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Electric Department Proposes 13.24% Rate Increase

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – A proposed 13.24% rate increase has been submitted to the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC) by the Town of Hardwick Electric Department (HED). The proposed June 1 increase applies equally to all rate classes; for residential, commercial, industrial, seasonal, security lighting and street lighting.

The last HED rate increase of 1.97% became effective March 7, 2024. Prior to that, a 5.57% rate increase became effective in July 2023. The requested 13.03% increase was reduced by the PUC following an investigation and hearing. At that time, a HED plan was

approved to refund excess payments it collected beginning on March 1, 2023, the effective date of the originally requested increase.

This increase is necessary to cover the anticipated cost of providing service in the coming year, said Steve Farman, in testimony filed with the requested increase. Farman, manager of the planning and support department at the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority, of which HED is a member, said projected costs, based on 2024 figures adjusted for the year beginning in June, are \$8,018,188, an increase of \$937,233. That increase of 13.24% was spread equally across all ratepayers.

See RATE, 3



The 10-acre HED solar farm at the end of Billings Road in Hardwick was added to the utility's portfolio in 2021. It was expected to provide 6% of HED energy needs annually at less than half the cost of net metered energy, allowing the utility to provide reliable and affordable electric power services, according to the HED website. *courtesy photo*

Mother's, Families, Praise Birthing Center

by Raymonda Parchment

MORRISVILLE – Area residents, employees and patients came together for a Mother's Day weekend of action, opposing the potential closure of the Copley Birthing Center.

Beginning with a honk-and-wave event in downtown Morrisville on Friday, the weekend closed with a rally on the corner of Congress and Main, Sunday. Attendees celebrated Mother's Day with music, face painting, a plant

swap and more, in an effort to raise awareness.

Concerned patients have spoken out, voicing serious concerns for future mothers and babies in the area. Supporters of the center fear that removing nearby access to prenatal and perinatal services will pose an even greater risk to parents both before and after delivery. They have also criticized both the hospital administration and the board for their lack of transparency, questioning whether the lack of profitability of the birthing center is justification enough for its closure.

Area resident and Copley patient Hilary Maynard said "Losing something like the birthing center at Copley, practically speaking, is a threat to the wellness of parents and babies in the region."

Maynard said the small size of the hospital allowed for focused and individualized care, "My experience was a total blessing, I think of it fondly. This is probably my only baby, but I wouldn't hesitate to have another one knowing that was the care I would receive."

Maynard says she believes the administration is more oriented towards the profitability of the hospital and the success of the hospital financially, "And yet a birthing center is required to bring human beings into this world, so how does that argument hold up in the grand scheme of care in the region?" she concluded.

Area resident Dani Lloyd also spoke to her experience with the center. Lloyd said one of the testaments to the superior care that the birthing center provides at Copley is the fact that birthing people and their families are willing

See CENTER, 4



Ana Maria Arroyo

courtesy photo

Terminated AmeriCorps Volunteers "no Longer Effectuate Agency Priorities"

by Paul Fixx

WOODBURY – AmeriCorps programs across the country learned on April 25 that \$400 million in grants had been terminated. The news trickled through various agencies, landing in the email in-box of Ana Maria Arroyo, an AmeriCorps volunteer who lives in Montpelier and works at the North Branch Nature Center (NBNC), where she has been involved with a variety of activities that include carrying out the work of the ECO Institute

See VOLUNTEERS, 5



Supporters of the Copley Birthing Center came together on Mother's Day, rallying support in the wake of the center's potential closure. Mother, grandmother and registered nurse Kaye Gould (left) stands besides Gabrielle Wachsman, Morrisville teacher and Copley supporter. Susan McKee, employee of Copley Birthing Center holds her sign up alongside Marty McMahon, a fellow supporter. *photo by Raymonda Parchment*

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WEATHER WATCH



A new garden, courtesy of the Cady's Falls Botanical Garden, has been planted at the Jeudevine Library. EcoTone Landscapes and Tree Care of East Hardwick did the site work, with more plantings to come. *courtesy photo*

Another Wet Weekend Ahead

by Tyler Molleur

EAST HARDWICK – Milder temperatures are beginning to permeate northern New England, as highs reach the 70s and wall-to-wall sunshine starts the week.

Over the past week, somewhere on the order of one to two inches of rain fell, with southern Vermont again receiving closer to three to four inches. That stubborn low-pressure system did exit a little earlier than expected, giving us a pleasant Mother's Day.

That stretch lasts into Wednesday under mostly sunny skies, before we go through our next weather transition. We briefly are under the influence of more cloud cover on Thursday, thanks to low pressure off the mid-Atlantic coast. This feature moves east but leaves us with an approaching warm front/cold front feature Friday. We will be in the warm sector on Friday afternoon, so expect showers with the chance of thunderstorms. The cold front arrives by Saturday afternoon with a renewed chance of thunderstorm activity and cloudier skies once again.

As the front occludes south of the area on Sunday, expect lingering showery weather and cloudy skies on Sunday. Highs are generally in the 70s through the period, although the mid-60s are more likely following the cold front passage Sunday. Cloud cover keeps the chance of frost from the forecast at night. A little more sun is in this forecast, but long-term weather patterns suggest wet and cooler conditions largely persist. In the meantime, here's the summary of the short-term:

Wednesday: Mostly sunny. High: 76. Low: 53. South wind 5-10 mph.

Thursday: Mostly cloudy. Isolated pop-up showers in the afternoon. High: 73. Low: 56. Light wind.

Friday: Partly sunny, with increasing clouds in the afternoon. Scattered showers and thunderstorms. High: 79. Low: 58. South wind around 5 mph.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy. Showers and thunderstorms likely by afternoon. High: 76. Low: 54. South wind around 5 mph.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers. High: 65. Low: 50. West wind around 5 mph.



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POLICE REPORT

Hardwick Police Media Log

May 4: Traffic Hazard, Kellogg St.; Medical, Maple St.; Theft, Buffalo St.

May 5: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Medical, Brown Farm Road; Suspicious Event, Nichols Pond Road; Suspicious Event, S. Main St.; Citizen Dispute, Mackville Road; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Lost Property, Washington Highway; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Traffic Stop, Main St./Summer St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St./Farr St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.

May 6: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 15/Williams Lane; Traffic Hazard, Main St./School St.; Suspicious Event, Dale St.; Directed Patrol, Hazen Union Drive; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Elm St.; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Hillside Ave.; Assist – Motorist, S. Main St.; Animal Problem, Mackville Road.

May 7: Traffic Stop, S. Main St./Prospect St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Nichols Pond Road; Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Property Damage, Dutton Road; Citizen Dispute, Mackville Road; Parking Problem, Mill St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Assist – Public, Vt. Rte. 15 W/Kate Brook Road; Dead Body, E. Church St.; Juvenile Problem, Vt. Rte. 16.

May 8: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Suspicious Event, Vt. Rte. 15 W; VIN Verification, Crafts-bury Road; Fingerprints, High St.; VIN Verification, High St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Wolcott St.; Assist – Agency, S. Main St.; Wanted Person, Vt. Rte. 15 W.

May 9: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Assist – Public, Vt. Rte. 15/Vt. Rte. 16; Fingerprints, High St.; VIN Verification, High St.; Directed Patrol, Hazen Union Drive; Noise Disturbance, Highland Ave.; Wanted Person, Vt. Rte. 15 W; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Granite St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Elm St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

May 10: Traffic Stop, W. Church St.; Lost Property, Vt. Rte. 15; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Elm St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Assist – Agency, Vt. Rte. 15; Wanted Person, Vt. Rte. 14/Vt. Rte. 15; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

May 11: Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Cottage St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Cottage St./Lower Cherry St.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14/Vt. Rte. 15; DLS, Hillside Ave.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Wolcott St.; Citizen Dispute, Houston Hill Road; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; DUI, Wolcott St.

Vermont State Police Single-Vehicle Crash

CABOT – On May 3, at approximately 9:35 p.m., Troopers of the Berlin Barracks responded to a report of a single vehicle crash on US Rte. 2 in Cabot. The operator was identified as Reuben Adams of Barre. Investigation determined Adams' vehicle crossed over the fog line before leaving the roadway and crashing. Further investigation determined Adams was impaired and he was taken into custody for suspicion of DUI Drug. A passenger of the vehicle was identified as

Danielle Gilman of Barre. Investigation revealed Gilman had violated court ordered conditions of release. Gilman was taken into custody. Both Adams and Gilman were transported to the Vermont State Police Berlin Barracks for processing. Adams was later lodged at the Northeast Regional Correctional Facility on \$1,000 bail. Both Adams and Gilman were issued citations to appear in Washington Superior Court – Criminal Division to answer to the charges.

