going emotional and legal support for people of all ages and gender.

For more information about AWARE, including educational resources, programming and how to get involved as a volunteer visit awarevt.org.

POLICE REPORT



Responding to an out-of-control grass fire in Walden were Alec Larrabee and Owen Kittredge from the Walden Fire Department. *courtesy photo*



Walden Fire Department Firefighters Eric Kittredge and Alec Larrabee participated in the quick knock-down of a grass fire. *courtesy photo*



Tyler Brodbeck and Alec Larrabee of the Walden Fire Department work on a grass fire in Walden on April 24. *courtesy photo*

Walden Fire Department Grass Fire, Structure Fire

WALDEN – The Walden Fire Department, along with the Cabot Volunteer Fire Department was toned to respond to a large, out-of-control grass fire in Walden at 3:53 p.m. on April 24. Walden responded with the engine, UTV, and several firefighters. Upon arrival, Cabot's response was canceled enroute. There was a quick knock-down of the fire which was about a half football field in size by Chief Jason Larrabee assisted by Firefighters Alec Larrabee, Rodney Hooker, Tyler Brodbeck, Eric Kittredge and Owen Kittredge. Burn permits are required for any open burning in Walden by contacting the Forest Fire Warden Rodney

Hooker for at (802) 563-9926

The Walden Fire Department was toned mutual aid to Marshfield on the evening of April 26 for a structure fire. The department responded to Marshfield with an engine, tanker and firefighters to join firefighters from Marshfield, Cabot, Plainfield and East Montpelier fire departments, with Chief Jason Larrabee, First Asst. Chief Butch Greaves, Second Asst. Chief Dan Greaves, Captain Tyler Mayo and Firefighters Alec Larrabee, Rodney Hooker, Matt Millard, Eric Kittredge and Owen Kittredge. All Walden units were back in quarters and back in service at 11:55 p.m.

Thrailkill Appointed as Caledonia County Sheriff

LYNDONVILLE – Governor Phil Scott has announced the appointment of Brandon Thrailkill of Lyndonville as Caledonia County Sheriff following the passing of former Sheriff James Hemond earlier this spring.

“Brandon has a proven track record of public service in Caledonia County both as a law enforcement officer and as an active member in his community,” said Governor Scott. “As a lifelong resident of Caledonia County, I believe Brandon will serve Vermonters well in this role.”

Thrailkill has served as a law enforcement officer for over 13 years. He most recently served as

the state transport deputy for the Caledonia County Sheriff's Department where he rose to the rank of captain. Prior to that, Thrailkill worked at the Lyndonville Police Department as a patrol officer.

“It's an absolute honor to have been appointed sheriff to serve the people of Caledonia County. I have big shoes to fill but I look forward to bringing open communication, integrity and continue building trust within the communities we serve,” said Thrailkill. “Caledonia County is my home, and I will lead with purpose and with the community's wellbeing as a top priority.”

Thrailkill's appointment is effective immediately.



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Bridge

Continued From Page One

Donna has completed yet another week of training.

In comparing this year's statistics to last year, Henry said complaints are up, but arrests are down. The department has been very busy with fingerprinting, 100 more than last year.

Hardwick Electric Department (HED) Commissioner Myles Kamisher-Koch provided an update, saying a rate increase request of 13.24% has been submitted to the Vermont Public Utility Commission. The increase is primarily driven by inflation, in an amount to balance the budget. Maisher-Koch explained that, with Wolcott Hydro Dam in need of repair and not producing power, HED must purchase more

power, thus increasing costs. Work on the dam is proceeding, he said.

Jeudevine Library Director Diane Grenkow said they have moved into temporary space in the Memorial Building for the next two weeks while the floors are refinished in the original library. Grenkow reported they hope for a soft opening by Springfest, with a grand opening sometime in July.

Peter Fairweather, with Fairweather Consulting, presented the draft of his final report on the Better Connections grant project for East Hardwick.

Zoning and Floodplain Administrator Kristen Leahy was present for her regular flood update, announcing the town has received \$3.1 million in grants for flood resiliency projects since the 2023 flood. The amount includes buyouts, mitigation efforts and funds for future

planning. With the current administration canceling Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) funds, some projects may be affected, she said. Vermont Emergency Management is currently looking for funding that may help replace the lost federal funding. Notably, the town has not borrowed any money for flood repair because it's been able to borrow from fund balances pending reimbursement. Leahy's full report is available on the town website.

The board discussed the purchase of a new trailer to be used for transporting town equipment. After some debate, the board agreed to purchase a new trailer for up to \$31,342, using some of the budget adjustment act funding.

The board voted unanimously to enter into a contract with

Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB), a civil engineering company, for the Mill Street transportation scoping study, to evaluate safety issues through the downtown area.

Business Manager Casey Rowell presented the FY25 quarterly budget update. The town is slightly ahead in revenues, primarily due to FEMA reimbursement from the 2023 flood.

Upson said the town water and sewer department has \$135,000 capital funds for new meters. After some discussion regarding the logistics, the board agreed to install more meters this summer.

The board discussed the job description for the new public works project coordinator job, agreeing to continue to work on it and try to have a final version at the next meeting.

Murder

Continued From Page One

The misstep was just one of several mistakes that occurred during one of Vermont's highest-profile murder cases in the past few years. Earlier this month, after a particularly grave error, that case culminated with a surprise plea deal and a sheriff's deputy on administrative leave.

Brunell pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter and will serve a decade of probation with no additional prison time, a far lighter sentence than a murder conviction would entail.

Even before it reached a trial, the case was a tangled one. Last fall, the case became embroiled in a controversy over evidence, after it emerged in late September that prosecutors had failed to turn over a 3D rendering of the crime scene to Brunell's defense attorney.

The state had mistakenly given the defense a model from a separate case, an error that Gerhard apologized for.

Jessica Burke, Brunell's attorney, asked the court to throw out the case based on that mistake. Presiding Judge Mary Morrissey, however, allowed the trial to go forward, with a postponement to allow the defense to prepare.

Morrissey levied a stronger penalty against prosecutors over the handling of another piece of evidence: a 20-page letter, allegedly written by Brunell while he was in prison in 2023. That letter allegedly laid out a plan to have sex with his defense attorney, then accuse her of sexual assault, with the goal of getting his case dismissed, according to court filings.

In a court filing at the time, Assistant Attorney General Sophie Stratton sought to admit the letter as evidence in the case. Stratton wrote that prosecutors had only

recently learned about the document, even though Vermont State Police had been aware of it for months.

But Morrissey ruled that the state had violated time limits for introducing evidence and that the letter could not be admitted.

Defense attorney Jessica Burke said last fall that the case was the most disorganized she had ever experienced.

The trial finally began in mid-April, three years after the killing of Feather. In her opening statement, Burke, Brunell's attorney, laid out the defense's argument that Brunell had acted in self-defense.

The case, she argued, was botched from the start. Law enforcement charged Brunell with murder even before they completed processing all the evidence, Burke said. She argued that law enforcement had failed to thoroughly collect evidence, and that officers had allowed Feather's dogs to roam freely around the crime scene for roughly an hour after the killing, potentially contaminating the scene.

But the jury never got a chance to make a decision on those arguments. On May 15, the second full day of the trial, the attorneys learned that Brunell had an unauthorized conversation with a Lamoille County Sheriff's deputy one day earlier while being driven from the courtroom to Southern State Correctional Facility after jury selection. In testimony, it emerged that Vermont State Police Detective Sergeant Isaac Merriam had asked the sheriff's department to use a body camera to create a recording during the drive.

"I wanted to make sure that that transport was recorded in case Mr. Brunell made statements about this case," Merriam told the court.

Lamoille County Sheriff's Department Detective Kevin Lehoe

testified that he had passed along Merriam's request to Sheriff's Deputy Christopher Turner, who had been assigned to the transport.

Although he instructed Turner to record the trip on his body camera, Lehoe said, he had not told him to ask specific questions about the case. The recording was just intended to capture any "excited utterance" that Brunell might make, Lehoe told the court.

Had Lehoe explicitly warned Turner against asking questions? Burke, the defense attorney, asked.

"I didn't at the time, no, and I didn't expect that I would have to," Lehoe replied.

Two sheriff's deputies, Turner and a Rutland County deputy whose identity was not clear, were assigned to the transport. Although the transcript of the conversation is not exact, the document clearly shows that Brunell was questioned about Feather's car, the knife used in the killing and his relationship with his attorney.

Jared Carter, a constitutional law professor with Vermont Law and Graduate School, said that questioning a defendant outside of the presence of their lawyer is a clear violation of the constitutional right to an attorney.

"Once a person has been read their Miranda rights, they have the right to an attorney," Carter said.

For the questioning to happen on the eve of a trial is "quite frankly, beyond belief," he said.

Turner, the sheriff's deputy who conducted the transport of Brunell, was placed on administrative leave while an outside law enforcement agency conducts an investigation, Lamoille County Sheriff Roger Marcoux said earlier this month.

On the second night of the trial, Burke filed a motion for a mistrial. In court the next morning, describing

the transcript from the body camera, both Burke and Gerhard described the incident as "egregious."

By the end of the next day, with the specter of a mistrial looming, the attorneys had hashed out a plea deal. Prosecutors said that day that they were concerned that, in the case of a mistrial, they would not be able to refile charges against Brunell and that he would ultimately walk completely free.

But the 10 years of probation was a far cry from the possibility of the decades in prison Brunell faced if convicted of second-degree murder. And the sentence elicited anger and dismay from Feather's family and friends.

In his own remarks, Jean-Francois Barbeau, Feather's father, condemned the "slap on the wrist" Brunell received.

"This isn't justice. It's a pitiful parody of justice," he said. And ended his comment with an expletive directed at the court.

Loans

Continued From Page One

small farmers and local food producers in the last several years.

Vermont Farm Fund marked its four million-dollar milestone in March. In the life of the Fund to date, VFF has invested \$4,105,066 in 242 individual loans to farm and food businesses across all 14 counties of Vermont.

"[Vermont] Farm Fund has been a great tool and resource for many reasons beyond the capital. It has been fast, easy, and professional . . . Thank you for the vision behind the program, but also the wonderful blend of professionalism and humanism along the way," said Tom Gilbert of Black Dirt Farm.

For more information about the Vermont Farm Fund, or to apply for a VFF loan, visit vtfarmfund.org.

Habitat for Humanity Work



Work on the site of a home to be built by Habitat for Humanity began April 26, with work to prepare the site. On that rainy Saturday, (from left) Steering Committee Chair Kent Hansen, Site Supervisor Bill Hardy and Greensboro Select Board member Tim Brennan move a sign for the rail trail that was in the middle of the home's driveway. photo by Jennifer Bayles



Kathy Hansen loads sawn logs into a wheelbarrow, April 26, at the site of a new Habitat for Humanity home in Greensboro Bend. They were given to a neighbor next door for firewood. photo by Jennifer Bayles



John Mackin helps clear the site of a future Habitat for Humanity home in Greensboro Bend by chainsawing a fallen tree, Saturday, April 26. photo by Jennifer Bayles



An excavator at 1119 Main Street in Greensboro Bend stands ready for work on the foundation of a new Habitat for Humanity duplex home. It began excavating for the building's slab on grade and frost walls, Monday, April 28. social media photo



Rick Ely carefully edges the sidewalk at 1119 Main Street in Greensboro Bend, April 26, to assure accurate measurements for the foundation setback of a new duplex home planned by the Greensboro Initiative of Central Vermont Habitat for Humanity. photo by Jennifer Bayles

Plan Would Overhaul Vermont's Response to Homelessness

by Carly Berlin

VERMONT – A bill that would fundamentally overhaul Vermont's response to homelessness is making its way through the Statehouse. H.91 provides a potential off-ramp to the state's mass use of motel rooms as a primary form of shelter and could spell an end to the political battles over the voucher program that have become a yearly ritual.

"We've become stuck in a cycle of using band-aids with no real path out of this crisis," said Rep. Jubilee McGill, D-Bridport, to her colleagues on the House floor in early April. Building the housing the state needs to ease homelessness will take time, she said. "In the meantime, we must make responsible use of our resources to ensure our vulnerable neighbors can thrive."

H.91 would dissolve the motel voucher program as it currently exists next summer. In its stead would be a new initiative: the Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing program. Funding and decision-making power over the state's homelessness response would shift to five regional anti-poverty nonprofits.

These community action agencies, along with the statewide organization serving people fleeing domestic violence, would also receive funding the state currently doles out for building and running local shelters, and would decide how to distribute it. The state would play an oversight role.

The bill's backers contend that a homelessness response system centered on the community level, rather than one that relies on the state as the central actor, will offer a better way to spend state money and serve unhoused people and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Its critics argue that such a change would remove accountability from state government to care for Vermont's homeless population, eroding its current function as a backstop when shelters are full.

The bill passed the House earlier this month, and now sits in the Senate. Members of Republican Gov. Phil Scott's administration, frequently at odds with Democratic lawmakers over the future of the motel voucher program, have expressed some concern about the bill's cost, but have signaled their approval of the overall direction H.91 takes.

"There's a lot of merit, we think, to the idea of bringing this sort of service and decision-making closer to the local communities

that are most impacted," Department for Children and Families Commissioner Chris Winters told lawmakers Thursday. He urged the Senate Health and Welfare Committee to consider speeding up the transition contemplated in the bill.

Leaders of the community action agencies, meanwhile, have pleaded with lawmakers to pump the brakes. But the regional directors say they are up for taking on the responsibility the bill entrusts to them if they're given an extra year to plan and implement the new system, and if it's properly funded in the long term.

"Hopefully this will mean that we don't have this cycle of people in hotels under these different categories that suddenly have to leave," said Paul Dragon, executive director of the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity. "That's going to take the communities coming together to decide how we want to do this differently."

Yet others have pushed back forcefully against the bill including many directors of local shelters. In interviews and in public testimony, they have questioned the efficacy of funneling money through the five community action groups, an arrangement they fear could create conflicts of interest and ultimately cost more administratively, leaving less funding available for direct services.

A decentralized system could create disparities in services in different regions, critics said. And the move could destabilize the state's shelter system at the exact moment federal funding for housing and homelessness programs could disappear.

"Frankly, this is not a good look for the state. It feels like an attempt to distance the state from its responsibility to care for its most vulnerable people," Kim Anetsberger, executive director of the Lamoille Community House, a shelter in Hyde Park, told lawmakers Wednesday.

"These are Vermonters, and yet they're often treated like a problem to be solved rather than people to be supported," she said.

The seismic shift contemplated in H.91 caught many who work in Vermont's homelessness service system off guard this legislative session. Yet the transition considered in the bill is hardly new. For over a decade, state leaders have looked at shifting the state's role in homelessness response over to local and regional organizations and at times have experimented with it.

In the midst of the Great Recession, in 2009, DCF relaxed the rules guiding the emergency

housing program, allowing more people to access motel vouchers. The next year, it began contracting with the five community action agencies to essentially vet applications, while the state held ultimate responsibility for approving someone's stay, according to a 2012 stakeholder study.

"I remember waiting rooms in community action agencies being filled daily with folks who were seeking entry to the motel voucher program," said Erhard Mahnke, the former coordinator of the Vermont Affordable Housing Coalition. People would wait all day to hear whether the state ultimately approved them a place to stay for the night, he recalled.