AWARE Report

HARDWICK – Nine people used AWARE services between May 4 and May 11. 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. 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.

Hardwick Police Vehicle on Rail Trail

HARDWICK – On May 8, at approximately 8 p.m., Todd Luce, of Hardwick, was arrested on an outstanding warrant and was lodged at Northeast Regional Correctional Facility.

On May 11 at 4:25 p.m., the Hardwick Police Department conducted a traffic stop on Hillside Avenue in the town of Hardwick for a motor vehicle violation. The operator, identified as Crystal L. Davies, of Westford, was operating with a criminally suspended license because she is required to use an ignition interlock device which was not installed in the car she was driving. Davies has been cited into the Caledonia unit of the Superior

Court of Vermont to be arraigned on the charge.

On May 10 at approximately 5 p.m., the Hardwick Police were asked to assist Morristown PD with a motor vehicle complaint. Complaints have been made to MPD regarding a vehicle being driven on the Rail Trail by Alain Fradette of East Hardwick. Hardwick PD was advised that Fradette had an outstanding arrest warrant out of Lamoille County. Hardwick officers intercepted Fradette as he drove east on Vt. Rte. 15 toward Hardwick village. He was brought to Northeast Regional Correctional Facility in St. Johnsbury.

Rate

Continued From Page One

Details of the increase are attributable to a \$259,187 increase in power supply costs, a \$447,669 increase in labor expense, with a corresponding \$43,848 increase in payroll taxes, plus a \$135,459 increase in medical, dental and other benefit costs, noted the PUC filing. The remainder is accounted for by a number of other small adjustments, including a \$62,257 reduction in net income.

The PUC may or may not open a formal investigation. If it chooses not to, the rates will go into effect June 1, 2025. The rates will still go into effect June 1 if the PUC orders a formal investigation and hearing on the proposed rate changes, but will be shown as a surcharge on customer bills until the investigation is complete, at which time adjustments or refunds would be made if the increase is not approved as requested.

Eight public comments on the proposed increase ask the PUC to reject or limit it. They include a statement by Katherine Schmidt of Wolcott that begins, "The increase requested by Hardwick Electric is absolutely outrageous. Our rates have been increasing at ridiculous rates since 2022 and we in Vermont cannot afford higher electric charges." Schmidt wrote that she works three jobs, and asked that any increase be limited to 5%.

Ruth Frisenda, in Greensboro Bend, said she already pays one-third of her mortgage for electricity due to what she called price gouging from HED. "I have filed a previous complaint before tariffs went into effect due to the ridiculous prices set by this monopoly," she said.

Paul Schnitger of Wolcott, wrote in opposition to the rate increase, suggesting HED documentation supporting it does not "adequately represent the qualitative issues that should be resolved by HED before it seeks a rate increase."

Schnitger points to frustrations he and his neighbors have had with the "quality of HED's operations for years," saying, "It has great employees but it has delivered sub-optimal service." He suggests "operational shortcomings may have directly led to an inefficient and excessive operating budget."

In conclusion, Schnitger suggests the "new and very capable general manager" who was recently appointed to lead HED be given time to address previous issues. "It would be more fiduciarily responsible for the PUC to give the new general manager at least a year to perform a thorough assessment of HED's operations and expenses before considering a rate increase. At a minimum, such a delay would provide the customers of HED more comfort and certainty that the rate increase is necessary."

HED is a not-for-profit, locally owned municipal electric utility. It is governed by a five-member board of commissioners and serves approximately 4,350 customers in eleven Vermont towns with approximately 325 miles of transmission/distribution facilities.

Those wanting to comment on the proposed rate increase can file their views in writing via the PUC's electronic filing system which can be found at ePUC.vermont.gov using Case No. 25-0729-TF. Comments may also be submitted by regular mail to the Vermont Public Utility Commission, 112 State Street, Montpelier, Vermont 05620-2701.

Center

Continued From Page One

to drive from a distance to go to the birthing center, even if they have other hospital options closer to them.

“So many people have said to me, ‘oh yeah, I knew without a doubt that that’s where I was going to be seeking my prenatal care and having my baby,’ because the birthing center and the women’s center collectively, the perinatal care is so outstanding that people talk about it a lot and it has that positive reputation.”

Lloyd recounted her experience, “Our little girl, Bo, is now 14 months old, and I honestly do not think a day passes without some fleeting thought about her beautiful entry into this world, thanks to our literal dream team at the Copley Birthing Center. My labor was long. It began in the middle of the night on a Friday, and I delivered a wide-eyed, healthy baby girl at 12:10 p.m. on Tuesday. After consulting with our doula and the midwife, we arrived at the birthing center close to midnight on Sunday night, and I was monitored, supported and given choices until our baby made her grand debut. One of the most powerful moments I have often recalled was our nurse crawling into the smallest shower with me, and searching for my baby girl’s heartbeat. I had wanted a water birth, but the tub stalled my labor even more, so I had to move out. When she had a hard time finding it, our midwife crawled in. For as long as my baby and I were able to stay strong, I was given the time and space to labor on my own with their unrelenting compassion and guidance. I have never felt more important, or more well cared for.”

Lloyd says over the past few months, connecting with other families who feel similarly, serves as proof that the impact of the birthing center reaches beyond Lamoille county. “It’s really a testament to the incredible care that everyone receives there and the reputation.”

She continued, “When you look at the health outcomes associated with the moms and babies who seek care at the birthing center, I mean they’re off the charts good. The health outcomes are outstanding. We know that maternal health and newborn health, just as far as the data is concerned, indicators throughout the country, our country as a whole has a lot of work to do in that regard. Copley’s Birthing

Center is topping the charts when it comes to these health outcomes, these positive health outcomes, so let’s nurture it and let others learn how they’re doing it and grow it, and allow it to thrive because obviously that model is working.”

Other patients feel similarly. Sarah Schnur, a Copley employee, is thirty-eight weeks pregnant with her first child. Schnur has received all of her prenatal and general women’s care from Copley. Schnur said she briefly considered going to another center, but ultimately chose Copley because of the midwifery model of care, “Besides the fact that it’s really nice to not have to travel an hour to get care, seeing that the birthing center was midwife led, and that they had a really low C-section rate compared to other hospitals in the state, was like a huge plus for me.”

Schnur says she carried much anxiety around getting pregnant and giving birth prior to getting pregnant, “I got pregnant and then I started going to Copley for my prenatal care and I feel like all of the anxiety that I had really kind of washed away, and I think a huge part of that is because of the care that I’ve received from the midwives there.” She continued, “I feel like . . . the level of care is honestly unlike anything I’ve ever received at any medical establishment. I feel like I’m really seen and heard and I can ask questions and have them answered without judgment, and they give me the tools and the resources I need to make informed decisions for myself, about my body and what I’m going to be doing when it comes to labor delivery and all of the things leading up to that.”

Schnur says her husband feels the same as she does, which is especially nice. “He’s at all of the appointments and he feels similarly. He’s just met with such grace and he’s welcomed in the space and he’s said I’m so excited, I think whichever midwife we end up being there for our delivery day is gonna be amazing cause they’re all so great.”

Schnur’s concerns are mostly for other patients, “I’m speaking from a place of privilege in the sense that I live fifteen minutes to Copley, I have reliable means of transportation, I have a job that has a relatively flexible schedule so I can easily schedule my prenatal appointments and make it to them. There are a lot of people in our community that don’t have some of those privileges. . . The studies have shown, when you remove care from being accessible from a distance perspective, people just have less appointments, people go to less appointments. This desert of care potentially, is super concerning to me.”

Morrisville resident Kim McGuinness also sees no benefit in closing the birthing center. McGuinness says she had a fantastic experience at Copley, preferring the smaller setting and personalized care. She too shared her concerns for future patients, having faced some risks during delivery herself, “I’m in Morrisville so I’m very close to the hospital, I’m very lucky. With my first labor I experienced back labor.

I guess my baby was turned the wrong way, so I was putting a lot of pressure on my pelvis and my lower back and it was excruciating. I could not sit, I couldn’t walk. I couldn’t put any pressure on my pelvis, I was literally crawling around my



Birthing center supporters and patients, Eva Zaret (left) and Dani Lloyd were both in attendance for the Mother’s day rally on Sunday, May 11.

photo by Raymonda Parchment

house and then crawling around the hospital room. So I’m just imagining if I had to sit in a car and drive you know an hour plus, to a hospital, I can’t imagine.”

McGuinness further commended the team of midwives at the center for their bedside manner and more, “The midwives, I feel like they have this really nurturing and comforting touch, I liked how it’s not a huge hospital, so there’s four or five different midwives and you rotate through their services throughout your prenatal appointments. I remember the secretary mentioning, ‘have you seen this midwife yet?’ when I was booking my appointments. If there was someone I was unfamiliar with, they scheduled me to meet with that person just so when the time came I was familiar with whoever would be doing my delivery. They give you all of your options, they’re funny, they’re very resourceful and they’re understanding. I didn’t feel pushed into anything specific. I felt like they just laid out all this information for me, and it was very much like no judgment, no expectations, we are just there to support you in your own journey however you want it to go.”

Like many other concerned patients, McGuinness is wondering what other solutions are available, “Can they cut something else? Can they charge more for something different? If you’re gonna call yourself a community hospital (and right now Copley is an amazing community hospital), but you get rid of your birthing center, I feel like that goes hand-in-hand. That’s one of the most fundamental services of healthcare that there is.”

For more information, go to savecopley-birthingcenter.com/.



Leo (left), West (baby) and Winter (right) attend the Mother’s day rally, Sunday May, 11, with their mother Adeline Larose, who utilizes Copley’s home birth support services.

photo by Raymonda Parchment



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Volunteers

Continued From Page One

(Educating Children Outdoors).

That day, Arroyo wrote a social media post, saying, “Today I was fired. Effective immediately. Until today I have been serving as an AmeriCorps member with the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board.”

She went on to say, “I received a termination email alongside 30,000 other people who were volunteering their time to serve their community.”

Arroyo has been visiting Woodbury Elementary School one day a week along with a NBNC staff naturalist, where they would alternate mornings between kindergarten and first graders one week and second and third graders the next. Afternoons are spent with fourth-, fifth- and sixth-graders.

Each week’s activities vary, with an emphasis on place-based programming. That has included earth science activities, ecology and environmental studies, said Arroyo. It’s sometimes group work, or playing thematically appropriate games. Sometimes children simply sit to observe nature from one to 15 minutes, then discuss what they’ve seen.

Larger lessons involve the history of the landscape and how glaciers have affected it. They’ve explored wildlife diversity, tracking and installed trail cams.

Lindset Benton, a fifth- and sixth-grade teacher at Woodbury Elementary School wrote on social media, sharing Arroyo’s post, to say, “I just feel so sad that AmeriCorps has been cut by DOGE. Just after college I served two AmeriCorps terms through the Student Conservation Association, and those experiences significantly shaped the trajectory of my life.”

In speaking of Arroyo’s work with NBNC, Benton said, “Programs like this serve so many communities, and the assistance that AmeriCorps members provide within nonprofits is essential to their overall healthy functioning.”

The late April email Arroyo received said, “Over the weekend, SerVermont received notice from AmeriCorps that all five AmeriCorps state grants were terminated effective immediately due to a determination that ‘the award no longer effectuates agency priorities.’”

She said she received no explanation of exactly how those priorities had changed.

The message said Vermont AmeriCorps staff learned 80% of all AmeriCorps state and national

programs received notice of termination, including Vermont’s five state programs: VHCB AmeriCorps, ECO AmeriCorps, LEAP, ReSOURCE and Vermont Youth Conservation Corps.

The email said, “AmeriCorps members are vital fabrics of Vermont communities and host site organizations – this notification severely impacts not only our members’ personal lives but the essential services they provide.”

Arroyo offered that other information in the message explained how she was to proceed and said, “It’s discouraging and incredibly frustrating.”

Arroyo, who graduated from Ithaca College with a BA in Environmental Studies, has been working with AmeriCorps since June 2024. For two months she was a camp assistant. She said she loved the NBNC work and extended her time for another 10 months to work with them, despite being paid a living allowance of just \$14 per hour, when a living wage is between \$21 and \$23 per hour.

In a social media post announcing her termination, she said, “Americorps members are the people who came to muck out houses after Vermont experienced debilitating flooding in the last two years. AmeriCorps members are the people who are providing food to people who need it, no questions asked.”

“It was not entirely unexpected,” she said, “but no one seemed to want other work. AmeriCorps gets things done!”

Arroyo said AmeriCorps volunteers are part of a larger network that provides food access work, assistance with health and housing for low-income people nationwide. Without AmeriCorps volunteers, the work they have been doing either won’t get done, or will cost a lot more.

Arroyo says, while the termination notices said to stop service immediately, her relationship with NBNC has been good and she was told her living allowance would continue through May 15. After that she expects to be volunteering her time, but there’s a fine line between paying rent, car insurance and other living expenses, she said. “There’s not a lot of wiggle room.”

The email Arroyo received said, “The State is currently reviewing the legality of this termination and exploring options to challenge it.”

NBNC and the various other Vermont organizations involved with AmeriCorps have been working to identify ways for volunteers to continue serving, she said.



Cones around an excavator from Thursday through Saturday last week were the only daytime evidence of nighttime work on a South Main Street water leak in front of the Flower Basket. The repair was the subject of a series of alerts sent to town residents who had signed up for the town’s new alert notification system, which can be used to send notification to residents about water and wastewater issues, emergency response and other town business.

photo by Paul Fixx

Water Leak Gives Alert System a Workout

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – As town officials begin to utilize the new Hardwick Alert Notification System, residents received email and text alerts last Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday about repairs of a water leak under South Main Street in front of the Flower Basket.

The alert system requires residents to sign up to receive email and text alerts. The information provided will be “used to communicate with the residents of Hardwick, including water and wastewater alerts, emergency response, and other town business. The main method of communication from the town will be via email,” notes the sign-up form.

Last week’s first alert, Wednesday morning, May 7, shared a notice to South Main Street water users indicating the possible disruption of water service beginning at 8 p.m.

On the next evening, an additional alert indicated, “Town of Hardwick water users will experience a reduction in pressure

and volume after 9 p.m. tonight as our crew will need to shut the water system down briefly to repair a leak in the main waterline on South Main Street.”

Further details advised the area’s water users to “Please plan accordingly to minimize the disruption in your household,” saying, “The repair should take less than two hours once the water is shut off and service will be returned as soon as possible once the leak has been repaired.”

Then, on Saturday evening, notice was sent to say, “The leak was stopped on Thursday night but crews did not have the parts to restore service to the affected building. The water system will be shutdown again at 10 p.m. tonight (5/10) so crews can finish the repair. Water system users will experience a reduction in pressure and volume after 10 p.m. tonight for approximately one hour. Please plan accordingly to minimize the disruption in your household. The system will return to normal once the work has been completed.”

Sign up for alerts on the town website at hardwickvt.gov/

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Summer Road Work Planned in Cabot

by Paul Fixx

CABOT – Town Road Commissioner Sig Griggs updated residents about three local FEMA projects that are planned for work this summer in a May 9 social media post for Menard Road, Jug Brook Road and Mack Mountain Roads.

Kirk Fenoff and Son Construction will be doing the work on Menard Road. They have applied for and received an early work permit from the Vermont River Management program so they can begin work much earlier than the state usually allows. Fenoff will begin mobilizing personnel and equipment on and around next Wednesday, May 14, wrote Griggs.

The temporary bridge will stay in place for most of construction, allowing the road to stay open, said Griggs, though there will be delays with trucks bringing in materials for the project.

The crew will work underneath the bridge as long as they can before removing the bridge. Griggs said, “Depending on the weather and subsoil conditions, the tentative plan is to close the road

on Wednesday, May 21. Bridge removal will then begin at 9 a.m. and take about six hours. Reopening at 3 p.m.” He said he’d post an update on Facebook as that date approaches, or any delays arise.

Poulin Construction will be working on Jug Brook Road beginning near the first week of June, said Griggs. “Once construction begins, the road will be closed . . . for the duration of the project, which is expected to last 4 weeks.”

A detour in the same location as last fall will be in place until the work is complete, he said.

Kirk Fenoff and Son Construction will also be working to install a new concrete box culvert on Mack Mountain Road. The structure is being constructed off site now, but will take months, so this project is not expected to start until August, said Griggs.