The system didn't last long.

The 2012 study found that many believed the state had asked the regional nonprofits to take on the vetting responsibility "without giving them adequate resources to do so" – resulting in "considerable inconsistency around the state." While some wanted the local groups to gain full decision-making power, the state ultimately took over the application process again.

In the years following, reports to the Legislature routinely emphasized the program's high price tag and the need to shift to a different model.

"While motels may meet the need for a temporary roof overhead, it is not good public policy for reducing homelessness in

See HOMELESSNESS, next page

Sen. Douglass Expresses Concern About VHEARTH Bill

by Paul Fixx

MONTPELIER – H.91, dubbed VHEARTH (Vermont Homeless Emergency Assistance and Responsive Transition to Housing Program) by its sponsors in the Vermont House, was introduced with the intent "that unsheltered homelessness be eliminated and that homelessness in Vermont be rare, brief, and nonrecurring."

The bill is now being considered in the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare after passing to the Senate in early April.

Sen. Sam Douglass (R-Orleans) serves as clerk of that committee and said "H.91 is hopefully an end to using the Emergency/General Assistance (GA) program in ways it was never intended, which is the bipartisan consensus."

Douglass' characterization of bipartisan consensus is in keeping with the House version of the bill, which intends that, "arbitrary time limits, night-by-night shelter, relocation between interim housing sites, and other disruptions in housing stability be eliminated to the extent possible."

Sen. Douglass said, "There are questions about the bill in regard to governance and its structure, and my committee appears unconvinced about the bill in its current form. The bill isn't short, so without getting into too much detail, I believe that it will look different once we have passed it from my committee."

The committee has received information from the Joint Fiscal Office, which identifies \$10 million in annual spending with \$6.5

million allocated for community action agencies and the statewide organization serving households impacted by domestic and sexual violence, \$3 million for the continued development of shelter capacity in the state and \$500,000 for contractual and other system transformation assistance.

As passed by the House, the bill intends for six regional community action agencies to take the lead and collaborate with other community partners and local housing coalitions to provide emergency and transitional housing.

Testimony and letters of support have been received from a wide range of organizations, including the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF), COTS (Committee on Temporary Shelter), the Vermont ACLU and Housing First.

Sen Douglass recently said, "There are significant concerns about whether community action organizations have the funding and capacity to take on the task [the bill assigns to them] and I am very worried about the staffing issue . . ."

Douglass sees the capacity of community organizations tasked with taking on the role now filled by DCF as a potential issue. "I work in Human Services, and we struggle to find staffing, so I imagine that, with expanded responsibilities, they will have the same problem, which is a problem that DCF also has with staffing the GA program now."

"I imagine it will pass to the floor with some changes. But that doesn't mean we can't revisit it next session or continue work on the program in the summertime," said Douglass.

Homelessness

Continued from previous page

Vermont,” one such report from 2016 read.

Several years later, DCF pushed to remove the motel program from state government entirely. In a February 2020 memo, DCF officials outlined their aim to restructure the state’s approach to emergency housing, ending the state-run motel voucher program and shifting to a “100% community-based emergency housing/shelter system.” Officials hoped to begin the transition that July, but service providers pushed back, arguing the state wasn’t providing enough time.

The next month, the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and the proposal was shelved. With emergency funding from the federal government in hand, the state opened the voucher program’s doors to anyone in need of shelter.

The program transformed from one that provided short-term shelter to a few hundred people during the coldest points of winter and cost under \$5 million annually into one that offered long-term stays to several thousand people at a time and cost upwards of \$50 million a year. (The cost has since decreased due to various caps placed on the program over the last several years, and is projected to cost about \$34 million this fiscal year).

When DCF attempted to revive their localization proposal in 2021, critics worried the state was offering communities too little time to plan and was removing itself as a backstop, according to a DCF memo to lawmakers from that February. Service providers strongly objected, arguing the change would result in an “exponential increase in literal homelessness,” according to VT-Digger reporting from the time. Since then, fights over how to best wind down the program’s pandemic era-expansion have become a perennial flashpoint in yearly budget negotiations, as lawmakers and administration officials debate the best way to care for a homeless population that has tripled since before the pandemic. Last-minute extensions and rule changes have become the voucher program’s hallmark, creating what Dragon called a “roller coaster” ride for unhoused people and service providers alike.

Proponents of H.91 see it as the last-best effort to step off that turbulent ride.

The concerns that plagued former versions of regionalization (the timeframe of the transition, the funding questions, the fear that the state is absolving itself of responsibility) all haunt H.91. But the leaders of community action agencies were quick to point out the differences between this bill and prior proposals to decentralize Vermont’s homelessness response system.

Past efforts focused on restructuring the motel program in particular, Dragon said. The current bill is much more holistic, giving communities more flexibility in how they choose to use the funding after undergoing a regional planning and needs-assessment process while the state plays a monitoring role.

That decision-making process could result in using motel rooms to an extent, Dragon said. “But it may look very different. It could include a variety of different shelters . . . it could include single resident occupancies.”

H.91 proposes maintaining the current funding level for homelessness programs when the regional nonprofits take the reins. Even now, however, there is not enough money in the system to address the needs of all Vermonters experiencing homelessness, said Frank Knaack, director of the Housing and Homelessness Alliance of Vermont.

He thinks the regional shift envisioned by the bill could work, if adequate funding for shelter and affordable housing is maintained over time – and if the state retains a key role in the picture.

If it’s the middle of winter in Burlington and the local response team has run out of funding for an emergency cold weather shelter, the state must be there to assist, he said. If another flood occurs in Washington County, “the state has the ability to bring massive state resources in immediately to address that.”

“The state is the one who can kind of see all the pieces,” Knaack said.

This story, by Report for America corps member Carly Berlin, was produced through a partnership between VTDigger and Vermont Public.

Proposed Farm Relief May Include Logging

by Sam Hartnett

VERMONT - A bill to help farms recoup losses due to extreme weather could bring forestry businesses into the mix as it makes its way across the Legislature.

S.60 sets up a farm relief fund that lawmakers seem to agree should be accessible to loggers as well. Only farms would qualify for the money under the Senate’s initial plan, which came together after floods and freezes in recent years devastated Vermont agriculture.

Over the last two years, “persistently rainy conditions made many forested areas too wet to harvest,” a rep from the Professional Logging Contractors of the Northeast told legislators last week in the House committee dealing with agriculture and forestry.

Those conditions came alongside damage to roads and bridges due to flooding. Heavy mud seasons and warmer, wetter winters in particular can inhibit both the harvest and transport of timber, leaving loggers stuck.

Lawmakers had already been looking at including foresters in the bill when the testimony came. Shortly after, a draft doing just that was introduced.

“We expect the loggers impacted would be a fraction of the claims, but their losses from adverse weather events cause great hardship, and giving loggers the opportunity to apply for emergency funds seems fair,” said Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun, D-Westminster, who had sponsored a nearly identical House bill that covered foresters.

A typical forestry outfit’s business model looks a lot different from the average farm, but people in both industries are subject to extreme weather events hurting bottom lines.

“Loggers have historically been left out of these relief bills,” said Rep. David Dufree, D-Shaftsbury.

Flood relief efforts like the Business Emergency Gap Assistance Program didn’t extend funds to loggers as their losses were considered revenue loss, according to the logging organization.

The inclusion of foresters raises questions about who or what would receive payments. Loggers often use sub-contractors for loading logs or trucking timber, and legislators need to determine if or how the fund could compensate those workers.

“Clearly, there are different circumstances for a farmer than there are for a logging contractor, and the biggest one is that the logging contractor doesn’t generally own the property they are working on,” said Dana Doran, the rep from the logging group, told the House Committee on Agriculture, Food Resiliency and Forestry.

In a phone call Monday, Doran was confident lawmakers would find a way to ensure everyone involved in a logging operation could be compensated.

He believes the important part is setting up legislation to provide much needed relief for struggling foresters.

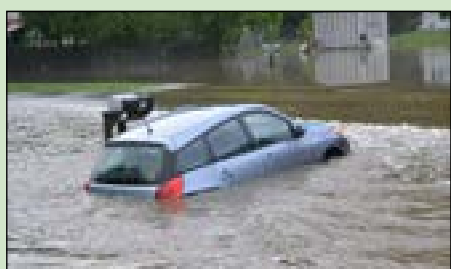
As laid out earlier this year, the fund would help farms recover losses or reimburse them for unexpected costs. Those could include wages, wiped-out income from destroyed crops or repairs to roads. It would cover up to 50% of uninsured or uncovered losses, up to \$150,000 per year for a farm.

A review board would make the final call, with a turnaround coming at most 30 days from officials receiving an “administratively complete application,” under ideal circumstances.

The updated version of the bill in the House committee includes two forestry operators on the review board alongside the previously planned group of state officials, farmers and farming orgs. Forest fires have also been added to the list of eligible extreme weather events.

Legislators also added a limit on the proportion of the fund a single farm or forestry operation could receive at 5%. The maximum funding a single entity could receive from the program remains capped at \$150,000.

Sam Hartnett writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship

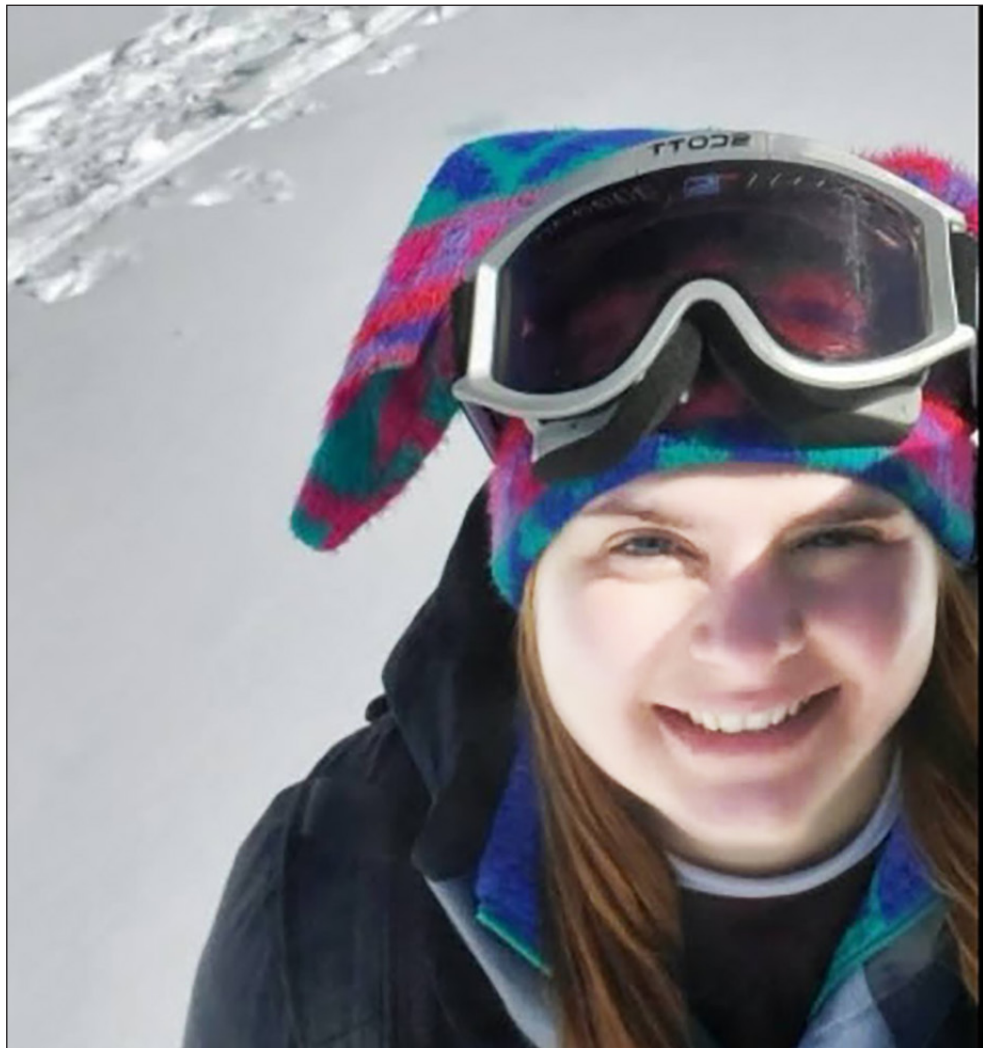


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The Gazette brought you updates during and after the July 10 flooding, just as we did during the July 10, 2023, floods and for 135 years before that.

Click here to [DONATE](#) now so we continue to be here with fair and accurate community news and information when you need it.

Schaper Encourages Digging Deep into Solid Waste



Erika Schaper

by Michael Apicella

MORRISTOWN – Erika Schaper works for the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management

District (LRSWMD). She helps deliver outreach and education across Lamoille County and the towns of Craftsbury and Worcester. She was a high school science teacher before working for LRSWMD and has a background in biology with a minor in chemistry. Schaper has been working with LRSWMD since June 2024.

Schaper sees waste, what we consider to be not useful or past its purpose, as an entirely human concept. If we look into nature, there's circularity, resources have something to go back into. There is no waste. "Humans have a consumption problem. We consume complicated, toxic things, and many of them are hard to avoid. Take plastics for example, they're everywhere. The best thing we can do is consume less, consume used, get resourceful and reuse as much as possible, and then recycle," she said.

There's evidence to support that waste management as a concept first started in ancient Greece. A law was established ordering garbage to be disposed of one mile away from the city of Athens. In modern society, waste has become an emerging topic with the rise of industrialization. Within the United States, repurposing and recycling became a big part of the Great Depression. This idea of giving new life to resources such as metals, paper, and rubber from tires extended into World War 2 with

the "Salvage for Victory" campaign.

Today, with much growth and development, waste management has become a fundamental part of life, even if we don't realize it.

In Vermont, waste management is dealt with at many levels, including the municipal level, state level and in the private sector.

LRSWMD is a municipal entity that helps oversee waste management across 12 district towns with around 26,000 residents. In her role as the outreach coordinator, Schaper helps educate community groups, schools and businesses to encourage waste reduction and sustainable materials management across those towns.

Waste management today involves a mix of human power, technology and evolving policies. For example, there are currently two material recovery facilities, also known as MRFs, in the state of Vermont. MRFs sort out Vermont's mandatory blue bin recyclables (paper, plastic containers, steel and aluminum cans and glass bottles and jars) to be sent to downstream processors. The Vermont MRFs use a combination of machinery and hand sorting.

The MRF in Williston now takes in about 70% of the recyclables in the northern part of the state. There's talk that a new MRF with more advanced technology will be built sometime in the near future by a Vermont solid waste management entity. At the policy level, EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) programs exist for special materials such as paint, fluorescent bulbs, mercury containing thermostats, electronics

and batteries. EPR laws hold manufacturers financially responsible for the cost of proper disposal of these materials at their end of life, taking the burden of figuring out what to do with the materials off of consumers. Paint and batteries for example can be dropped off for free at year-round collection locations.

Miseducation surrounding recycling systems today has been widespread and prevalent since 2017 when China stopped importing materials from the United States. In Vermont, this change had little impact because markets have mostly been within domestic borders. Discouragement in the system and lack of knowledge sometimes keep people from taking local action to participate in recycling programs. "There's a huge misconception that recycling is broken, but it's not, and myth busting these facts is a big part of my job," Schaper said.

Schaper states that the best way people can make a difference in the amount of waste they produce is to "Form small action teams, inspire and educate your

neighbors, build local community resilience, buy local as much as you can. . . We need to make our economies as local and circular as possible."

LRSWMD's mission is to reduce the quantity and toxicity of trash generated and going to the landfill while maintaining or improving overall environmental quality (air, water and soil), treating customers and employees with respect, and operating within a balanced budget. LRSWMD manages organics (food scraps, leaves, and yard debris), garbage, recycling, across five drop off sites in Craftsbury, Johnson, Morrisville, Stowe and Worcester. LRSWMD runs a commercial compost center, Lamoille Soil, which uses an aerated static pile process to make compost that is approved for use on VT organic farms. The District also hosts bi-annual household hazardous waste collection events.

Michael Apicella contributed this story written for the Sterling College Science Communication course. Apicella is a student in Environmental Studies with a focus in Ecology.

2024 Employment Figures Released

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK - 2024 Employment in Northern Vermont outside the Burlington metropolitan area is estimated at 89,320, according to the Vermont Department of Labor. That approaches a 2018 employment estimate for 2030, which projected the area's employment at 89,976.

The mean hourly wage was \$30.82, equating at an annual salary of 64,100.

The top five professions are listed as being office and administrative positions, educational and library employees, management workers, food preparation and serving professions, followed by sales jobs.

On Thursday, April 24, the Vermont JobLink website showed eight job listings for available positions within five miles of Hardwick, 14 within 10 miles and 2,843 within 25 miles. Most of those between 10 and 25 miles are in the Barre or Montpelier area and many are jobs with the State of Vermont.

Within five miles of Hardwick, a number of retail positions are available, including several at Jiffy Mart for a food service supervisor and associate, with undisclosed salaries, and one for a retail position at \$16 per hour with a company that supplies employees to retail stores.

A position for an automotive technician at Greensboro Garage with five years of experience and a high school diploma was listed as paying \$20 to \$28 per hour. Several positions were shown for traffic control flaggers with a company out of Miton paying \$21 to \$25 per hour, with or without a high school diploma.

Within 10 miles nursing and healthcare security positions appear along with three for farm workers that are paying from \$17.80 to \$18.83 per hour. Some of that work is in apple orchards and a maple sugaring operation.

Farther afield, but within 25 miles, 171 are open paying \$20 or more, including electricians, bookkeepers, medical technicians, teachers, therapists and one for a pastry baker.

Just six positions paying over \$75 per hour are open within 25 miles of Hardwick at UVM Medical Center facilities in Berlin and Barre for pharmacists paying \$55.06 to \$82.60 per hour, and for a primary care physician at \$264,000 per year.

Current details of open positions can be searched for and found at VermontJobLink.com

Positions with the State of Vermont, including seasonal opportunities at state parks and with the Agency of Transportation can be found at careers.vermont.gov

ANOTHER OPINION

Will They Round up the “Homegrown”?

by Anne Hanson

CRAFTSBURY – The Bill of Rights in our Constitution explicitly provides freedoms of speech and assembly via Amendment I. Amendment IV provides protections against unreasonable searches and seizures. Amendment XIV states those residing here cannot be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. The Constitution was written to prevent the excesses and abuse of power once held by kings.

Donald Trump, increasingly ruling this country as a king (with help from advisors), has become expert at defying Constitutional norms. His administration’s attempt to normalize “disappearing” people, a fear tactic long employed by authoritarian regimes, is a way to sow fear and to silence criticism. Footage in the past week showing the disappearing of Vermont resident and Palestinian student Mohsen Mahdawi, when he went to report for his final citizenship interview in Colchester is chilling.

Who is ICE? Why do they drive unmarked black vehicles? Why take into custody and disappear a man who had used his free speech rights to criticize the destruction of his homeland? Why are some of the ICE men masked? Why don’t

they wear badges with id numbers as police officers must? Will they be the ones to round up the “home-grown” (presumably any of us at any time)?

Kudos to Senator Christopher Van Hollen of Maryland who traveled to the notorious concentration center in El Salvador to visit Kilmar Armando Abrego Garcia, a resident of Maryland who had been swept up in a mass ICE deportation despite court orders that prevent this man from being returned to El Salvador. “I don’t think it’s ever wrong to fight for the constitutional rights of one person, because if we give up on one person’s rights, we threaten everybody’s rights,” Van Hollen said in an interview on CNN Sunday, adding, “Anyone who is not prepared to stand up and fight for the Constitution doesn’t deserve to lead.”

In an op-ed in the Chicago Tribune last week, Vermont resident Elizabeth Shackelford gives perspective on the above sweep earlier this month that sent 250 immigrants to El Salvador without any due process. She linked a Bloomberg News article noting that 90% of those sent away from this detention and extradition sweep had no criminal records in the U.S.

“As the executive branch brazenly flouts the Supreme Court, we have reached the constitutional crisis so many have feared, and its

consequences put our most basic freedoms at risk. If you think you are safe from this overreach because you haven’t broken the law, neither had most of these men. If you think you’re safe because you’re not an “illegal immigrant,” many of these men weren’t, either. If you think you’re safe because you’re a “home-grown” American citizen, that is cold comfort today because Trump urged President Nayib Bukele to build more prisons because “home-grown are next.” Beware: It’s a common play for authoritarians

to hone tools of oppression against unpopular populations before they roll them out against anyone they wish.”

This is all too serious to name as a side show, but it does reduce our attention to the decimation of the Veterans and Social Security Administrations and many other vital services under siege by [Elon] Musk and the creators of Project 2025, as well as the Trump tax cut that will further concentrate wealth for the very richest.

Love, Loss, Repeat

The oldish woman sat on the dock in the chilling shade reading a book, alone, except for a lone paddler in an orange kayak on the wind rippled lake.

She purposely was sitting there to be by herself while she finished the last pages of a book that she didn’t want to end.

It ended.

She had a feeling of loss and sadness and wanted to go back a few minutes, still anticipating, savoring the last pages.

If the book embraces her spirit, she feels this way every time.

She doesn’t care who wrote it, or what it was about, just so it was good writing.

Beginning any book, she knows the possibility she will have her heart broken, but she tentatively opens the cover anyway.

Feeling unsettled, she looks up at the lake and sees the dark depths a few feet away and balks at transitioning back to reality. Any book is someone’s reality, not necessarily hers, but she doesn’t want to be in either. Maybe she will want the next book to be her reality. So on and so on, book after book.

During the first part of the Covid pandemic she happily kept busy with home projects, not reading as usual.

When Fall came, she drove to the newly opened library and chose some books by their covers.

She tentatively piled the books in the order she might want to read them.

Ah, safe again.

Angela Grace Woodbury

This poem was written for the Verse-Village celebration of April Poetry Month.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Small-town Protests, May 1

To the editor:

Protests against the on-going efforts by President Trump to ignore the Constitution and undermine Democracy will be held throughout the country on May 1. Many are planned in Vermont, from small towns to the State House in Montpelier.

The Montpelier protest may get the most news coverage but I wonder if that State House gathering is of greater importance than the protests that will occur in places such as Wolcott, Barton, St. Johnsbury and other small towns.

I’ve driven through Wolcott many times in late afternoon. I am always surprised at the amount of commuter traffic there is heading toward Hardwick. A protest in Wolcott would be seen by many people, probably surprising more people than a yet-again television clip would from the State House. A local assembly might cause

more people to think or be made aware that what is happening is a local matter, not just something going on in Washington, D.C., or Montpelier.

Coming back from a State House protest on April 19, I was surprised, and pleased, to see 15 to 20 people, with signs, standing in Woodbury along Route 14 where it intersects with the Cabot Road. I doubt that was a common occurrence in past years when there was a need for people to speak up and speak out.

I hope area residents will exercise their Constitutional right to join me and their friends and neighbors to assemble peaceably Thursday in an effort to petition our government.

The Wolcott protest will begin at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 1, by the Town Hall.

Ross Connelly
Hardwick



A honk and wave protest calling out the federal administration’s overreach, at the corners of State and Main streets in Montpelier, Saturday, April 19, drew a crowd of 200 to 300 people carrying signs, and “lots of honking to go with the waving,” said Hardwick’s Ross Connelly. He reported seeing two people from Walden, one from Wolcott, one from Greensboro, two from Calais and another from Woodbury. The four corners were full, despite the rain. People stayed on the sidewalks, walking across the streets when the “walk” sign came on the stop lights. A small group of 15 to 20 protesters with signs were standing in Woodbury, near the Cabot Road intersection with Route 14, as he drove home later, said Connelly.

photo by Ross Connelly

VOICES OF SPIRIT

Make Your Bed and Change the World

by Sister Gail Worcelo

GREENSBORO – There are several things living in a monastery and being a U.S. Navy Seal have in common. One of those things is the simple task of making your bed.

In the Christian monastic tradition of which I am a part, we follow Integral Life Practices, which are the directives for how we practically live our lives at Green Mountain Monastery. In accordance with these practices, we counsel all the nuns and guests to make their beds every day with awareness and attention.

Making our beds does not mean throwing the covers over the bed to hide the twisted sheets underneath, but taking the time to properly smooth out blankets and sheets to create a sense of order and harmony in the space.

This is not as easy as it appears. Whether living in a monastery, in navy barracks or in your own apartment or home, the tendency is to want to rush past this mundane task to get on with the more important jobs of the day.

During our early training in the monastery, we were taught to put the best of ourselves in all our actions, even the most uninteresting. In fact, my novice directress at the time would say, “Make your bed and change the world!”

In 2014 US Navy Admiral William McRaven gave the commencement address at the University of Texas which went viral. In less than two minutes this former Navy Seal made a compelling case for the simple practice of making our beds.

As a Navy Seal, he and his fellow Seals were required to make their beds to perfection every morning as a discipline designed to build on the harder tasks they would face as the day unfolded.

Each morning their beds were inspected. If the bed was done properly, the covers would be square, the corners pulled tight, the pillow centered under the head board and the extra blanket folded neatly at the foot of the bed.

Admiral McRaven tells us that this mundane task seemed ridiculous to the men at the time, as they were aspiring to be real warriors, tough battle-hardened Navy Seals.

But the wisdom of this simple discipline has been proven to be beneficial many times over, both in the monastery and in the navy.

If you make your bed every morning, you will have accomplished the first task of the day. It will give you a small sense of pride and encourage you to do another task with awareness, and then another. By the end of the day, that one task will have laid the foundation for finishing many tasks well.

Making your bed will also reinforce the fact that the little things in life matter. If you cannot do the little things right, the bigger things can be wanting. For example, we all know what it means to cut corners or do something quick and dirty, sayings that reflect work that is hasty, sloppy, lax and careless.

This is what my novice directress was referring to those many years ago when she said, “Make

your bed and change the world!” She was teaching us to establish practices and a discipline that would translate out to the world in the work we do, with the people we interact with and in the services we offer.

This simple discipline, beginning each morning, can lay the foundation for jobs well done with integrity and care. It can also work on character by building up consistency, reliability and self discipline.

In the days ahead, try making your bed if you tend to leave it undone. If you already make your bed, then give some extra time to making it with attention.

Notice how it feels to step back and feel a small sense of pride in accomplishing something at the beginning of the day that can encourage you for larger tasks ahead.

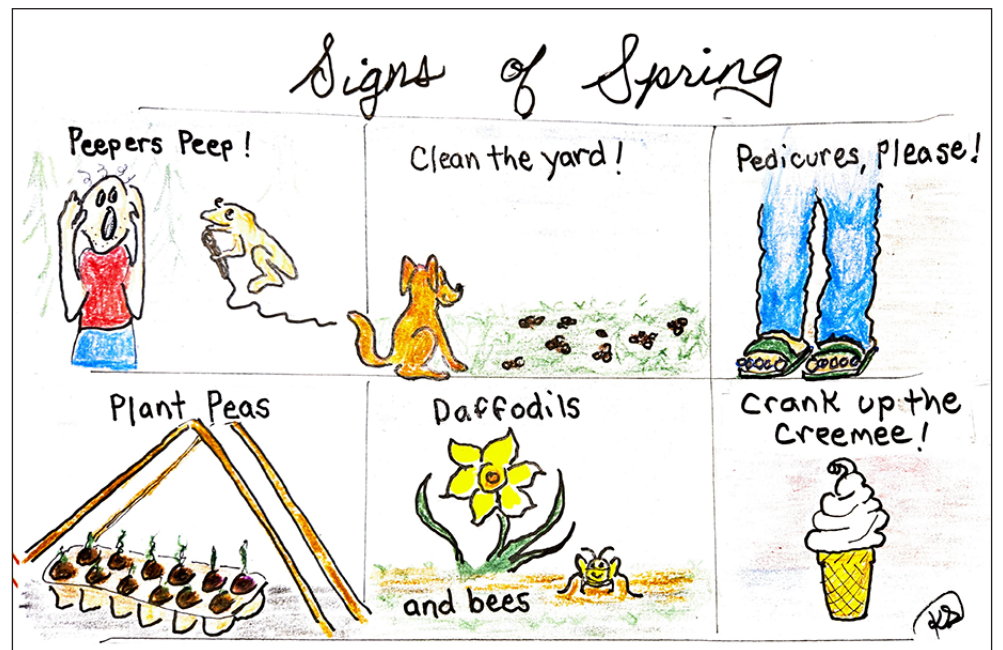
Also, pay attention to how

the room changes when the bed is made, and what it feels like to arrive home after a day of work to a well-made bed. You may be surprised. Remember . . . making your bed can change the world!

If you would like to listen to the 2014 commencement address of Admiral McRaven online, search You Tube for “Navy Seal Commander explains why you should make your bed every day.” https://youtu.be/m_3sd_Kx-SMg?si=HoShdLQMolX_F4u1

Sr. Gail Worcelo is a co-founder of Sisters of the Earth Community, a community of Catholic sisters whose mission is Earth Healing and Protection. She leads retreats and programs worldwide on topics related to establishing mutually enhancing human-earth relationships. The sisters offer retreats, programs and spiritual accompaniment at Green Mountain Monastery, Greensboro.

Home Fries by Kay Spaulding



THE Hardwick Gazette Since 1889

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Because we believe that accountability makes for responsible debate, we will print signed letters only. We might rarely withhold the writer's name with good cause. Letters are limited to 400 words and must be addressed to the Gazette's readers, not to individuals public figures or organizations. Opinions longer than 400 words on topics of current and local interest to readers in our 11-town coverage area may be considered for publication. Thank you notes are not considered to be opinions and will not be printed as letters from readers.

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OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Sunday-Winters Acts Fast and Shows Up

by Emma Pearce

GREENSBORO – The Rev. Ed Sunday-Winters, minister of Greensboro United Church, had to act fast when the pandemic hit Vermont in 2020. Within 48 hours of the first lockdowns, he took the church fully remote.

Originally, he said, it was just him, his iPad and an organist streaming sermons over Facebook. After some time, a parishioner who had worked in the film industry brought the pastor more equipment, and the church's YouTube channel was born just before Easter that year.

To this day, the church broadcasts services live every week.

What he saw of his parish during those pandemic days showed how Greensboro United Church of Christ “helps the community be a community,” said Sunday-Winters, a quality that made it a perfect fit for him.