In other road crew news, Griggs reported, “We luckily had a fairly easy mud season thankfully, as Aldo has not returned from his injury and my other crew member Tom had left the road crew to take another career path at the end

of March. Harry has been filling in part time when he isn’t working his own business to help keep things rolling as best the two of us can, meaning the times he is busy I have been working alone.

“As there is plenty of work to do, the already long list doesn’t grow much shorter working alone. With what seems like never ending rain lately, we have not been able to start grading roads now

that most of them, except for a few spots on Danville Hill and Cabot Plains have dried up. It looks like the weather is looking favorable for this to change next week, so we will be getting out there to make your travels more enjoyable.

“Aldo will hopefully be returning soon and there is a potentially new hire coming soon as well.

Thank you for everyone’s patience.”



Renee Brochu and Paulette Brochu-Colburn, AWARE board member, display the quilt Brochu won in the AWARE raffle. *courtesy photo*



Capturing the top three places in the Junior Division (ages 10 and 11) at the 2025 Vermont 4-H Horse Judging Contest, May 4, were (left to right) LeighAnn Judd, Wolcott (first); Ian Kascha-Hare, Milton (second); and Avery Minor, Fairfax (third). *photo by Amanda Turgeon*

Local 4-Hers Place at Horse Judging

BURLINGTON – On May 4, Blackrose Morgan Farm in Colchester hosted the 2025 Vermont 4-H Horse Judging Contest, which attracted 26 4-H’ers and three Future Farmers of America (FFA) members.

In the Juniors 10-11 division, LeighAnn Judd, Wolcott, placed first and Adriana Holbrook, Hardwick, placed fourth.

The youths judged four classes: stock horse halter class; Morgan mare class; Morgan hunter under saddle and saddleseat pleasure. Following the judging, the group moved to the Champlain Valley Exposition grounds in Essex

Junction where competitors, ages 12 and older, gave oral reasons for their rankings. The top 10 scorers in each age group received rosette ribbons.

Judges for the event were Jessie Bachmann-Lertola of Ira, the Vermont 4-H Horse Judging Team coach, and Grace Parks, former Vermont 4-H horse judging participant. Amanda Gifford, Fairfax, and Elizabeth Sweet, MVU FFA chapter advisor, served as moderators for the oral reasons. Scorekeepers were Martha Blades, Jericho; Sonja Koehler, Derby; and Melissa Morin, Wolcott.

Brochu Winner of Quilt

HARDWICK – Renee Brochu is the winner of AWARE’s quilt raffle. Mary Riley made and donated the quilt for this fundraiser. AWARE raised a little over \$300 to help fund services for survivors in the community.

AWARE services are offered to survivors and victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, dating violence and stalking in the community and are available 24-7. Someone who needs help should call the hotline, (802) 472-6463 or aware@vtlink.net.

Local Weaver Places First in Guild Show

RANDOLPH – Barbara Bendix of Marshfield placed first for Best Use of Wool at The Vermont Weavers Guild (VWG) show, “Vision & Voice” at the White River Craft Center. The display is open to public on May 15 and 16, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; May 17, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; May 18, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.; May 22 and 23, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.; May 24, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and May 25, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.. Weavers will be on hand to answer questions about weaving.

Rebecca Jenson, of Peacham, won Best in Show, the Handweavers Guild of American Award for “Fire-som” an object d’art/basket, and Best Three-Dimensional Item. Pamela Wilson of Barre earned the Judges’ Choice Award, Complex Weavers Award, and Best Use of Linen Award for her “Table in the

Tree” Wall Art. Other first place winners were:

After the show ends, the guild will enter award winners and others’ work to a regional exhibit in early July organized by the New England Weavers Seminar in Massachusetts.

Typically held at the White River Crafts Center, presentations are available free to the public and workshops are open to non-members who pay the workshop registration fee. The Vermont Weavers Guild is the only Vermont guild exclusively focused on weaving and draws members from across Vermont as well as members from New Hampshire, New York, and Canada. Information on current and past Guild programs and membership benefits can be found at www.vtweaversguild.org

Removing Dams Key to Effective Flood Prevention

by Hannah Head

VERMONT – In light of the recent increase in severe flooding across Vermont, environmental scientists say that restoring rivers to their natural flow can decrease Vermont's flood risk.

But dam removal is expensive, and as flood disasters keep occurring, it becomes increasingly difficult for the state to move forward with large restoration projects.

Flooding in summer 2023 caused damage totaling more than \$600 million, according to a state estimate. Another round of flooding in summer 2024 caused fresh damages estimated at more than \$32 million.

Ecologists argue that river restoration work can no longer be put off.

“Ultimately the restoration work is public safety work. We're contributing to public safety, but because it's not as immediate, it gets pushed down the road,” said Karina Dailey, a restoration ecologist for the Vermont Natural Resources Council.

Dailey works on river restoration programs throughout Vermont as a means of flood prevention. She manages the council's dam removal program, which focuses on removing dams and concrete barriers in rivers so that natural stream flow and function can be restored.

Vermont has 1,085 dams around the state, according to an inventory kept by the Department of Environmental Conservation. Of these, 146 are listed as significantly hazardous due to their poor condition, and 75 are listed under the more dangerous category of highly hazardous.

Infrastructure like dams, berms and levees can be effective at controlling river flow and diverting water during heavy rain. Many dams in Vermont were also built to generate power for mills and other small industries. But the structures also restrict river flow, which can lead to increased flooding down the line.

“I remove barriers from rivers,” Dailey said. “When you take out a barrier, you're also lowering the elevation of the river because the river's built up behind that dam where there's been years of accumulated sediment. And by lowering that river elevation, you're also giving the river access to the floodplain that historically may have been (a reservoir) behind the dam.”

In heavy rain conditions, floodplains are critical in preventing downstream flooding. They temporarily store excess water and allow floodwaters to spread

out. But people have a history of building on floodplains due to their rich soils and lack of obstructing vegetation.

“When as a society we built our infrastructure in the path of the river, it increased our collective risk for the floods that we're experiencing today,” said Kassia Randzio, co-director of the Vermont River Conservancy.

The Montpelier nonprofit runs big- and small-scale river restoration projects across Vermont. In fall 2024, the organization completed a multi-year floodplain restoration at Whetstone Brook in Brattleboro. Currently, the group is working on feasibility studies in hopes of removing four dams around Montpelier, where the 2023 flooding submerged the downtown and caused millions in damage.

“The opportunity that we have is to look at the land and think about places where we can protect floodplains, protect wetlands, protect headwater, forests,” said Randzio. “If we can allow those places to serve as the sponges that they should be . . . all of those things that we can do are opportunities to keep homes and businesses and communities safer downstream.”

Many river restoration projects center around the idea of giving rivers room to move, or destroying old infrastructure, such as dams and berms, so that smaller-scale rivers can resume their natural flow.

It's about “recognizing that our natural infrastructure is our best line of defense,” Dailey said. “We really need those systems to function as natural systems to protect us.”

Still, flooding is a significant risk.

“We're always at risk of flooding,” said Marvin Boyd, a meteorologist at the Burlington office of the National Weather Service.

Boyd attributed most of the flood risk to heavy rainfall, as well as to heavy ice or snow melt that can quickly cause rivers to rise. As temperatures warm from climate change, the atmosphere can hold more water, which can fuel more intense rain.

“The intensity of the storms that are coming in and the amount of water that is coming in with these horrific storms is just too much to handle,” said Julie Silverman, the Lake Champlain senior lakekeeper with the nonprofit Conservation Law Foundation.

As lakekeeper, Silverman's role is a blend of environmental education and outreach. She works to monitor and advocate



Hardwick Lake, held back by Jackson Dam, near the intersection of Vt. Rte. 15 W. and Vt. Rte 14 N., was considered for removal in a 2001 report by the Vermont Natural Resources Council. Northern Rivers Land Trust photo

for the health of Lake Champlain and its tributaries.

“How do we support removal of those derelict dams, or unneeded dams, so that we can let the rivers flow?” Silverman asked. “And what we know is that a dam that's not

maintained, and a dam in general, is more dangerous to flooding than no dam at all.”

Hannah Head writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.

Dam Removal Being Considered

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – The value of Jackson Dam, holding back the waters of Hardwick Lake, has been questioned for many years. A 2001 report by the Vermont Natural Resources Council notes, “The Jackson Dam currently has little economic value.”

The dam was then over 100 years old and the report indicates it, “is not unsafe at this time, but . . . will require a major overhaul in the future.”