Sunday-Winters has been a minister at Greensboro United Church of Christ for eight years now. The church belongs to the United Church of Christ (UCC), a Protestant denomination.

Before moving to Vermont, he had served as Senior Pastor at Ball Camp Baptist Church in Knoxville, Tenn.

He spoke of a continual spiritual journey he experienced while ministering in Tennessee. Most parishioners there were



Ed Sunday-Winters

courtesy photo

desire to spread and teach the works of God, he said.

“Religion tends to be focused on the end game,” he said. But “it’s a day-to-day thing, always answering the call.”

It’s through that call that people walk through life together and can catch glimpses of the divine, he said.

Lifting up people who are different from you, he believes, is the heart of the gospel.

The pastor saw that on display during the pandemic. The church and broader town community worked together to bring groceries and prescriptions to those in need. That Easter, Sunday-Winters said, there were acts of mercy, compassion and kindness in Greensboro.

“Jesus was alive,” he said, “and everywhere.”

The church also owns Fellowship Hall, attached to the church. More than just a resource for parishioners, it is a community space and plays a role in helping those in need. One of those roles is assisting Migrant Justice.

The church supplies supper and Fellowship Hall meeting space for the immigrant rights group Migrant Justice, for example. The church helps organize transportation to take workers to meetings and has supported Milk with Dignity, a Migrant Justice program that commits dairy producers to providing workers with better working conditions.

Sunday-Winters and his parish, he said, “show up where we can.”

Emma Pearce writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for the Hardwick Gazette.

welcoming of LGBTQ+ members, he said, but older churchgoers opposed embracing them in the congregation. For a year he tried to navigate the schism, he said, but it grew too tumultuous and he decided to break away and take a year off from ministry work. During that year he became a member of the Church of the Savior in Knoxville, his first experience with the UCC.

A friend of his worked in financial planning, he said, and helped him get a job as an advisor at Edward Jones. He spent about a year in the role but remained steadfast in his faith and eventually looked to go back to preaching. That led him to Greensboro United Church of Christ.

Growing up an hour outside of Knoxville, Sunday-Winters said he found a sense of community and stability in the church. His home life was unstable. But in a youth group during middle school, he found faith, and a refuge where he felt he didn’t need to be afraid. That sense of belonging planted the seed for his



Greensboro United Church of Christ

social media photo

If Matter is Made of Perception, What World Wants to Become?

A spiraling, dancing, perplexing world
 Deeply sensing, exploring every corner and crevice
 With pleasure and play, opening and blossoming to the unfurling potential
 In sincerity & reverence, in wonder & amazement at the truth of this beauty

This sacred, holy, ever-changing wild, alive mystery
 Caressed and held with tender hands, danced upon with delicate toes
 Diving deep into the pain like that of the ocean blue
 Engulfed in the torrents, submerged in the waves

Residing in the darkness, transforming into light
 Surrendering all into the abyss of delight
 An offering to you, Great Mother, Whatever you ask of us
 Melting, softening, releasing, becoming one in this great web

A love that resounds and envelops it all
 A piercing penetration to the elemental essence of existence
 Actions in step with the rhythm of nature’s heart-beat
 Slow, Let Go, Woah!, A-Ho!

Sierra Klotz
 Hardwick

This poem was written for the Verse-Village celebration of April Poetry Month.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Stop the Billionaire Coup

To the editor:

Nationwide there will be coordinated protests to the billionaire political elite’s take-over of our government, and the Trump administration’s disregard for the rule of law, and the separation of powers upon which our democratic republic stands.

For those unable to attend

the Wolcott, St Johnsbury or Montpelier protests, please join me in front of Front Seat Coffee this Thursday, May 1, from 4:30 to 5 p.m., with signs and your presence to be part of the nationwide May Day Walk Out demonstration.

Bob Hawk
 Walden

ANOTHER OPINION

Watson Responds to Moore's Commentary on Global Warming Solutions Act

by Sen. Ann Watson

MONTPELIER – In a recent op-ed about the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), Vermont's cornerstone climate policy, Sec. Julie Moore accused legislative leadership of being "content" with "unattainable" climate pollution reduction requirements.

As chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy, I feel compelled to respond, as I would not describe us as "content" with the current situation.

Earlier this year, I presented the administration with a potential path forward, an offer that still stands. But before I get into the details, let's clarify one important point. The next major GWSA deadline isn't tomorrow. It's in 2030, five years from now. Five years to act. Five years to take meaningful steps toward reducing climate pollution, which will ultimately save Vermonters a significant amount of money.

Unfortunately, based on the pattern we've seen, I don't believe Gov. Scott will do what's necessary. Instead, he'll continue to do what he has done on climate: stall, resist and let the Legislature do the heavy lifting, only to blame us when we propose real solutions that would lead Vermont toward a

cheaper, more sustainable and resilient energy future.

I'm interested in solutions, and I believe Vermonters are too. It's unclear to me, though, how interested the governor is in finding solutions. By 2030, Gov. Scott will have had an entire decade to implement policies to meet our climate targets. While I recognize and appreciate his support for the clean cars and trucks rules, that alone falls short of what this moment demands.

Unfortunately, it remains unclear what further policies the governor is actually willing to support. The governor's package of climate rollbacks (H.289) requires an "implementation strategy" for reducing climate pollution, but it's not due until December 2026, after this biennium is over and, conveniently, after the next election.

Just to clarify, the governor doesn't need a new bill to make an implementation plan. We already have an actual law: the Global Warming Solutions Act. If Scott wasn't willing to act based on the directive of current state law, it's difficult to trust that a new law would compel him to do so.

That's why I proposed the following path forward.

First, the governor must

identify and commit to a real strategy, something that moves us meaningfully and substantially toward the 2030 pollution reduction requirement, something that gets Vermonters to the cheaper, more price-stable, more self-sufficient and resilient future that we all want.

Second, the governor should roll it out and start implementation in 2026 or 2027. Third, prove to us it's working in 2027 or 2028. Then, and only then, we can talk about recalibrating the timeline, choosing a slightly delayed deadline year with a pollution reduction requirement that follows the curve downward, which would maintain accountability.

This offer remains, but the first step must come from the governor. If he has a substantive, meaningful plan for getting Vermont back on track, I'm ready to listen and work together. For the vast majority of cases, the renewable option is cheaper than its fossil fuel alternative. If Gov. Scott were serious about energy affordability, he'd be finding a way to transition Vermonters off of

expensive, price-volatile, foreign fossil fuels.

What's concerning is the governor's continued pattern of resistance and a lack of initiative, even as energy costs fluctuate and the need to transition off fossil fuels becomes more urgent. This moment calls for leadership that embraces both the financial and scientific realities before us.

The affordable, resilient energy future Vermonters need is within reach, but only if we're willing to take bold, concrete steps.

Gov. Scott, Vermont needs you to bring forward a serious, actionable climate plan that gets us back on track toward necessary climate pollution reductions, that gets us back on the path toward energy affordability. If you do, I'll be the first to recognize and support that effort. But in the absence of such a plan, we must stay the course for the 2030 deadline.

This commentary by Sen. Anne Watson, D/P-Washington was first published in VT Digger. She is chair of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy.



New England Center for Circus Arts artist Avery Ucker performs aerial feats on the trapeze during the Circus Springboard Show: "Thank You For Waiting," April 24, at the Highland Center for the Arts.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

The Window Above Bruno's

It is still there, in evening's dusk of a late August,
the second-floor window
where my friend's father
would sit to watch the Summers' Street roll out
its tableaux vivants of unstaged occurrences.

The window is always dark
yet frames the memory
of his face lit by the dimness of a fifty's street lamp.

I've found a bench across the street,
facing the long-closed doors of Bruno's bar and grill,
from where the brawls and arguments could spill out

on to the sidewalk any night of the week except Sunday.

I look again to the window,
a void into a darker night,
his private box above the stage of the evening street.

And I ask what joins the shadows and echoes of our yesterdays

to the unknowable and eternal night of our tomorrows?

**Victor Densmore
Hardwick**

This poem was written for the Verse-Village celebration of April Poetry Month.

Straw

I sweep the dirt
thinking about the debate.
So much accumulates!
Dust and wind
In the corners of the porch
pollen and spider webs;
trapped insects sometimes
fly free

I try to use gentle strokes,
but
muscles often strain
for force. Breathe out

**Mark Brown
East Calais**

This poem was written for the Verse-Village celebration of April Poetry Month.

North Pole, Equator

Forced together
In one place
In one year
We should be so lucky
To build

Our lives
Our homes
Here

**Ryan Andrus
Hardwick**

This poem was written for the Verse-Village celebration of April Poetry Month.

YANKEE NOTEBOOK

My Love Affair with Small Boats

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – The tips of my tamaracks are starting to turn green, the coltsfoot is in bloom, and a phoebe is singing in the brook bed below the kitchen. The sun is out, and if the thermometer goes up another five degrees, I'll fire up old Helga (she's 27 this year) and let her out of the barn for her first run of 2025. In spite of the strong snow shower of last week, it's probably safe to say that spring appears to be here.

Because of my long love affair with small boats, expressed these days mainly by my clicks on social media websites, I get a lot of photos and videos of happy, expectant boat owners about to launch for the summer. They speak of days of scraping, sanding, caulking and painting; the results gleam in the sun as the moment approaches. It's enough, these days, to join them vicariously, and just remember the delight I once felt at the first lift of a boat, any boat, to the motion of its native medium.

Right in the middle of these reflections, here came another video, of a much larger boat sliding back into the Atlantic Ocean at Rockland, Me. The excursion schooner American Eagle, after a winter "on the hard" being brought up to snuff for the summer season of cruising, is again in her natural element. Her masts are stepped; her maroon bottom paint, dark against her white hull, peeks just above the surface of her placid berth beside the wharf near the north end of town.

It's not possible to expect reasonably a scenic environment beside a harbor, and so it is here. But once across the rough blacktop and up a hill, there sits a world-class clam shack. Claws, I think it's called, and on summer evenings there's a line of perhaps 20 people waiting to order at the window, where the cashier (usually an eastern European student here for the holiday) runs your payment and hands you a number placard for your table. You sit at a picnic table. Eating lobsters or clams, the restaurant's website declares, is nothing you do in a suit and tie. Afterward, the aroma of frying seafood follows you back down to the ship. A quick brush-'em-up in the tiny sink in the cabin, and a deep, sea-cushioned sleep.

My friend Bea and I have been on two cruises on the Eagle, and the prospect of a third is never far from our minds. We've been lucky to get the same cabin both times, a double in the after saloon with two other doubles, the crew's bunks, and a head. Our cabin is about

the size of a refrigerator (only one of us at a time can put on their shoes) and features a low-hanging overhead beam that in an incautious moment can put you down for the count. But it's snug, which is what you want on a cool, foggy morning off the coast of Maine.

The American Eagle, originally Andrew and Rosalie, after the original captain's children, started life as a schooner out of Gloucester. Her name was changed during the early days of World War II, before Germany declared war on the United States, to show U-boats that she was not Canadian, and thus fair game. The engine was a nod to the need to get fish to market fast as possible without loading up with ice. After some years as a dragger, she underwent a three-year conversion to a passenger windjammer, as they're called on the coast.

We show up in Rockland (not an inconsiderable drive from Montpelier) the night before our departure. The captain gives his logistics and safety lecture, and then it's off to the clam shack. Coffee is ready next morning whenever we wake up. After breakfast, the engine pulls us out of our slip. The sails go up, with our help, and we cruise quietly out of harbor, past the famous Rockland breakwater and light, and out into Penobscot Bay.

It's a nostalgic experience for me. Over half a century ago I spent several summers rowing and sailing around the bay with students in open 30-foot pulling boats. Old familiar names of islands, Calderwood, Butter, North Haven, Eagle, slide by as the schooner picks up speed in whatever wind is blowing. On sunny days everyone lounges on deck, chatting, painting watercolors, or just loving the silence and the ripple of the ship's bow wave. In foul weather, they retreat to the warm galley forward for coffee and sweet rolls or huddle under the dodger amidships. I generally descend to my cabin with a book or magazine and let the patter of the rain on the deck just above my face lull me into a happy stupor. I remember Huck Finn's comment about life on the water: "It's lovely to live on a raft."

We spend one fair-weather evening going ashore on an island for a lobster bake, ferrying in from the ship in the seine boat, our amateur six-oar performance earning us the title of the Spastic Cockroach. We anchor for the night in coves picked by the captain to shelter us from the wind. The rest of the time, the spruce-crowned islands float by, one after another, like a dream. You can see what's happening here: I'm talking myself into another trip.

Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



"GARBAGE BAGS DOTTED BOTH SIDES OF THE HIGHWAY FOR 11 MILES. IMAGINE ALL THE ROADS IN VERMONT CONTAINING THIS MUCH TRASH!"

MEETING MEMO

Thursday, May 1 Hardwick Select Board, first Thursday of month, 6 p.m.	Greensboro Select Board, second Wednesday of month, 6:30 p.m.
Tuesday, May 6 Cabot Select Board, first Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.	Town Clerks Cabot: cabotvt.us
Craftsbury Select Board, first Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.	Calais: calaisvermont.gov
Marshfield Select Board, first Tuesday of month, 5:30 p.m.	Craftsbury: townofcraftsbury.com
Plainfield Select Board, first Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.	Greensboro: greensborovt.gov
Wednesday, May 7 Wolcott Select Board, first Wednesday of month, 6 p.m.	Hardwick: hardwickvt.org
Monday, May 12 Calais Select Board, second Monday of month, 7 p.m.	Marshfield: town.marshfield.vt.us
Wednesday, May 14	Plainfield: plainfieldvt.us
	Stannard: Stannard town clerk: (802) 533-2577, open Wed., 8-noon, townofstannard@myfairpoint.net
	Walden: waldenvt.gov
	Wolcott: wolcottvt.org
	Woodbury: woodburyvt.org

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IN THE GARDEN

Get Garden Ready with Spring Soil Test

by Andrea Knepper

BOLTON – There’s no need to guess what a garden needs for optimal results. Take a soil test this spring to create the right conditions for the garden from the start.

A simple soil test will help prevent problems later in the season. By following the recommendations in results, plants get a strong start, leading to better growth, bigger blooms and a more rewarding harvest.

A soil test provides a complete picture of what’s going on beneath the surface in a garden. It will provide information on the pH of the soil, how much organic matter is present and the levels of phosphorus, potassium, magnesium and other macronutrients and micronutrients.

Nitrogen is not included in soil tests because its availability in the soil fluctuates due to biological activity and weather conditions. With the test result information, informed decisions can be made about what to add to garden soil before planting.

The University of Vermont (UVM) Agricultural and Environmental Testing Lab conducts soil testing for home gardeners and commercial farmers. Visit its website at go.uvm.edu/soiltest for the submission form and additional information. The cost for a basic nutrient soil test is \$17 per sample.

To begin collecting a soil sample, have a clean trowel or small shovel, a clean bucket and a plastic bag. The bag needs to be able to hold one-half to one cup of soil. It is important that all materials are clean to avoid contamination.

Choose the area to sample. If garden beds have different purposes, collect a sample to test for each space. For example, sample beds for annual flowers and garden vegetables separately as they have different nutritional needs.

In the chosen area, identify about 10 different spots to collect soil. These should be distributed throughout the space. Dig a small hole about 6 to 8 inches deep (The root zone for most plants). Then, take a slice of soil along the side of the hole. Put this sample in the bucket.

Repeat this process at each location. The more locations samples are taken from, the better the results will represent the average conditions of the garden.

Thoroughly mix the samples in the bucket. Then scoop one-half to one cup of soil and place it in the plastic bag. Label the bags, especially if multiple samples are being submitted. The soil sample is now ready to send to the lab for testing.

Include the completed soil test submission form and mail the sample to the UVM Agricultural and Environmental Testing



A soil test will provide information on soil pH, organic matter and levels of macronutrients and micronutrients, making it easier to make an informed decision about what to add to the soil before planting.

photo Mary Jane Duford

Lab for analysis. Results will be sent in two to three weeks by email or mail.

The results will include information on the current state of the garden soil and offer recommendations for amendments to maximize the soil quality for gardening, as well as including resources to help interpret the results of the soil test.

The UVM Extension Master Gardener Helpline also can help make sense of garden and

lawn soil test results. Complete the form on the website, go.uvm.edu/gardenhelpline, upload a copy of the soil test results and an Extension Master Gardener will be in touch.

Starting a garden with a soil test can save time, money and frustration. It’s a small step that can make a big difference and it’s worth doing every few years.

Andrea Knepper is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from Bolton.

In My Nature by Abrah Griggs



Northeast Kingdom Human Services community skills direct support professional Debbie LePage (left) assists Chris Bartlett (right) with planting seeds in the Center for an Agricultural Economy’s Atkins Field hoop house on Granite St., April 22.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

THE OUTSIDE STORY

Protected: Area Towns are Handling Emerald Ash Borer

by **Camila Van Order Gonzalez**

AREA TOWNS – Since the emerald ash borer was first detected in Vermont in 2018, Plainfield has been unlucky in its relationship with the invasive beetle. The town is a hotspot for infestations right now, leaving dry, rotted-out ash trees ready to crash.

But Hardwick, just a few towns north, has never seen any confirmed case of emerald ash borer, according to the state.

“It’s a good lesson in how the insect spreads,” said Noah Hoffman, the invasive species coordinator for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation. “Most of the emerald ash borer in the state, we put it there.”

The emerald ash borer chews its way through forests with little regularity; it often spreads as a result of human activity, being carried on infested firewood or logging timber. They are most likely to use ash trees, which make up 6% of Vermont’s trees by volume, as a host for larvae. The bugs have been spotted in 96 out of Vermont’s 247 municipal areas, Hoffman said.

That there are no emerald ash borers in Hardwick could be attributed to the work that foresters, educators and town management have done to slow the spread.

“The state has done a great job with their educational outreach,” said Rose Paul of Plainfield’s conservation commission, “and we’ve tried to do our part in town.”

Hoffman said the state Agency of Natural Resources’ educational

programs have been a big success in slowing the insect’s spread, teaching the public how to identify infected trees or wood and how to treat it.

“There are landowners who might have ash in their forest. If we can slow the spread, it gives people more time to think about what they want to do, do some research, create a plan for their trees,” Hoffman said. “Maybe they want to do some logging and cut their healthy ash trees.”

Trees with emerald ash borer larvae living in their bark can resemble partially peeled carrots — chunks of bark are stripped off. Those marks come from woodpeckers flecking away in search of grub. Other indications of infestation include splitting bark, thinning crowns and D-shaped exit holes on the trunk.

If left untreated, the infestation dries out the wood and turns it brittle, useless for logging, liable to fall and ultimately dead.

In Calais, townspeople’s understanding of the hazards of sick trees has made it possible to plan tree removal on a broad scale.

“One of the things that strikes me about Calais is there’s a lot of interest in conservation and protection of natural resources,” said Kari Bradley, town administrator.

The town’s select board applied for an ash tree removal grant from the Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program, a collaboration between the state and University of Vermont Extension. Bradley said there was no opposition from the public on the board’s



Emerald ash borer

photo courtesy Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets

unanimous decision.

“Calais has close to 80 miles of road, and there are somewhere (around) 3,000 ash trees along the right of way on those roads,” Bradley said.

Grant funding for the Urban and Community Forestry Program has changed due to “the shifting priorities of the current administration,” said Hoffman with a dry chuckle. “Is that a nice way of saying it?”

The Trump administration’s mass campaign to cut federal awards is a cause of “angst and concern,” Hoffman said, because although the program is state funded, “a lot of the work we actually do and the service we provide to Vermonters is through federally awarded grants.”

Other methods of managing

the bug include injecting trees with a systemic insecticide, a process that can cost several hundred dollars every three years. It may seem pricey, but Hoffman argues that a tree could end up costing much more to take down than to vaccinate, especially if it caused damage on its way down. For several years, the state has also been releasing natural predators to the emerald ash borer. A few species of wasp-like insects that lay eggs inside the borer’s larvae or eggs. It’s a biocontrol measure aimed “to try to reduce its density and to try to give the trees more of a chance,” Hoffman said.

Camila Van Order Gonzalez writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, on assignment for the Hardwick Gazette.

Spring Early Risers Include Moths

by **Amber Jones**

NORWICH – Spring doesn’t just herald the return of birds, frogs, and bees; it also signals the emergence of many native moths, which deserve some of the spotlight.

Enter the Infant Moth (*Archicaris infans*). Also called the First-born Geometer because of its early emergence, these diurnal (day-flying) moths can be found in the air as early as mid-March, even with snow still on the ground. They range from Alaska to Newfoundland, from the northern United States as far south as New Jersey and are associated with mountainous or boreal areas.

As small green caterpillars, Infant Moths spend their time chowing down on their host plants: mainly birch trees, but also alder, willow, and poplar. When it comes time for



The Joker (Feralia jocosa)

them to pupate, they create a cocoon from tree bark and other debris and settle in for the long winter. In the spring they emerge as inconspicuous, mottled brown adults; but beneath those seemingly ordinary forewings are dazzling orange hind-wings that can be seen during their rapid flight.

Like many butterflies, these moths can often be found “puddling” or sipping nutrients from moist soils, seeps (muddy areas where groundwater has surfaced) or even animal dung. The adults will lay their eggs on the branches of their host plant, and when the caterpillars hatch a short time later, the cycle starts all over again!

The Half-wing Moth (*Phigalia titea*) is another rather inconspicuous, early-flying moth that overwinters as pupae. But look closely! While the male moths have fully functioning wings, the females are flightless and only have vestigial wing buds. They must therefore await a mate right where they emerge from pupation.

And while plants begin to green up in the spring, so do some of the moths. The Joker (the moth, not Batman’s nemesis) is a beautiful

example. With green wings that resemble lichen, these moths prefer coniferous host plants for overwintering as pupae.

Amber Jones is a staff member of the Vermont Center of Ecostudies in Norwich.



Half-wing Moth (Phigalia titea)

OUR COMMUNITIES

Public Education Town Hall, April 30

CABOT – There will be a public education town hall on Wednesday, April 30, 6 to 8 p.m., at the Willey building in Cabot. The event offers an opportunity to engage in conversation about the future of Vermont’s public schools. Invited speakers include representatives from the Rural Schools Community Alliance, the Public Assets Institute, sociol-

ogist Nikhil Goyal, and local community voices. All are welcome, including students, school workers, board members, administrators, and residents.

Light refreshments will be served. This event is organized by the Cabot School Sustainability Committee, Vermont School Workers United, and local community members.

Woodbury Town Green Up Day, May 3

WOODBURY – On May 3, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Green Up Day will be located at Woodbury Elementary School, located on Valley Lake Road, to pick up Green Up bags and to drop off collected trash. Focus of the day will be trash

along town roads, bearing in mind that state highway crews will be responsible for gathering the trash along Route 14. Roadside trash will still be accepted. Tires will be accepted for \$8 each. There will be a metal dumpster for metal disposal.

Bird Walks, Every May Saturday

HARDWICK – Saturday bird walks on the Hardwick Trails begin May 3, 7 a.m.. This tradition of enjoying the spring bird migration in local woodlands is for seasoned birders and birder wannabes of all ages. Leaders include Dave Brown, Eleanor Hammond,

Scarlett Podolin, Lucian Avery and Marie LaPre Grabon. Meet at the Hardwick Trails kiosk, located behind Hazen Union parking lot.

These free events are sponsored by the Hardwick Trails Committee. Call Norma Wiesen for questions, (802) 472-6517.

“Just Getting By” Film Showing, May 4

EAST CRAFTSBURY – “Just Getting By,” a documentary film by Bess O’Brien, will be showing at the East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church, Sunday, May 4, 7 p.m. The film is a documentary exploring the lives of Vermonters struggling with housing and food insecurity and

has been touring the state and is raising awareness about the challenges of working and low income Vermonters. Bess O’Brien will hold a discussion session after the movie. Admission is free. Shelf food donations to the Hardwick Area Food Pantry are appreciated.



Liam Franks, 7, and his sister Livian Franks, 6, of Hardwick, ride on the dirt pump track at Atkins Field April 22. photo by Vanessa Fournier

Community Contra Dance , May 9

CABOT – On Friday, May 9, the Cabot Community Contra Dance will take place in the Willey Building, 3084 Main St, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. Featuring the calling of Erin Smith, live music will be provided by a group of local musicians. All ages and abilities are welcome, and genderless terminology is used.

All dances are taught, and easy to learn, but beginners are

encouraged to arrive at 7 p.m., as the evening will start with the simplest dances, and then build in complexity. Admission is on a sliding scale, \$5-10 suggested, but nobody is turned away for lack of funds. Water is provided, or bring a water bottle. Masks are welcomed but not required, and the windows will be open to let in air.

For more information, contact cabotdance@aroundvt.org

Bake Sale, Luncheon, May 13

MORRISVILLE – The Copley Hospital Auxiliary hold their Mother’s Day Bake Sale on Friday, May 9, beginning at 8 a.m. in the Art Gallery at Copley.

To donate baked items, contact Lois at (802) 888-3701.

The annual spring meeting and luncheon will be held on Tuesday, May 13, at the Charlmont Restaurant banquet room, with the

meeting beginning at 10 a.m. with lunch following. Call Sarah at (802) 851-8012 for more information or to register for the May 13 luncheon.

For more than 90 years, the Copley Hospital Auxiliary has been raising funds for Copley Hospital.

To learn more about volunteering or becoming a Copley Hospital Auxiliary member visit copleyvt.org/volunteering.

Annual Summer Sale, June 7

EAST HARDWICK – The First Congregational Church in East Hardwick, will hold the annual summer sale on Saturday, June 7, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. There will be baked goods, a tag sale and the auction table. Barbecue hot dogs

will be available for purchase at lunch and water and soda will be available for purchase. For donated household items, call (802) 472-7094 to arrange for either drop off or pick up. (No computers, large appliances, or TVs).



Area residents from Hardwick, Greensboro, Stannard and Walden meet to celebrate International Tai Chi and Qigong Day, on a rainy Saturday morning, April 26. Gathered to practice under Hardwick’s Atkins Field pavilion are (from left) Heather Davis, Ruth Gaillard, Norma Spaulding, Kathy Spaulding, Kathi Ball, Lynn Angebrannt, Chris Foster and Paul Fixx

photo by Bill Smith

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BUSINESS BRIEFS

Local Food Program Looks for Security in State Money

by Sam Hartnett

VERMONT – Funding may be at risk for a nonprofit program that buys local food and gives it to Vermonters struggling with money so its leaders are backing a bill that would solidify its budget through a state agency, rather than grants and donations.

Vermonters Feeding Vermonters, created and run by the Vermont Foodbank, helps get locally grown produce and protein into the hands of food-insecure Vermonters.

Started in 2018, the program provides money to purchase food wholesale from local farms, offers grants to community organizations and buys shares of community-supported agriculture programs, or CSAs.

The program is two-pronged: Farmers say it helps secure their bottom line, and officials in and outside the Legislature say it's vital to curbing hunger.

“Rather than investing Vermont dollars in fruit from Florida or potatoes from Maine, this program designated funding to support local Vermont producers,” said Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun, D-Westminster, introducing H.167 to the Senate's agriculture committee last Tuesday after it passed the House.

The bill looks to continue funding for the program through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, with \$2 million in general funds floated as a price tag.

“Food insecurity is increasing again as pandemic support programs have come to an end and with recent changes in federal funding,” Bos-Lun told the Senate committee.

According to nationwide food bank network Feeding America, 1 in 9 people in Vermont face hunger.

“The number-one thing is to reduce food insecurity, which is far too high in a very wealthy state in a very wealthy nation,” said lead bill sponsor Rep. Esme Cole,



Much of the produce inside the Plainfield Co-op is local.

photo by Catherine Morrissey

D-Hartford, in a phone call.

Since its inception, Vermonters Feeding Vermonters has been run by the Vermont Foodbank, a private nonprofit. The state has provided direct appropriations to the food bank in the past because “it's good at what it does,” legislative counsel Michael O'Grady said in a February meeting in the House.

Officials outside the Legislature agree: The program is included in the state's 2021-2030 agriculture plan, which states, “There is universal agreement that support for food and farm businesses must be coupled with funding and policy to enable low-income consumers to access this local food.”

Carrie Stahler of the Vermont Foodbank said the proposed legislation “codifies the relationship” between the state and the food bank. Stahler believes the bill would have an impact beyond food insecurity.

“This is part of Vermont making a commitment to farmers, local farms of all sizes and community members,” Stahler said.

The federal agriculture census reported that in 2012, Vermont had 7,338 farms. That number dropped to 6,537 in 2022, the most recent survey, with many of the closures being small dairies.

Vermont produce specifically.

Christa Alexander of Jericho Settlers Farm has been a member of the program since its inception. The food bank provides the farm with a stable market to sell around 10-15% of its root crops.

“It's nice to just have a known market, so that we can plan out our workflow, plan out pricing schemes,” said Alexander. In addition, the program matches her philosophy about local food.

“Being able to feed the community with food that is grown here is such a win-win,” Alexander said.

Graduate students from a University of Vermont's food systems policy class presented a project to the House agriculture committee last week on the program, saying it has contributed \$3.8 million to Vermont's economy.

The students identified limited funding as the core issue challenging the program's efficacy.

Small farms in particular have trouble accessing the program, as they often don't produce large enough quantities for the Vermont Foodbank to purchase wholesale. To combat that, the Vermonters Feeding Vermonters program includes mini-grants for organizations to distribute food from smaller farms.

The graduate researchers said mini-grant funding often varies, and the grants would be more effective with constant support.

Sam Hartnett writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.



Bethany Dunbar (left), the Center for an Agricultural Economy community programs manager gives a tour of the hoop house and Atkins Field to the Northeast Kingdom Human Services community skills program participants (from left) Matt Harvey, service coordinator Karl Nitsche, Tiffany McCulluck, direct support professionals Alexa Newton and Debbie LePage, Chris Bartlett and Melinda Lakus. The group had a picnic at the pavilion and planted seeds in the hoop house, April 22, in celebration of Earth Day.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

OBITUARIES

SHIRLEY OPAL (BOARDMAN) ALLEN

WOLCOTT – A graveside interment for Shirley Opal (Boardman) Allen who died on May 5, at 11 a.m., in Fairmount Cemetery, Wolcott. Shirley's complete obituary may be viewed at dgfunerals.com.