There is no hydroelectric facility at Jackson Dam. The dam was originally built to store water for the downstream hydroelectric facility at Wolcott. The report notes HED uses the Jackson Dam and Hardwick Lake for storage. If a large rain storm is anticipated, HED can draw down the Lake to supply water to the downstream Wolcott project. This storage benefit of Hardwick Lake is not significant.

On the question of constructing a hydroelectric facility at Jackson Dam, the report says, it “has been considered in the past, but has never been economically feasible. In other words, the expense of building a generating facility is not worth the power and financial benefits that a facility would provide.”

“Dam removal would cost significantly less than dam

repair,” notes the report.

A 2021 Lamoille River Tactical Basin Plan, prepared by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, identifies stormwater master planning and implementation as a priority.

The 2001 report said, “The dam provides no functional flood prevention potential because the capacity of Hardwick Lake to store floodwaters is relatively small.”

Significant flooding events in July 2023 and 2024 have raised new issues for managing the Lamoille River through Hardwick according to Town Manager David Upson. Cancellation of a recent federal BRIC grant opportunity that would have looked into flood mitigation options on the Lamoille River upstream of the Cottage Street Bridge, further delays attention to the town's flood planning.

HED's General Manager Sarah Braese says Commissioner Renaud Demers has been appointed to serve on a group that is expected to explore a feasibility study for Jackson Dam, but that discussion has been postponed.

“Otherwise, the HED Board of Commissioners has requested a comprehensive update on HED's dam portfolio which is slated to be discussed at their next Regular Meeting scheduled for May 20, said Braese.”

Senate Natural Resources Revisits Wake Boat Rules

by Olivia Gieger, VTDigger

MONTPELIER – If the tulips lining the walkway to the Statehouse are any indication, summer is on its way, and with it, a season of boating on Vermont’s lakes and ponds.

That fast-approaching season is not lost on advocates for wake boat-free lakes. Alongside representatives from the Department of Environmental Conservation, they spent Tuesday morning in the Senate Natural Resources Committee discussing the presence of the contested craft in Vermont’s lakes.

Wake boats, it’s worth clarifying, are not just any old boat that creates a wake, waterskiing boats, pontoons or whalers don’t fall into this category. Rather, they are boats specifically designed to displace large amounts of water, with V-shaped hulls, special wave-shaping plates and, most notably, big ballast systems that can take on gallons of water to weigh the boat down to create even bigger waves for wakeboarders or surfers.

Though the committee does not intend to take action this year, advocates are concerned that even one more boating season under the current rules could spread invasive species across Vermont’s lakes.

Those rules, passed in April 2024, restrict wake boating to specific wake sports zones: areas with

50 contiguous acres of lake, 500 feet away from the shoreline on all sides and depths of at least 20 feet. Those rules are meant to prevent the large waves from crashing down on shore and from churning up lake-bottom sediments and thus protect lake wildlife from too much disruption.

But, advocates say the current rules don’t go far enough in protecting Vermont’s precarious lake ecosystems from the encroachment of invasive species. Specifically, the ballasts of these boats can be carriers for insidious invaders like zebra mussel larvae or watermilfoil, Pat Suozzi, president of the Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds, said in her testimony. Though boaters empty most of their tanks when taking boats ashore, they still may hold up to 8.5 gallons of residual water, according to John Wildman, a member of Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes, who also testified.

“It doesn’t take much. In fact, it only takes one boat,” Suozzi said, of the risk for invasive species spread.

That’s why she and other advocates are urging legislators and the Department of Environmental Conservation to consider a “home lake rule” for this summer, meaning wake boaters must register in one lake for an entire season.

Other attempts to prevent the transport of invasives through



photo via Adobe Stock

ballast tanks fall short, advocates said, since the visual inspection of hard-to-reach, under-boat tanks can be near impossible and the disinfecting washing equipment with water hot enough to kill larvae is expensive and doesn’t exist at most lakes.

Still, others who testified expressed a desire to prohibit the presence of wake boats on Vermont’s inland lakes altogether. Waves that can reach up to five feet above the water can be an equally daunting prospect to a kayaker on the surface or a loon nesting not far

off shore, according to advocates.

“Why should our lakes be essentially off limits to those, the majority, by far, who want to fish, kayak, canoe, paddleboard, sail, swim, water ski, or use their normal motorboats or pontoon boats?” said Phil Dodd, a Montpelier resident, during testimony.

Dlugolecki, with the Department of Environmental Conservation, said her office plans to engage residents this year through the summer on revising some of these rules to possibly take effect for 2026.

Pedestrian Bridge Project Receives \$200,000 Grant

by Raymonda Parchment

MONTPELIER –The Hardwick pedestrian bridge replacement project received a total of \$200,000 for the demolition and replacement of the deteriorated, unsafe and currently closed pedestrian bridge with a new ADA compliant pedestrian bridge.

Governor Phil Scott and the Department of Housing and Community Development announced the 2025 recipients of Vermont Downtown Transportation Fund awards, May 9. This year, the Community Investment Board chose eight Designated Downtowns and Village Centers to share \$1,452,405 in funding.

Town Manager David Upson expressed his gratitude for the award, saying, “We’re able to move forward with a fully funded project, and we hope to start construction this summer. This is a vital part of our downtown.”

“Our historic downtowns and village centers are part of what makes Vermont so special,” said Governor Scott. “Keeping them

vibrant is a priority for my Administration and I want to thank the Community Investment Board for endorsing these projects.”

The Downtown Transportation Fund makes investments in infrastructure and public spaces, stimulates private investment, and creates a sense of identity and pride in Vermont’s downtowns by helping municipalities pay for transportation-related capital improvements within or serving a Designated Downtown or Village Center.

“These grants will be put to use to make these communities more inviting to guests and residents,” said Alex Farrell, Vermont Housing and Community Development Commissioner and chair of the Community Investment Board Chair. “Whether it’s increasing walkability, supporting multi-modal transportation, or providing better lighting, these are important investments that benefit everyone.”

Discussions have taken place at select board meetings as to how the construction will impact Main St. For more information on the downtown transportation fund, see vermont.gov

Petition to Ban Caspian Lake Wake Boats Still Pending

by Paul Fixx

GREENSBORO – In a report to the select board at the January 8 meeting, then-board member David Kelley reported that he and others spoke at a Vermont Agency of Natural Resources meeting on December 12 in Montpelier, “asking the ANR to prohibit wake boats on Caspian Lake. He said ANR seems skeptical of their arguments, and they’ve begun conversations with our state legislators,” noted minutes of that meeting. Kelley concluded, “It is expected that ANR will issue a decision by springtime.”

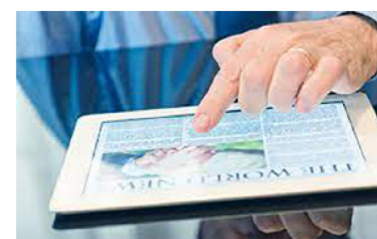
The testimony by Kelley and others was in support of a July 2023 petition by the Greensboro

Association and Greensboro Select Board proposing the prohibition of wakesports and wakeboats on Caspian Lake. No action on that petition is recorded on the Department of Environmental Conservation website.

A 2022 petition by Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes asking that wake sports be regulated in a responsible manner and prohibited on small lakes, was supported by many area organizations, including the Lake Eligo, Lake Elmore, Shadow Lake and Woodbury Lake associations, along with the Craftsboro and Glover select board.

Hardwick Electric Department prohibits wake boats from launching at the Caspian Lake boat launch.

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Vermont Nonprofit Pairs Seniors and Renters

by Tracy Brannstrom

VERMONT – Several years ago, Linda Suter looked for a small house on the market in central Vermont, hoping to downsize. She was living alone in a three-bedroom Montpelier home that she'd owned for nearly two decades, but could no longer afford it. Real estate prospects that fit her budget and needs, however, were slim.

Suter, 82, also realized she didn't actually want to move away. "I have a big garden and I love living here," she said. Each year, she grows lots of perennials and some vegetables in her yard.

This year, she decided to rent out a room in her house through HomeShare Vermont, a nonprofit organization that screens and matches people looking for affordable rental options with homeowners who have extra space to rent out and who could use some form of support, whether extra income, help with household tasks, or a presence in the home.

HomeShare currently serves Addison, Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Washington, and Windsor counties, plus some towns in the Northeast Kingdom and Rutland County.