ELIZABETH (BETTY) MAE DICKSON

HARDWICK – A graveside interment for Elizabeth (Betty) Mae Dickson who died on February 27, will be held on Friday, May 9, at 1 p.m., in Fairview Cemetery, Hardwick. Betty's complete obituary may be viewed at dgfunerals.com.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Extension Program Helps Sawmill Acquire Funds to Expand

ALBANY – For over 50 years, Goodridge Lumber Inc. in Albany has been a vital part of the region’s forest-based economy, producing white cedar lumber for uses like interior paneling, decking, exterior siding, logs and siding for log home construction, woodchips for mulch and sawdust for bedding on local farms.

When the family-run business began planning for business expansion and succession a few years ago, they turned to the University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Forest Business Program (uvm.edu/extension/forest-business) for assistance in developing a strong business plan. The program provides businesses in Vermont’s forest products sector with management resources, skills development and one-on-one planning services to support the expansion of a sustainable forest economy in the Northeast.

Colleen Goodridge operates the family business with her sons Doug, Mark and Brian. Goodridge Lumber serves about 280 retail and 15 to 20 wholesale customers annually, building on the family’s reputation for integrity, hard work and a commitment to local production. They source the bulk of their log inventory within a 75-mile radius in northern Vermont, working with foresters, landowners, loggers and truckers within this region.

In late 2022, UVM Extension Forest Business Specialist Chris Lindgren and David Redmond, an independent forestry consultant, began working closely with them on the complex task of business succession planning, meeting regularly to address family dynamics, communication challenges, business plan

components and strategic planning.

“Succession planning can be one of the most challenging and time-intensive aspects of business planning,” Lindgren explained. “It requires people to come together and align on their goals to set a clear path forward.”

A year into the planning process an opportunity arose to address an important need for the business: upgrading the mill’s power infrastructure with the help of a Working Lands Enterprise Initiative (WLEI) grant. So, the team pivoted away from succession planning and shifted their focus to obtaining a grant for the installation of a three-phase power electric system at the mill site.

Throughout fall 2023 and into 2024, Lindgren and Redmond spent considerable time helping Goodridge Lumber develop a tailored business plan by pulling together the necessary financial details, determining total project costs and calculating operational savings and efficiencies. They also looked at the economic benefit potential as part of the grant application and connected the Goodridges with staff at the Northern Forest Center (NFC) in Concord, New Hampshire, to assist with writing the WLEI grant application.

In March 2024, Goodridge Lumber was awarded just over \$225,000 to fund their power upgrade, and by October 2024, the three-phase power electric system was successfully installed, marking a significant milestone for the family and their company. In addition to increasing profitability of the sawmill operation, the new system is estimated to save over 12,000 gallons



Colleen Goodridge operates Goodridge Lumber, Inc. in Albany, Vermont, with her sons (left to right) Doug, Mark and Brian. photo by Laura Hardie

of diesel fuel and 180,000 pounds of carbon emissions annually.

Colleen Goodridge said, “The power project was critical for mill operations, and we wouldn’t have been able to do the project without the grant. Chris and Dave guided us through the grant application process, answering questions, helping compile necessary information and connecting us with the NFC. Their expertise and assistance made all the difference, and the timing was perfect, as without that solid foundation of a business plan, we wouldn’t have secured the infrastructure funding, especially with so many applications in the pool.”

“Chris and Dave ran the numbers, helped us see the big picture and kept us focused on our long-term goals,” added Mark Goodridge. “The business planning services they provided were invaluable, and without their support, we wouldn’t have been able to secure the grant or make the necessary upgrades. It

wouldn’t have happened.”

He continued, “The grant put the infrastructure in place to expand, explore new markets and be able to process other species like red pine.”

Redmond has continued to work with the family to complete their succession plan including setting owner salaries, establishing estate planning services with an estate attorney, creating a buy-sell agreement with another specialized attorney, assisting in the assessment and transfer of assets for re-investment in the business and assigning other “homework” for the family.

Colleen Goodridge, reflecting on the experience, shared, “I would recommend that every business take advantage of business planning services. The expertise they provide is invaluable.”

Dana Ruppert is the Extension Working Lands Professional at University of Vermont.



Mark Goodridge demonstrates the knife sharpening machine at Goodridge Lumber, Inc. as Forest Business Roundtable members Andy Harper of Winterwood Timber Frames in East Montpelier (left), and Tucker Riggs, LSF Forest Products in Fletcher, observe. photo by Dana Ruppert



Colleen Goodridge (left) chats with University of Vermont Extension Forest Business Specialist Chris Lindgren during a site visit to discuss business succession planning and expansion plans for Goodridge Lumber, Inc. photo by Dana Ruppert



The North Country Chorus, shown here at a Christmas concert, will sing two "Gloria" compositions at their spring concert, May 3. *courtesy photo*

North Country Chorus Sings "Gloria!" in Spring Concerts

ST. JOHNSBURY – The North Country Chorus's spring concert will showcase two classical works titled "Gloria," one by Francis Poulenc and the other by John Rutter. The performances are on Saturday, May 3, 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, May 4, 3 p.m., at United Community Church on Main St. in St. Johnsbury. Admission is by donation.

The program will feature the Royal Towne Brass Quintet who, along with organ and percussion,

will accompany the Rutter "Gloria." Director Alan Rowe will also lead several songs performed by the St. Johnsbury Academy Hilltones. Both settings of "Gloria" use liturgical text from the Latin Mass. Poulenc's work was composed in 1960, Rutter's "Gloria," premiered in 1974.

The North Country Chorus has been singing since 1947. Currently about 50 members, this community chorus is a mix of trained and amateur musicians. Auditions are not required.



Eliana Perlmutter of the New England Center for Circus Arts performs on a Cyr Wheel during the Circus Springboard show, "Thank You For Waiting," at the Highland Center for the Arts, April 24. *photo by Vanessa Fournier*

photo by Vanessa Fournier

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Moore, LaPré Grabon on Exhibit through June 17

MORRISVILLE -- River Arts is currently hosting exhibits by two local artists Orah Moore and Marie LaPré Grabon.

Moore's exhibit, titled "Rocks and Ruins," features her large format black and white photographs. These prints are a return to her black and white photographic roots. In 2024, Moore, who lives in Weston, visited sacred sites in south England. This exhibit emerged from the photographs she took during that trip. Moore holds a B.A. and M.A. in photography and her most influential teachers were Ansel Adams and Ruth Bernhard.

LaPré Grabon is exhibiting her fiber artwork, a collection she has been working on since 2020.



"Untitled" hooked wall hanging by Marie LaPré Grabon, 10" x 10"

Her show is titled "Painting With Fibers" and her fiber projects are hooked wall hangings. Starting with a basic knowledge of traditional rug hooking, LaPré Grabon has pushed the medium through experimentation to explore space, color, a variety of techniques and the use of a wide variety of fibers. Throughout her long career as a visual artist LaPré Grabon, currently residing in Hardwick, has viewed nature as her primary source for inspiration. She received her undergraduate degree from Massachusetts College of Art, and her graduate degree in fine art from Goddard College.

The exhibits are open to the public through June 17. River Arts is located at 74 Pleasant Street, and the galleries are open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. For more information call (802) 888-1261, or visit info@riverartsvt.org.



"Fallen Sarsen Stone, Stonehenge," photo by Orah Moore

Robertson Exhibit Through June

WOODBURY – The Woodbury Community Library invites all to stop by and browse the artwork by Phillip Robertson during the months of April – June. Meet Robertson at the closing reception

on June 20 from 5 to 6 p.m. Robertson will demonstrate the technique that he has used to create the work in this exhibit, Meditation on the Landscape. Participants of all ages are welcome.

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“Greenwoods” is Imaginative, Original, Humorous

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

GREENSBORO – The audience at the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro was treated to a very imaginative, original and humorous journey in a production of a new play entitled *Greenwood* by Ira Karp last Sunday afternoon, in the midst of an unwelcomed late April snowfall. This was a fast-moving, madcap event with some 18 chapters in two parts, with many scenes and costume changes and a variety of puppets and props, all given continuity (more or less) by reference to the seasons and annual holidays.

There were seven participants and they introduced themselves at the beginning of the show. Ira Karp, the 17-year-old son of Josh Karp and Maria Schumann of Greensboro, was the author and impresario of this work, playing many of the roles. Last summer he performed “The Honey Let’s Go Home Circus” that was very entertaining at the same venue.

Amelia Castillo was a character named Lucy, and she said that she liked to wash her hair with bubble soap. Clare Dolan (of the Museum of Everyday Life in Glover) was a nurse, who enjoyed taking people’s temperature. Tom Cunningham, as Edmund, particularly found pleasure in riding his bicycle and eating yummy snacks, while Adam Cook, portraying John Piper, found satisfaction in doing his chores as a dairy farmer. Maura Grahan (of Vermont

Vaudeville) as Rose Marie, wearing a real fright wig, also liked washing her hair. Maria Schumann (of Bread and Puppet), impersonating April Brown and many other roles, liked to ride in the ambulance.

Ira then pointed out the details of a large painting in the center of the background curtains, which was a landscape presumably of Greenwood. In the lower left corner was a section of the ocean with a crocodile and octopus, with a crowd of people above in the middle and a city with a hospital at the top. Elsewhere were various houses and a windmill in a rural landscape, as well as a cow, a pig, a crow, a pumpkin and even a giraffe.

Part-one started with Chapter One, an amusing skit about making cheddar cheese from the milk of Daisy the cow, an escapee from Bread and Puppet’s Circus.

Chapter Two was named “Television,” which had a T.V. screen with curtains, first giving an advertisement and then a song from the “Wizard of Oz,” “Somewhere Over the Rainbow.” Mysteriously a strawberry-rhubarb pie came out of the T.V. screen, complete with whipped cream from a can.

Chapter Three was called “Accident,” in a ludicrous sequence where Cunningham, on a tiny child’s bicycle, was hit by a small black paper car held by Karp, and fell down. Then Schumann performed a hilarious operation on Cunningham with a shovel, rake and other implements, with absurd things coming out of him like a stuffed toy dog, until she declared, “You are all better!”

Chapter Four was themed “Easter.” Cook, in a rabbit hat and

tail, took eggs from a basket and hid them around the stage Castillo and Cunningham were then lead by Karp up and around into the audience searching futilely for the eggs, finally returning to the stage where they discovered a few.

In Chapter Five, Karp became Doctor Scrub and delivered a baby from pregnant Graham, with ridiculous complications. Next Ira appeared dressed in an over-the-top costume of overhanging layers in the manner of his favorite contemporary pop singer, Dua Lipa, who “came all the way from London.”

Chapter Six was “Christmas,” where Cunningham was decorating an extremely small tree with candy canes and a star, joined by Graham and Schumann in Santa Claus suits.

Chapter Seven, “Bumper Cars,” was especially funny, as several people go to a giant country fair in the summer and pretend to bump into each other until they all fall down.

Chapter Eight was “Storyland,” where they gathered around to hear a book being read, singing “Oh, My Darling Clementheart.”

After intermission in Part-two, Chapter One was about thunder and lightning and rain, with great lyrics. Chapter Two celebrated Thanksgiving, where first Cunningham was blindfolded and had to sacrifice a turkey. Then everyone brought somewhat incongruous foods in paper models to set on the table, such as chips and salsa, spaghetti and meatballs, English muffins pizza and cheese ravioli. They pretended to eat with spoons and then fed the baby all at once with their spoons.

Chapter Three had Adam giving he full history of Halloween, which started with the death of Babi Yaga in her spooky mountain retreat.

Chapter Four was about another “Accident,” this time a stove improbably falling on Castillo’s foot, which nurse Dolane lifted up, freeing her, with Cook declaring, “I am unstuck.”

Chapter Five was about “Winter,” and Karp became the Winter Enchantress in a long white costume with fur stoles hanging from the shoulders, bringing snow and ice.

Chapter Six as a “Spelling Bee,” while Chapter Seven was a recurrence of the inexplicable “Accident” of the stove on Castillo’s foot. Once again nurse Dolan rescued her, while Karp as Dua Lipa made another appearance singing, “You got me inside.”

Chapter Eight saw Cunningham offering a raspberry pie to Castillo, only to have it thrown back in his face in the classic vaudeville stunt, followed by Karp giving another song from Dua Lipa’s repertoire, “You got me in love again.”

Chapter Nine had Cunningham and Cook wearing pig noses, down on all fours making pig sounds, while Castillo tried to help them by creating mud with a spray bottle,

In the last scene, Chapter Ten, called a “Walk,” all the cast was brought together for a finale. The audience expressed its delight in the whole performance by giving them a standing ovation. We look forward to future productions by Ira and this wonderfully talented group.

B.J. Gray Exhibit Features Animal-themed Art

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

GREENSBORO – B.J. Gray is having an exhibition of her art at the Greensboro Free Library this month, entitled “A Mixed Bag.” She has long been known for her beautiful “over the door boards” that visually enhance many homes. As she writes about some of the new directions in her art, they “explore a playful and thoughtful collection of animal-themed artwork” in different mediums such as woodburning, watercolor and painting, all “inspired by the natural world and rooted in Vermont life.”

The door boards have one flat bottom edge to sit on top of a door molding and a curved edge above.

There are nine examples in this show, featuring symmetrical pairs of loons (one with their babies characteristically riding on their backs), speckle breasted birds, bats, butterflies, crows, hedgehogs and bluebirds. Flowers, berries and landscapes are carefully integrated into the compositions, which are well proportioned and harmoniously colored.

Paintings of animals on thin boards are most numerous. Quite effective are two pieces cut from the outer edge of trees, depicting snowy and barn owls, very finely painted. A barred owl with two chicks on a vertical board has the illusion of a receding cavity behind them, nicely rendered. Others in this format show a loon, opossum, chickadee, otter, bald eagle, hermit thrush, mouse, fisher cat, seagull, pig, reindeer, cardinal and

wolverine. Some whimsical piece have a pig with a pie and two chipmunk holding an American flag on its back, a Covid-19 masked squirrel heating some liquid in a flash over a lit candle, a mouse playing a guitar and a rooster with a soccer ball, each of which makes one smile. All of these are convincingly painted with coherent layouts.

The woodburning works are skillfully crafted, with excellent linear detail. On squares and rectangles of thin wood are drawn a fox, a mallard duck, a red squirrel, a bee and a howling coyote. A rat with a slice of pie is quite humorous. Unique are the woodburning pieces on nine boxes of various sizes. One has a beaver, turtle, porcupine, fox and quail on the visible sides. Another, a squirrel with mushrooms and nuts. Larger animals such as a moose,

bear and coyote decorate a small box with a sliding cover, while two bigger boxes with open holes for handling at each end show a chicken, lamb, calf, duck, goose, pig and hawk. Several boxes have landscapes with barns, a windmill and hand pump with a watering trough, a lighthouse, a fence and trees. One combines a sailboat with fish, a crab, turtle, gold finch and blackeyed susan flowers in a more nautical theme. A watercolor of nasturtiums conveys their joyous colors.

This exhibition will run through April, hopefully extended into May. A number of pieces have already been sold, and a percentage of the proceeds will go to the library. For more information, go online to bjwgray@gmail.com or contact the library at (802) 533-2531 or greensborofreelibrary.org.