Last year, its caseworkers matched 274 people who shared 169 homes across the state, with an average monthly rent of \$359 and an average stay of 21 months. Twenty-three of those matches were in Washington County.

Low-income seniors, who make up the majority of hosts, earned \$354,000 in rental income, according to the organization.

U.S. Census Bureau data and research from the mortgage giant Freddie Mac shows that 28% of single-family homes in the U.S. were occupied by just one person last year, with 61- to 79-year-olds making up the largest portion of sole-person households. That can be expensive. In Montpelier, where Suter is based, the median monthly cost of homeownership from 2019 to 2023 was \$2,015 with a mortgage and \$994 for a home that's paid off.

It can also be lonely. "I needed the money," Suter said, "but I also needed the company." Her grandchildren, for whom she provided childcare in past years, are now away in college. She found herself wanting another presence in the house. "I just felt like it would be safer with someone here," she said.

Joe Lerner, 75, now shares the home with Suter and her 13-year-old dog Kipper. "I feel like we're slowly becoming friends. I think we can help each other mutually," Suter said. "We both like to have

milk in our coffee and some bananas around, so we share both of those. It works for us."

HomeShare Vermont aims to tackle housing affordability issues on the "guest" side of the equation too. Last year, 90% of guests who matched under the program were living on a low income.

The organization gets far more applications than makes matches. It matched 23 people in Washington County after receiving a total of 88 applications, 31 from hosts and 57 from guests.

The cost of rent under the program averages far below market-rate rent pricing, within a range of \$0 to \$650, or up to \$850 for housing arrangements without shared communal space, such as an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). By contrast, the average rent in Vermont as of this March is \$2,100 per month, and \$2,200 per month in Montpelier, up \$700 from the previous year, according to data from Zillow.

Often, renters, or what HomeShare Vermont calls "guests," typically provide some combination of non-medical services in exchange for reduced rent. Hosts' needs vary from cooking to pet care, to help with technology, to keeping them company more generally. Over 30,000 hours of service were completed for hosts last year.

Of the roughly 40 home listings posted to the HomeShare Vermont website currently, a younger host in Burlington who lives with chronic illness is offering rent of \$200 monthly in exchange for about 15 hours of shopping, meal preparation, and transportation. Another host in Bethel is offering free rent in exchange for some housework, shared meals, and a guest to accompany him to an activity he loves, fairs. And in Ludlow, a host is requesting \$400 per month for "help sorting through 50 years of memories."

These services offer value beyond just financial savings on rent. HomeShare Vermont director Connor Timmons said for older Vermonters or people living with disabilities, it can mean "they're enjoying their lives more, because they can access more parts of their lives."

Sequana Skye, 69, is nearing the end of her nine-month HomeShare agreement in Plainfield. She pays \$850 per month to live in the property owner's house and is tasked with providing 10 hours of service per week for the co-owner of the home, an older man who lives in an ADU on the property. She drives him to appointments and checks in on him each morning. "I also set up a bird feeder



© Terry J. Allen

Sequana Skye and her cat are finishing up a stint as HomeShare guests in Plainfield. photo by Terry J. Allen

outside his window that he's just enthralled by," she said.

She also provides some hours of personal care each week for him, negotiated beyond the HomeShare agreement, since she worked for years as a registered nurse.

Skye called her home-sharing arrangement "pretty perfect," but noted that these tasks sometimes exceeded the agreed-upon number of weekly hours. "I did, at times, feel tethered to the house. I really wasn't, but it's more of a psychological thing where I've felt like I'm responsible for this older person. I wanted to be there if he needed me," she said.

While trading services for rent isn't always a perfect formula, Skye said that "overall the situation was an ideal kind of transition for me, from displaced housing to the next step."

Skye applied to HomeShare last September after her apartment in Plainfield village was damaged from flooding in July. She had lived in the unit for about a year and loved it. "I had a neighbor, and a porch, and a deck near the brook where I'd sit, have coffee, and watch the birds in the morning. It felt like paradise to me," she said. "Having that wiped out was really traumatizing. I haven't loved a lot of places I've lived, but I really, really loved that apartment."

Skye will soon be moving into a different rental she found on the

market, but said she would consider HomeShare again in the future. She was impressed with how her caseworker at the organization, Sarah Hudak, one of two caseworkers in central Vermont, was dedicated to matching Skye with a host and provided support throughout the terms of the agreement.

Hudak said matching hosts with guests takes a good deal of work, and brainstorming that "it's kind of like arranging a marriage, because living with someone is a really intimate thing."

The organization's five caseworkers do in-depth interviews with applicants and visit hosts' homes. "I try to get their life story and a good sense of their personalities," Hudak said.

Matching can be challenging, Hudak said, when hosts' homes need repairs to make their space more livable, like fixes to heating systems and windows, or when guests need housing more quickly than the three months it can take HomeShare to move through the application process. Guests also tend to be less interested in getting matched with hosts in rural areas, since job prospects in those regions can be low. Most, she said, are seeking housing in more urban areas such as Burlington, Montpelier, or Waterbury.

The organization gets far more applications than it makes matches. **See RENTERS, next page**

Renters

Continued From Previous Page

Even before thinking about compatibility, caseworkers call several references and do a series of background checks. A criminal record will render any applicant ineligible for the program.

Caseworkers also ask references whether an applicant has mental health challenges that would make living with them unsafe, according to Timmons. “But we encourage people to be open about what they’re dealing with. There are all kinds of challenges that are totally compatible and actually make people better off to be living with someone else,” he said. “If the pandemic has taught us anything, it’s that being alone in your home is not a great recipe for long-term mental health, at any age.”

In an informal sense, shared-living models have a long history in the United States, dating back to the 19th century when it was common for middle-class homeowners to take in boarders, often immigrants and single young workers. People increasingly turned to it during the economic collapse of the 1930s, but in the post World War II era, zoning laws discouraged these arrangements.

More structured programs emerged in the 1970s, with social service agencies and nonprofits typically partnering older households with younger tenants to address housing affordability challenges while also enabling older adults to remain in their homes as they age.

HomeShare Vermont started up in 1982 in Chittenden county,

expanding to additional counties and towns over the years.

The organization is currently awaiting funding approval for a planned expansion to cover the rest of Windsor and Windham counties, and all the counties in the Northeast Kingdom. Timmons said the goal is to share employees based at existing organizations in those areas rather than setting up new offices and hiring additional HomeShare staff. That will save taxpayers money, he said, “and that feels critical right now, with how tight things feel with budgets.”

About half of the organization’s budget, set at \$826,000 for this year, comes from state and federal dollars, including a federal Medicaid waiver for services designed to facilitate aging in place. Timmons called this a “wildly good investment.” He said it would be far more costly to fund placements in long-term-care and assisted-living facilities, and “besides, we are very far from having those beds exist,” he said.

The remainder of HomeShare’s budget comes from private donations and Vermont towns.

These investments address the financial realities of the housing crisis and a broken eldercare system, Timmons said, and as Skye put it, the urgent need for new ways of living together.

“The floods last year taught me that we all have to change how we live,” she said. “McMansions no longer make sense. Older folks are living alone and winters are hard. And we need to figure out, quite literally, how to live in community.”

This article first appeared in the Montpelier Bridge, montpelier-bridge.org



Jennifer Tidd (left) and her son Jacob, of Cabot, stand with their custom gifts as one of 40 vendors participating in the Hazen Union eighth-grade Spring Craft Fair in the school’s gymnasium, May 10. All proceeds from the craft fair will help fund a class trip to Montreal where they will visit the Biodome, Old Montreal and see a Cirque du Soleil show. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Mike Lapierre (left) and his son Corban begin work on a new Gazebo in the park across from Willey’s Store. The gazebo has received its permit and is being paid for with Greensboro ARPA funding requested several years ago by the Caspian Critters 4H Club. photo by Paul Fixx



A poured concrete foundation, May 8, at 1119 Main Street in Greensboro Bend is the first evidence of the two-family home being constructed on the site by the Habitat for Humanity Greensboro Initiative.

photo by Jenny Bayles



Foam Panels at the site of the Habitat for Humanity Greensboro Initiative, May 8, await volunteers at a work day scheduled for Monday, May 12. Six to eight volunteers were being recruited for dirty and messy work to help move, cut and adhere foam panels to the cement foundation walls.

photo by Jenny Bayles

All welcome!