EVENTS

Wednesday, April 30
VERSEVILLAGE OPEN MIC NIGHT, 7 p.m., The Galaxy Bookshop, 41 S. Main St., Hardwick. Register at tinyurl.com/Galaxy-Bookshop. Information: (802) 472-5533 or visit galaxybookshop.com. Open to the public.

Thursday, May 1
SESSION ON SINGING FRENCH SONGS, La Chanson Francaise with Don and Mabel Houghton, 4 to 5:30 p.m., John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library. Information: (802) 586-9692 or jw-simpsonmemoria

Saturday, May 3
ART AND AUTHOR AFTER-NOON with artist Cynthia Ross and poet Marjorie Ryerson, 4 to 6 p.m., Jaquith Public Library,

Marshfield. Information: jaquith-publiclibrary.org or (802) 426-3581.

BIRD WALK, 7 a.m., Hardwick Trails. Meet at the kiosk located behind Hazen Union School parking lot. Sponsored by the Hardwick Trails Committee. Information: (802) 472-6517.

ALBANY LIBRARY WRITING GROUP, 2 - 4 p.m., 830 Main St., Albany. Teens and adults are both welcome. Writing prompts provided. Information: (802) 755-6107, albanypubliclibraryvt.org.

Sunday, May 4
EASTERN COYOTE PROGRAM, 4 p.m., Highland Center for the Arts, Greensboro, with Chris Schadler. Information: info@projectourwildlifevt.org.
SPANISH CONVERSATION CLASS, 1 to 2 p.m., John Wood-

ruff Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road. Information: (802) 586-9692.

Thursday, May 8
THE LITTLE MERMAID, performed by the Cabot Community Theater, 7 p.m., Cabot School Performing Arts Center, 25 Common Road. Reservations recommended: tinyurl.com/cctmermaid

Friday, May 9
AUCTION ITEM DROP OFF for the Shadow Lake Dam auction, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Glover Town Hall. Mail Gift Certificates to Town of Glover, 51 Bean Hill Road, Glover, VT 05839, att: Shadow Lake Dam. Information: (802) 525-7199 or email theresa@townof-glover.com.
CABOT COMMUNITY CONTRA DANCE, with caller Erin Smith,

Willey Building (Cabot Town Hall), 3084 Main St., 7 to 9:30 p.m. All dances taught, no partner needed. Families and beginners welcome. Information: cabotdance@aroundvt.org.

DROP IN CRAFTING CIRCLE, 10 to 11 a.m., Highland Center for the Arts, Greensboro. Information: greensboroassistant@gmail.com or call the library at (802) 533-2531.

THE LITTLE MERMAID, performed by the Cabot Community Theater, 7 p.m., Cabot School Performing Arts Center, 25 Common Road. Reservations recommended: tinyurl.com/cctmermaid

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VERSE VILLAGE is Hardwick's town-wide celebration of National Poetry Month. Fifty-three poets from
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EVENTS

25 Vermont towns have their poems in windows along Hardwick's Main and Mill Streets. There will be opportunities to meet other poets and to read their poems throughout April.

WINTER CRAFTea, held through April on the last Monday of the month, 5:30 to 7 p.m., hosted by the Jeudevine Memorial Library, held at the Hardwick Community Center, 56 High St. Bring whatever handiwork you are working on. **MONTPELIER CONTRA DANCE**, 8 - 11 p.m., Capital City Grange. Newcomers lesson at 7:40 p.m. First, third and fifth Saturdays. Information: (802) 225-8921 or cdu.tim@gmail.com

MOVEMENT, MEDITATION, QI-GONG, with Ellie Hayes, the first Saturday of each month through May, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., Woodbury Library community room, 69 Valley Lake Road. All are welcome and children can join the story time from 11 to 11:30 a.m. Space is limited. Call (802) 472-5710.

OLD-TIME JAM SESSION, 6 to 8 p.m., J.W. Simpson Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road, East Craftsbury. All ages and abilities encouraged to attend. Jam sessions held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

COMMUNITY DINNER, noon, United Church of Hardwick, S. Main St., Third and Fourth Thursdays of the month. Call Sharyn Salls at (802) 472-6566 to reserve a meal. Take-Out or Eat-In. Donations appreciated.

DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS for Young Adventurers, first and third Mondays, Craftsbury Public Library, for children ages 8-13. Reserve a spot to play by contacting director@craftsburypubliclibrary.org.

EARLY LITERACY STORYTIME, Craftsbury Public Library - Tuesdays, 10 a.m. For children ages 0 - 5. Information: childrenslibrarian@craftsburypubliclibrary.org or (802) 586-9683.

TAI CHI CLASSES, Tuesdays, Hardwick Area Health Center, 9:30 to 10:15 a.m. Advanced Tai Chi, taught by Norma Spaulding, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Tai Chi for Fall Prevention, taught by Norma Spaulding. Information: Norma Spaulding, (802) 472-8724, nspauld@gmail.com.

TAI CHI CLASSES, Church of Christ, Greensboro. Thursdays, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m. Advanced Tai Chi taught by Norma Spaulding. 10:30 a.m. to 11:30. Tai Chi for Fall Prevention, taught by Norma Spaulding and Paul Fixx. Information: Norma Spaulding, (802) 472-8724, nspauld@gmail.com and Paul Fixx (802) 441-4599, pfixx@pfixx.net.

LIBRARY KNIT NIGHT ON THURSDAYS, 3 - 5:30 p.m., the Greensboro Free Library, 53 E. Craftsbury Road. Volunteers will provide help with knitting.

CRAFTING GROUP on Tuesdays, 4:30 to 6 p.m. and the fourth Saturday of each month, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, call (802) 426-3581 or visit jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

MAGIC ON TUESDAY. A group of

young people get together at The Civic Standard, 42 S. Main St., Hardwick, to play Magic: the Gathering, hosted by Dean Burns. Games begin at 5 p.m. and new players are always welcome.

PARENTING GROUP, on Wednesdays, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m., Jaquith Public Library. Caregivers can relax and connect with each others while their babies play. Geared for babies 0-18 months. Siblings invited. 122 School St., Marshfield. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, call (802) 426-3581 or visit jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

COMMUNITY SUPPER, every Wednesday, 5:30 p.m., The Civic Standard, 42 S. Main St., Hardwick.

COMMUNITY DINNER, Sterling College, Craftsbury Common, every Friday, 4:30 to 6 p.m. Free and open to anyone in the greater Craftsbury area and neighboring towns. Hosted by students in the Food Harvest and Conservation class. Students will give brief presentations at 5:30 covering a couple components of the menu they create.

STORYTIME, PLAYGROUP ON FRIDAYS, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, call (802) 426-3581 or visit jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

MENDING CIRCLE MEETS, every third Sunday, 3 to 5 p.m., the Civic Standard, 42 S. Main St., Hardwick. Bring clothes in need of fixing. Materials, instruction and snacks will be supplied.

BOOK CLUB meets the second Thursday of each month, 1:30 p.m., the Flower Basket, Main St. Hardwick. Hosted by the Galaxy Bookshop. Call the Galaxy or stop in to reserve a copy of each month's book at 20% off for book club members. Tea and other drinks and small treats for sale.

HARDWICK HAIKU CLUB, every first Thursday, 5:30 - 7 p.m., The Civic Standard, 42 S. Main St., Hardwick. A time to read published haiku, brainstorm some Vermont kigo, or season words, and write your own haiku. No previous writing experience needed. Hosted by Mark Scott.

TRIVIA NIGHT, at the Village Restaurant, S. Main St., Hardwick, Thursdays, 6 - 8 p.m., unless there is a home basketball game. A limited menu of burgers and appetizers. Hosted by Annie Houston. First come, first serve event, with room for roughly 10 teams.

MEDITATION at Craftsbury Community Care Center, the second and fourth Fridays, 3. to 3:45 p.m., 1784 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury. Offered by Nancy Milholland. Open to all and sponsored by the Mental Health Resource Group of Craftsbury.

HANG OUT ON THURSDAYS, at the Civic Standard, 42 S. Main St., Hardwick, 2:45 p.m. - 6. Relax, make art, play games, get help with homework, or just spend time with friends. Facilitated by Hazen Union's Community School Coordinator Vaiva Velzis, with support from The Civic's staff. Snacks provided. Information: Vvelzis@ossu.org.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, Tuesdays, 3:30 p.m. - 5. Cabot Public

Library. Ages 9 - 13. Mysteries and magic, tails and talons, puzzles and prophecies.

OUTDOOR STORY & ACTIVITY TIME, with the Cabot Public Library, Wednesdays, 10:30 a.m. - 11:30, Cabot Rec Field Pavilion. Join Amanda Otto for stories, songs, snacks, crafts, open play and special programming.

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAM, Every Tuesday, 3 p.m. - 5; Thursday, 10:30 a.m. Preschool Storytime; Friday, 10:30 a.m. Homeschool Program. Greensboro Free Library. Information: (802) 533-2531.

Exhibits

LIZ CHADWICK: Uphill, Acrylic Paint-

ings on Cheeseboards. Parker Pie Gallery, 161 County Road, West Glover. Through May 6. The Pie is open Tuesday through Sunday at 11 a.m.

LOCAL ARTISTS EXHIBIT, the Third Floor Gallery, Hardwick Inn. A building-wide show on all three floors. Open during regular business hours. Show will be up through May. **ORAH MOORE AND MARIE LAPRE GRABON** on Exhibit, River Arts, 74 Pleasant St., Morrisville, through June 17. Galleries are open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Information: (802) 888-1261 or info@riverartsvt.org.

To have your event listed free in our weekly events calendar, please e-mail: news@hardwickgazette.com.

West Danville-Joe's Pond

Join sunny host and her pets on Joe's Pond for a quaint, camp-like experience. Beautiful views from bedroom, share bath, pond access, 40 minutes to Montpelier, less than 20 minutes to St. Johnsbury. Compatible dog and outside smoking considered. \$400 rent, \$100 utilities. (802) 863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

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Please contact the Town of Greensboro, PO Box 119, Greensboro, VT 05841, or (802) 533-2911 or at townclerk@greensborovt.gov for more details. All bids must be in the Town Clerk's office by noon on Wednesday, May 14. Bids will be opened at the May 14 select board meeting.

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Hazen Union pitcher Grayson McNaughton of Craftsbury sends the ball to a Fairfax batter during action on Hudson Field, April 21. Fairfax won the game. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Hazen Union's Will Halperon safely returns to first base during play, April 21. At left is first baseman Garrett Soderburg of Fairfax. Fairfax took the victory. photo by Vanessa Fournier

First Inning Woes Plague Wildcats

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – Multiple first-inning miscues put the Hazen Union baseball team behind the eight-ball last week in a pair of losses to BFA-Fairfax and Williamstown, as the Wildcats fell to 1-3 on the season.

Defending Division III champion BFA-Fairfax took advantage of several first inning miscues by the Wildcats last Monday on their way to a 14-0 road win. Ryan Sheehan scattered three hits and struck out nine to earn the win after inheriting an eight-run first inning lead. The Bullets capitalized on multiple errors in the opening frame by the Wildcat defense to score their first runs of the season after back-to-back shutout losses to Montpelier and Blue Mountain to start the year. Reagan Baumeister led the way for BFA with a four-hit day that drove in four runs. Kris Mummert added a pair of hits that

drove in another run in the win. Owen Skorstad paced the Wildcats with a pair of hits and Evan LaMare added a single. Grayson McNaughten took the loss on the mound, striking out four, while allowing just one free pass on the day. The Bullets, coached by Hazen alum Mike Brown, improved to 2-3 on the season.

“It was a tough outing for us against BFA. Grayson did a good job pitching to contact, but unfortunately our defense wasn’t behind him to start the game, and we never were able to recover,” said head coach Shaun Allen.

Paine Mountain exacted some revenge from a loss two weeks ago against the Wildcats, evening the season series with an 11-6 home win last Thursday. First inning miscues plagued Hazen once again, putting them in a six-run hole early. Freshman Jon Sicard took the loss on the mound and Justin finished up in relief. McNaughten (double) and Skorstad powered

the Wildcat offense, with three hits apiece and Chayse Newell added a single and a walk in the loss. Paine Mountain improved to 1-2 on the season.

“It was another hard start to the game for us. We gave Paine Mountain multiple outs in the first inning once again and they capitalized on it. I wish we could start our games in the second inning at this point, it’s just really hard to win ball games that way the last two games. Jon was a little shaky to start but settled down nicely with three shutout innings after the first,” said Allen.

Hazen looked to turn it around this week with road trips to Peoples Academy and Oxbow on Tuesday and Thursday. They will stay on the road next Tuesday with their second match-up of the season against Division II powerhouse Montpelier. All home games can be streamed on Hardwick Community Television (hctv.us).

Vermont's Catch-and-Release Bass Fishing is Underway

by Vermont Fish and Game

VERMONT – Vermont's catch-and-release bass fishing is underway with the start of warmer weather. The season runs until June 14, when the regular bass season opens, and the harvesting of bass is allowed.

“Spring catch-and-release bass fishing is a really special time to be on the water in Vermont, and the fishing can be truly spectacular,” said Bernie Pientka, state fisheries biologist with Vermont Fish and Wildlife. “Combine warming weather, minimal boat traffic and feeding largemouth and smallmouth bass, and spring bass fishing is hard to beat.”

For catch-and-release bass fishing, all bass must be immediately released after being caught and only artificial lures

may be used. The use of live bait is prohibited during the catch-and-release season.

State fisheries biologist Shawn Good says pre-spawn bass fishing provides outstanding angling opportunities at a time when bass are congregating but haven't started spawning yet and that it has very little impact on spawning success.

“Pre-spawn bass fishing is about targeting bass on a catch-and-release basis as they stage and concentrate around areas close to where they plan on spawning,” says Good.

Good says that many inexperienced anglers think early season bass fishing is about targeting bedding bass, but he says that's just not the case.

“Once bass have begun constructing nests, and guarding and protecting eggs and newly

hatched fry, they don't actively feed. Quite honestly, it's time consuming and often frustrating to target non-feeding bass on beds. It's the pre-spawn groups of bass that are aggressive, grouped up, and a ton of fun to catch.”

Vermont Fish and Wildlife has assembled a few basic tips for anglers heading out to fish for bass during the spring catch-and-release season.

Let water temperatures dictate arctic and lure choices. Fishing slowly on the bottom with jig-style baits can be most effective shortly after ice-out. As water temperatures begin to rise into the 48 to 58-degree range and fish feeding activity increases, moving baits such as spinnerbaits, crankbaits and stickbaits can be big producers.

Look for rocky shorelines and marshy back bays. Shallow, gradual

rocky shorelines consisting of ledge, rock, gravel or boulders will hold heat and warm up first, attracting baitfish and ultimately feeding smallmouth and largemouth bass. Marshy, weedy bays will also warm up quickly and attract largemouth bass.

Pay attention to the clues. When catching a fish, getting a bite, or seeing a fish follow the lure, be sure to take another pass through the same area. Many fish will often stack up on the same structure during the spring as they transition from winter to spring and summer haunts.

Bass fishing regulations can be found in the 2025 Fishing Guide & Regulations, or by using the online fishing regulations tool found on Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website. To purchase a fishing license or learn more about fishing in Vermont, visit vtfishandwildlife.com.