Gazette conversation with Greensboro **FREE** **Hardwick Gazette**

May 18, 3-5 p.m., Highland Center for the Arts
 Featuring Jasper Hill Cheese, Hill Farmstead Brewery samples, Wilson Farm ice cream, and a chance to express ideas on Hardwick Gazette coverage of Greensboro.

This is the first in a series of community conversations The Hardwick Gazette will hold in its 11-town coverage area.

EDITORIAL

What it Means to be Community Owned

For the last 16 months we've been working hard here at the Gazette to gather as much government, school, civic and sports news as we can, along with as many community events as are sent to us.

As part of being a nonprofit, we have no owners, only a board that's responsible for seeing that our publishing activities benefit the communities we serve. Understanding what's important to our communities is critical to our success.

We know local news is important and a recent Pew Research Center report confirms it. "As in the past, local news organizations are the most trusted news source across age groups – and this trust has risen slightly across all groups."

The report said, "On the whole, Americans remain far less likely to trust information from social media sites than from national and local news organizations. But the difference is less pronounced among the youngest adults: 54% of Americans ages 18 to 29 have at least some trust in the information that comes from social media, just below their level of trust in national news organizations (60%). More young adults (76%) express trust in information from local news outlets."

There is a much bigger gap in trust among the oldest Americans: 28% of those ages 65 and older say they have at least some trust in information from social media, compared with 74% who trust national news organizations and 84% who trust local news outlets.

We don't always get it right and readers are quick to tell us when we don't, which helps guide us. One measure that seems to make a difference in how Americans trust news is in how ready news outlets are to correct errors. We take our obligation to do that seriously.

I believe we've been doing well in covering upcoming community events, entertainment reviews and sports, but each week there's more happening in select boards, school boards, planning commissions and other civic activities than we can possibly get to and find the time to report on with our limited staff and budget.

To see that we understand what it means to meet the needs of our communities, on May 18 we plan to visit with one of those communities and find out how well Greensboro residents (and visitors who happen to be in town then) think we're doing. After this first gathering in Greensboro, we plan to do the same in other communities.

Part of the gathering will be spent helping us understand what the community thinks it means for The Gazette to be community owned. Part will be spent sharing how we look at our work and the many ways people can engage with it.

Greensboro is a unique community, as are all communities. We're lucky to have found a home in such a welcoming place after our previous owner stopped printing the paper in April

2020 and closed the office several months later. We've had our office in the Greensboro town hall since then, which makes it easier to cover news here than in other towns. (Thankfully, I live just a few steps from the Hardwick Memorial Building, and Gazette photographer Vanessa Fournier lives in Hardwick, so covering the government aspect of the Gazette's hometown is easy too.)

And, Greensboro's being a unique community, means we're able to hold the event at Highland Center for the Arts, where Hill Farmstead Brewery will share samples, Jasper Hill Farm will provide cheese and Wilson Farm will be sharing ice cream.

We hope you will join us to share your thoughts about our work, Sunday May 18 from 3 to 5 p.m.

Paul Fixx, editor

All welcome!

Gazette
conversation
with
Greensboro

FREE

May 18
3-5 p.m.
Highland Center
for the Arts

Your chance to express
ideas about
Hardwick Gazette coverage
and featuring Jasper Hill
Cheese samples,
Wilson Farm ice cream

Hardwick Gazette

This is the first in a series of community conversations The Hardwick Gazette will hold in its 11-town coverage area. (802) 472-6521 for more information.

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.

Letters to the editor require the writer's name, town of residence and phone number. Letters and opinions may be mailed, e-mailed or brought to our office. Letters and opinions are the opinion of the author. Editorials are the opinion of the editor and not the staff or publisher.

Submissions of Content and Deadlines: The Hardwick Gazette is published late on Tuesday each week with Wednesday's date. Submit your community event information, announcements, opinions, press releases and business news the Friday before publication by 5 p.m. Local news and sports items, letters to the editor and church submissions are due Monday by noon. Deadlines may be earlier for holidays. Obituaries may be submitted at any time. We make every effort to confirm receipt of obituaries by noon the next day our office is open. Call to confirm receipt of any obituary submitted Tuesday if it is important it appears in that week's edition. When sending photos, please send unedited files in the largest size available to ensure the best page and web presentation.

We make every effort to include all submissions with timely content in the earliest possible edition. Call with requests to include submitted content in specific issues. Submissions may be edited for style and length. We cannot guarantee publication dates.

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LEGISLATIVE REPORT

House Considers Several Bills Before Adjournment

by Rep. Richard Bailey

MONTPELIER – We are entering the home stretch of this year’s legislative session, still with some very big items on the agenda before we adjourn (we hope!), in the first week of June.

As for those big items, since my last update, the appropriations bill and school funding bills came out of committees, passed the house and were sent to the Senate. It is my understanding that Senate has nearly completed their work on these bills. They will be sending them back to the House, where they will go to a committee on conference to negotiate a compromise between both chambers.

Regarding the budget, I am greatly concerned that over just the past five years our state spending has exploded from around \$5 billion to \$9 billion annually. This level of spending, and the taxing necessary to support it, is not sustainable, especially if the federal funding that covers over a third of this number is cut or cut back. This burden is adding tremendous stress to our affordability crisis.

Currently, the approximate federal assistance to Vermont’s budget is \$3.2 billion. A lot of that amount was emergency, one-time money granted during Covid-19, under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and the Inflation Reduction Act. Unfortunately, when the supermajority was able to override Governor Scott’s vetoes at will, they did not heed the governor’s advice to use one-time money for one-time expenditures only. So, now we have to make some hard decisions about whether to cut that spending or continue it with new and higher taxes on Vermonters.

There are a great many differences between the House and Senate versions of the education reform bill, and what ultimately

comes out of conference committee will likely look different from both versions, so it is still too early to share any useful conclusions at this point.

My committee took testimony from a variety of witnesses on H.394, an act relating to renewable energy generation, and S.50, an act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration. Most of the testimony was from solar developers, VPIRG and Renewable Energy Vermont.

What this bill would do is basically allow larger solar arrays (from 15 kWh to 25 kWh) to go through a less restrictive approval process by the Public Utilities Commission. One bone of contention was over whether or not to require a set-back from a property line and highway right of way. We settled on a 10-foot setback. S.50 was voted out of committee on a vote of 9-0-0.

The Republicans on the committee were successful in keeping the single plant proposed change out of the bill. Single plant would have allowed additional construction of solar arrays in areas that have existing arrays. Although this may seem logical on the surface. Republicans on the committee were not convinced that ratepayers would not be subsidizing the cost for the power. A compromise was reached to have the Public Utilities Commission hold hearings on the single plant language and update the committee in January 2026.

Republicans also proposed all future solar projects approved for construction sell electricity at the market rate instead of at a premium, and tried to insert some language to help small municipal utilities cover some of their costs with these solar arrays installations. Both those efforts were not successful.

When S.50 came before the full House for action, Republicans tried to amend the bill with H.16, repeal the Affordable Heat Act (aka the Clean Heat Standard), but the speaker of the house ruled the amendment not germane, and did not allow it be attached to the bill.

On the third reading of S.50, Republicans tried again to attach some language from H.289, the

governor’s proposed energy bill, such as repealing the lawsuit provision of the Global Warming Solutions Act that allows anyone to sue the state at taxpayers’ expense, but we could not overcome the majority to get that through either.

Richard Bailey represents Lamoille 2 District in the Vermont Legislature. The district includes the towns of Belvidere, Hyde Park, Johnson and Wolcott.



A trailer behind the site of the former Big Lots store in the Morrisville Plaza and signs in the front windows announcing “Ocean State Job Lot coming soon, now hiring,” are evidence of the new store, for which several hiring events were held in April. A \$3,500 sign-on bonus was being offered for team leader roles, but no information on the store’s planned opening date has been available. photo by Raymonda Parchment

For the record

The correct date of the May Greensboro select board meeting is May 14. The article in last week’s edition, “Next Steps for Housing, Deteriorating Town Hall Contemplated.” should have said, “Town clerk Kim Greaves said this will likely be a subject for the May 14 select board meeting.” The full story is now at hardwickgazette.org/2025/05/06/next-steps-for-housing-deteriorating-town-hall-contemplated/

Last week’s lead story on page 1 of the PDF edition, “Select Board Gets Look at Master Plan,”

should have indicated Peter Fairweather presented the master plan for East Hardwick’s future to the Hardwick Select Board, April 17. The full story is now at hardwickgazette.org/2025/05/06/east-hardwick-gets-look-at-master-plan/



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FREE Hardwick Gazette

ANOTHER OPINION

An Open Letter to the Vermont General Assembly

by former Vermont lawmakers

VERMONT – (This commentary is by a group of former Vermont lawmakers. Their names are listed below the text.)