KEN BROWN'S SOFTBALL ROUNDUP



Ida Astick of Caledonia United safely slides into home plate, avoiding Randolph pitcher Lanie Thayer's tag. Danville, Twinfield and Cabot teammates (from left) Olivia Hess, Phoebe Crocker, Selena Lamery and Amura Simmons watch the play. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Ava Scott-Lucas of Randolph gets back to first as Caledonia United short stop Phoebe Crocker goes for the ball. Teammates include Myah Morgan (left) and Ida Astick (back). Randolph won 15-11. photo by Vanessa Fournier

Caledonia United Drops a Pair to Open Season

DANVILLE – The Cal United (Twinfield-Cabot-Danville) softball team fell to Randolph in a shootout before suffering a lopsided loss to Blue Mountain last week to open up their season.

Lainie Thayer fanned nine Cal United batters to power Randolph to a 15-11 road win last Tuesday. Austin Roos, Peyton Winn, and Myah Morgan all collected multiple hits for Cal United as both teams were knotted at 6-6 after the first

inning. Morgan suffered the loss in the circle, striking out 6 on the day. Randolph improved to 2-1 on the season.

Kaylee Hamlett continued to baffle opposing teams, striking out 10 to power Blue Mountain to a 14-2 home win over Cal United last Thursday. Addison Murray and Susanna combined for four hits and six RBI to power the Lady Buck offense. Peyton Winn and Austin Roos combined for four hits and two runs for Cal United and Morgan issued 14 free passes on the day to take the loss. Despite the score, first year head coach Jennie Moore and her young team

held their own against a Blue Mountain team that had outscored their opponents 53-5 in their first three games.

Cal United will be back in action on Wednesday as they host Paine Mountain at Paul Remick Field in Danville.

Richford Handles Lady Chargers a Second Time

CRAFTSBURY – Defending Division IV champion Richford handed the Craftsbury Academy (CA) softball team a lopsided loss for the second time in two weeks, dropping them to 0-3 on

the season.

Richford handled the Lady Chargers 32-6 on the road last Thursday to improve to 3-1 on the season. The Lady Rockets jumped out to a 16-1 lead after one inning of play behind an inside the park homer from Maddie Combs and a pair of base clearing triples from Mikayla Chagnon. Kyrielle Deuso went 5-5 at the plate, including a homer and a pair of doubles in the win. Adi Chagnon earned the win in the circle, striking out four on the day.

CA will look to get back on track on Thursday as they host Oxbow at Dustan Field.

Strong Leads Rice in Opener

HINESBURG – Finley Strong picked up right where she left off last spring, belting a home run and driving in four runs to lead her Rice Memorial softball team to a 15-6 season opening win over CVU last Thursday.

The senior slugger is the daughter of former Hazen Union baseball standout Jeff Strong and granddaughter of Wildcat coaching great Jack Strong. She went on a season ending home run tear last May and June to lead Rice to the Division II Final Four and looks poised to do it again in her final season. The senior captain earned First Team Lake Division honors last year, leading her team in eight different offensive categories, including six homers.

Strong and the Green Knights are scheduled to host defending Division IV champion Richford on Thursday and Hardwood on Saturday.



Craftsbury softball team players include (from left) Serenity Leach of Hazen Union, Linsey Allen and Eva Small of Craftsbury, Libby Bowley of Hazen Union and Savannah Boyce of Craftsbury. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Savannah Boyce of Craftsbury gets set to pitch to a Richford batter on Dustan Field April 24. Richford prevailed. photo by Vanessa Fournier

KEN BROWN'S TRACK & FIELD ROUNDUP

Personal Bests for Chargers at Essex

ESSEX – The Craftsbury Academy (CA) track and field team held their own against stacked fields in multiple divisions last week at the Essex High School Vocational.

Freshman Nora Van Gulden posted a personal record in the 1500m, knocking off 15 seconds from her time last week. She followed that up with another personal best in the 800m, with her time of 3:10.46 over three seconds faster than her previous best. Sophomore teammate Arwen Alexander smashed her best time in the 1500m by 23 seconds and also ran her best time in the 800m event.

Sophomore Charger Theo Alexander's throw of 8.99m in

the javelin beat his previous best, good enough for an eleventh-place finish. Harwood's Gavin Clark-Viola bested the field. Sophomore Kosmos Gletsos secured a top 20 finish in the shot put event with a personal best throw of 8.99m. Junior Diwash Maidali of Essex took home first place honors. Gletsos also posted a respectable sixteenth place finish in the discus event.

"It would be made easy for our relatively small team's success to potentially go unnoticed given how crowded the field was with athletes from all divisions," said head coach Kyle Anderson. "All to say, this is a group that's seeking to improve each and every week! I'm confident we'll see more personal records like this in the

coming weeks."

Multi-sport star Sophie Beck stole the show in Division III for Peoples Academy (PA), winning both the high jump and 300m hurdles event. She was also tops in her division and third overall in the 100m hurdles, finishing behind Ada Jorschick of Essex. Teammate Kiara Pike also posted an impressive fourth overall finish in the 100m. Dan Palmer finished runner-up for the Wolves in the shot put and teammate Myles Marcoux was best in his division in the 200m.

CA and Hazen Union is scheduled to be back on the track on Wednesday at U-32.

At the Mount Mansfield Vocational on Tuesday, former Hazen Union standout Manny

Fliegelmann showed quick transition to Division I with St. Johnsbury Academy, posting his best finishes of the young season. The sophomore teamed up with Daniel Carter, John Thornton-Sherman, and Taum Steen to win the 4X800m relay by over two seconds. He also finished fourth overall in the 800m event with a personal best time. Senior teammate and former Craftsbury Academy champion Charlie Kehler captured his first Division I win, besting the field in the 800m by over a second.

Kehler, Fliegelmann, and the Hilltoppers were back in action on Tuesday for a home meet before traveling to the Twilight Invitational in South Burlington over the weekend.

SPORT CALENDAR



Craftsbury Charger Alex Bingham of Hazen Union aims for the ball against Richford. April 24. Richford won. photo by Vanessa Fournier

Wednesday, April 30

3:30 p.m., Hazen Union Track and Field at Lyndon

3:30 p.m., Craftsbury Track and Field at U-32

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball vs. Paine Mountain., at Hazen Union

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball vs. Paine Mountain, at Danville.

Saturday, May 3

11 a.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball at Richford

Tuesday, May 6

3:30 p.m., Craftsbury Track and Field at North Country

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball at Montpelier

3:30 p.m., Hazen Union Track and Field at North Country

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball at Vergennes.

Thursday, May 8

4:30, Hazen Union Baseball at Thetford.

Friday, May 9

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball vs. Craftsbury, at Danville.

Saturday, May 10

11 a.m., Hazen Union Baseball at Spaulding.

Tuesday, May 13

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball vs. U-32, at Hazen Union

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball vs. BFA-Fairfax, at Danville

3:30 p.m., Craftsbury Track and Field at St. Johnsbury.

Wednesday, May 14

3:30 p.m., Hazen Union Track and Field at Lyndon.

Thursday, May 15

4:30, Caledonia United Varsity Softball at Paine Mountain

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball at Oxbow.

Friday, May 16

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball vs. Richford, at Danville .

Saturday, May 17

11 a.m., Hazen Union Baseball vs Lamoille, at Hazen Union.

Tuesday, May 20

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball at Randolph

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United

Varsity Softball at Winooski

3:30 p.m., Hazen Union Track and Field at U32

3:30 p.m, Craftsbury Track and Field at South Burlington

Thursday, May 22

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball at Lyndon.

Saturday, May 24

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball vs. North Country, at Hazen Union.

Tuesday, May 27

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball at Harwood

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball vs. Blue Mountain, at Danville.

Thursday, May 29

4:30 p.m., Caledonia United Varsity Softball at Craftsbury

4:30 p.m., Hazen Union Baseball vs. Lake Region, at Hazen Union.

Saturday, May 31

Hazen Union Track and Field at Essex Invitational, time to be determined

Craftsbury Track and Field at Essex Invitational, time to be determined

Thursday, June 5

Division 3 Track and Field State Championships, date and time TBA

Brown-Smith Grateful For Boston Marathon Experience

by Paul Fixx

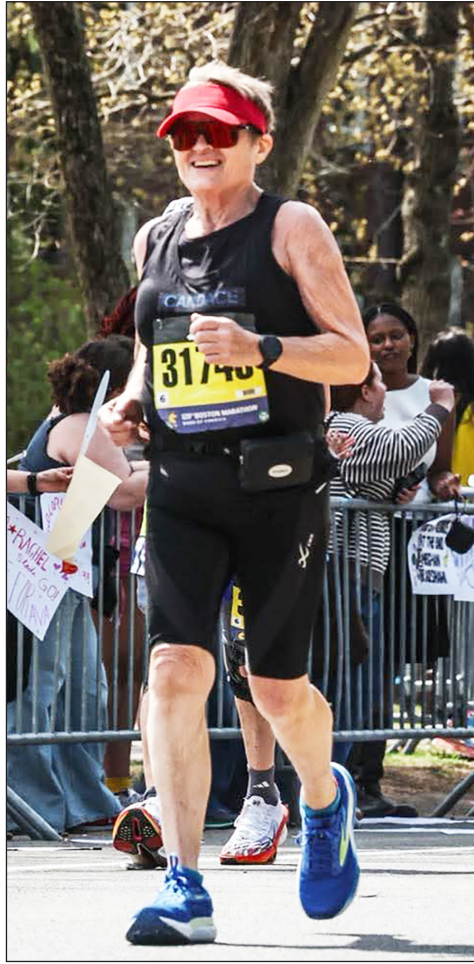
EAST CALAIS – Candace Brown-Smith made the trip from her home in East Calais to run in this year's Boston Marathon. "Just thinking about participating in the Boston Marathon is so exciting. To train for it, plan the trip, get gear that will serve for the entire race, or at least as far as you want it to, right down to thickness of socks and style of shoes is exhilarating!"

This year was the seventh time she ran the race. She first ran in 2015, when she was 54. Brown-Smith ran each year through 2018, then virtually during the 2020 pandemic year, and again in 2023. She finished each time.

Brown-Smith said, "At the age of 64, this year I kept more focus on training, health and fitness in general to prepare myself to do well for me." Her training includes winter running for which she says she screws sheet metal screws into the soles of her shoes to create her version of studded sneakers. She said she makes "concessions during the worst weather," running on a treadmill inside.

This was the first year she had a real race plan, said Brown-Smith. "And then, you are there!" At the starting line were 28,928 other marathoners. Brown-Smith crossed the starting line at 11:21 a.m., and 50 seconds according to the electronic timing system based on a chip in her numbered bib.

Timing marathon runners to the second matters most to the professionals who started just



Candace Brown-Smith of East Calais runs through Natick, Mass., about 10 miles into the Boston Marathon, Monday, April 21. She said, "Everything is still according to plan and I felt great . . . looking forward to a good result." photo by Marathon Foto

after 9:30 a.m. Before that military marchers had started at 6 a.m. They were followed by the men's and women's wheelchair divisions.

It took Brown-Smith over six minutes to cross the starting line after the fourth and final wave of runners she was in got their signal to start. When she crossed the starting line, the men's division

"Until then, I will deal with what was not successful and celebrate what was."

winner was just 20 minutes from finishing.

Her Daughter Julia Ljungvall met her on the course in Natick, about 10 miles into the race, where they posed for a selfie.

"Everything felt great in the beginning. I was happy, confident, prepared to carry out plan A. My times posted through the 25K mark [15.5 miles] were better than ever," Brown-Smith said.

"Then, the headache started."

She says she decided to put it out of her mind. "At first, I was just going to ignore it and finish anyway I could: walk/run, walk, crawl maybe.

"From the neck down, my body was in perfect order. The question was, the headache. After 10 minutes, there was no letup. But when my vision blurred, I decided I had better get checked out."

Her tests by medical personnel stationed along the course confirmed her sense that there was nothing physically wrong with her from the neck

down. Her blood pressure, blood oxygen saturation and heart rate were fine. Her heart rate quickly dropped to 56, she said. That's low for many, but the sign of a well-trained marathon runner.

A test of her electrolytes showed they were just fine, she said. That's the sign of a well-executed race plan; she replaced what her body needed as it was being used up during the three hours and roughly thirty minutes she had been running.

Brown-Smith said the next day, "I had made the right decision: to stop."

She said she hadn't anticipated all the stimulation of the race, which she suspects affected post-concussion symptoms she was being treated for. With that perspective, she's been able to see the headache as her body's reminder that it was time to stop.

"Over the years, many athletes have said, 'You don't always have the day you want.' April 21, 2025, was not 'the day' for me. The disappointment was unimaginable," she said.

"This too will pass. I do not see this disappointment as a 'fail.' I embrace this new information and will use it to nurture my growth: physically, emotionally and spiritually. I am grateful for the experience, will learn the lesson, and can even try again if it feels like a good idea.

"Until then, I will deal with what was not successful and celebrate what was," said Brown-Smith.

KEN BROWN'S COLLEGE ROUNDUP

Norwich Storms into Semifinals

NORTHFIELD – Despite losing their final game of the regular season and the top seed in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC) Tournament, the Norwich women's lacrosse team dominated Dean College in the GNAC quarterfinals last week for a program record fifteenth win of the season.

East Calais native and former U-32 standout Caitlyn Fielder scored twice last Tuesday in a pivotal regular season ending loss to Emmanuel College at Sabine Field. The sensational sophomore closed out the regular season with a team-high and career-high 47 goals in 15 games. Norwich's high scoring attacker wasn't able to suit up in their quarterfinal matchup against Dean College on Saturday, but the offense didn't miss a beat as they rolled to an 18-6 win. Senior Ellie Moriarty tallied a goal and three assists in the win. The former Stowe standout broke the program's all-time assist record earlier this season and now has 92 for her career.

Norwich advances to the GNAC semifinals for the first time since 2014 and will travel to Providence, RI to face Johnson & Wales University on Wednesday. The winner advances to the GNAC championship game on Saturday.

Alekson Finishes Fifth

FAIRFIELD, Conn. – Former Peoples Academy (PA) three-time state champ Ben Alekson won his fifth straight start on the mound for Fairfield University over the weekend to run his record to 7-1 on the season.

The big righty scattered six hits and struck out four as the Stags defeated Quinnipiac at home 15-5 last Friday. The former Vermont Gatorade Player of the Year has now recorded 105 strikeouts in his sophomore season with an earned run average of 2.77.

Fairfield improved to 33-10 on the season and will travel to Poughkeepsie, N.Y., for a weekend series with Marist. They'll close out the regular season next week with a pivotal series against Niagra to determine the top seed in the upcoming MAAC Tournament.

Royer Sisters Finishing Strong for Catamounts

AMHERST, Mass. – Former Hazen Union standouts Jessica and Cassandra Royer each posted top ten finishes for the University of Vermont (UVM) track and field team over the weekend at the Ken O'Brien Pre-Conference Qualifier.

Cassandra finished fourth in the 5000m with a time of 19:26.63 and Jessica finished ninth, posting a time of 21:15:97 for the Catamounts. It was the best finish of the outdoor season for Jessica, who also runs cross-country and indoor track for UVM. Cassandra also ran track and cross-country for the Hazen program and is in her first year with the Catamounts, posting a top five finish for the cross-country team last fall.

The Catamounts and their dynamic duo will be back in action on Saturday as they travel to Durham, N.H., for the America East Championships.