More than 50 years ago, Vermont recognized the hardship faced by homeowners whose property taxes were rising faster than their ability to pay them. Since then, state fiscal policy has moved, in fits and starts, toward a system where school taxes are based on Vermonters' income, the best measure of their ability to pay.

We, former Vermont legislators, urge you not to abandon a half-century of progress. Instead, we hope you will fulfill the promise of Act 60, which we helped pass in 1997, and ask Vermont homeowners with the most income to contribute their fair share to the cost of education by paying based on income.

Vermont's education funding system is committed both to fair taxation and local decision making, and we can strengthen both of those. Instead, H.454, the education reform bill that recently passed the Vermont House of Representatives, weakens them.

Income-based school taxes ease pressure on homeowners with modest earnings that don't keep pace with rising real estate prices and property taxes. For high-earning homeowners, income is a more accurate reflection of their means than a single piece of property, so taxes based on income are critical to fair school funding for all.

H.454 as passed by the

Vermont House takes the state in the opposite direction. The bill would repeal the law's current provision allowing residents to pay some or all of their school taxes based on their income, which 70% of Vermont homeowners do. Instead, H.454 recommitments the state to regressive property taxes that hit low- and middle income residents the hardest.

To temper the negative impacts of the property tax for those with incomes of \$115,000 or less, the plan puts in place homestead exemptions, which provide relief for some but still rely on property taxes. Lawmakers have considered homestead exemptions over the last

50 years and repeatedly rejected them as too complicated and failing to achieve the fairness of income-based taxes.

H.454 does nothing to address the unfair tax break in the current funding system. Many of Vermont's wealthiest homeowners pay school taxes on their property that are less than their income-based taxes would be. H.454 allows these homeowners to continue to pay property taxes instead of asking them to pay the same share of their income to support education as average Vermonters pay.

H.454 also brings back a foundation formula: state-determined and state-funded grants that can be supplemented by local school districts which Vermont tried before the state supreme court declared it unconstitutional in 1997. The constitutional problems can be overcome, and H.454 attempts to do so. But this, too, is something the Legislature tried decades ago and found unworkable

because it was overly complicated and made tax rates unpredictable from year to year.

None of the sweeping changes in H.454, the associated risks, nor the hassles to school districts are necessary. The sharp increase in taxes last year was due in large part to costs outside of school districts' control and also to legislative missteps in the previous two years.

And while the governor likes to say the message from the election was that schools are spending too much, that's not the case. School spending in Vermont as a percentage of the state's economy has been a stable 5.5% to 6% for decades.

Unfair taxes anger taxpayers and alienate them from participation in decision-making about their schools, and that hurts students, teachers and communities. H.454 does not solve these problems. Rather, in reaching for elusive "efficiencies," with promises of better education, the bill doubles down on school consolidation, which many Vermonters have rejected; that will alienate more citizens by taking budgetary decision-making out of communities' hands.

There are immediate, affordable changes to the existing law that would make the system fairer for the Vermonters hurt last year. Instead of rushing to new and unproven or old, proven-unworkable financing mechanisms

and an unprecedented move away from local control, the Legislature should adopt those changes.

We are proud that for 30 years Vermont has had the most equitable school financing system in the country, supporting schools that produce some of the highest test scores in the country. Not incidentally, our schools hold together many of the small rural communities that make Vermont an enviable place to live.

H.454 risks destroying much of this. Vermont deserves better. **Former Rep. Elaine Alfano, Former Sen. Susan Bartlett, Former Rep. Paul Cillo, Former Rep. David Deen, Former Sen. Matt Dunne, Former Rep. John Freidin, Former Rep. Martha Heath, Former Sen. Cheryl Hooker, Former Rep. Carolyn Kehler, Former Rep. Karen Lafayette, Former Rep. Gini Milkey, Former Rep. Donny Osman, Former Rep. Ed Paquin, Former Rep. Ann Seibert, Former Rep. Mary Sullivan, Former Rep. John Tracy, Former Rep. Michael Vinton, Former Rep. Mark Woodward, Former Lt. Governor David Zuckerman**

Paul Cillo is a former state representative who served the Hardwick Area and was the executive director of the Public Assets Institute until he stepped down at the end of 2022.

This commentary first appeared in VT Digger, May 12.



Cabot Community Theater members (from left) Rue Jacobs, Alice Hannan, Liam Waugh and Gwenyth Pare are sailors who sing of life on the sea in "The Little Mermaid" at the Cabot School Performing Arts Center May 8.

photo by Vanessa Fournier



In "The Little Mermaid," performed by the Cabot Community Theater from May 8 to 11 in the Cabot School Performing Arts Center., Thomas Dunbar (left) as Chef Louis, plans to make a meal of Jesse Clayton (right) as Sebastian, during one of the play's scenes.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

I HEARD IT THROUGH THE JEDEVINE

Jewel in the Crown Shines Again

by **Brendan Buckley**

HARDWICK – One of the jewels in Hardwick’s village crown shines again. The original Jeudevine Library building has cast off the shadow of mid-twentieth century linoleum, and, under the skilled guidance of Topnotch Floors, has revealed her original late nineteenth century beauty: lustrous, rich red and golden brown oak flooring.

When I stopped by to admire the reincarnated wood I instinctively removed my shoes. So struck was I by the transition from years of rather drab floor covering to gleaming, beautifully grained oak that I could not imagine tracking the debris of mud season across the room.

When the Jeudevine addition is completed in the coming weeks, the Main Street entrance will be closed. The new main entrance will be on West Church Street, so the pleasant surprise of the flooring revival will await your passing through from the addition into the original building. The project included the balcony office space and the winding staircase linking it to the main floor.

The tops of the original bookshelves are similarly being refinished to match the floors. Some are also being resized, allowing us to hold on to them and fit them into the altered space. Together with the recently cleaned

and repaired stained glass windows, the floors will bathe readers and browsers in a rainbow of welcoming color.

As our patience is tested in awaiting the completion of the new building and the reluctance of Spring to assert itself, perhaps we can find comfort in admiring the landscaping along the Main Street side of the Jeudevine. Gene Gravel has done the hardscaping. Ceilidh Kane and Geoff Fehrs are doing much of the soil preparation and planting, aided by Andrea Brightenbach who serves as head of the Jeudevine Landscaping Committee. Cady’s Falls Botanical Gardens donated many plants. The stone patio and gardenscape create another inviting space to pause as you pass by, or to linger with a friend, a good book, or your favorite morning wake-up beverage as the sun rises over the Memorial Building.

Inside the new addition, boxes of books fill the large upstairs children’s space. Shelving is being installed in those areas in preparation for a massive un-boxing to happen one day soon. Final inspections are ongoing: punch list, fire safety, climate control, the elevator. Inch by inch . . .

You can find the novel, “The Water Dancer,” on the Jeudevine shelves. Well, it’s almost certainly in a box as I write this, but look for it once it is back on a shelf. It is the first novel by Ta-Nehisi



Daffodils planted last year by Andrea Brightenbach are blooming above a granite retaining wall, Wednesday, May 7, as they are framed by the library’s new addition to the left and the original 1896 library to the right.

photo by Paul Fixx

Coates, a writer best known for his non-fiction works, “Between the World and Me” and “We Were Eight Years in Power – an American Tragedy.” For a decade he was a columnist for The Atlantic magazine, writing about a wide variety of topics from culture to politics and race. He is widely respected as an important voice on race in America. I found his initial venture into the world of fiction to be quite remarkable. The story unfolds in the American South during slavery and centers around a young orphan slave, Hiram Walker, who possesses a magical gift: the ability to transport people from place to place. The novel recounts the death

of his mother, his blending into the family of other slaves on the plantation, and his slowly uncovering the power of his gift and the memories of his mother. It is beautifully written. Coates’ descriptive writing is rich. In scene upon scene he vividly describes landscapes and creates characters so as to immerse the reader in that time and place. I am cautious in embracing a blend of the real and the spiritual, but Coates is not heavy-handed with the magic, and so, although not fully believable, it rests comfortably within the scope of his story. As a reader, I was readily transported into that world. In his own way, Coates shares Hiram’s gift.



At the Jeudevine Library in Hardwick, Wednesday, May 7, Elfi Goldenrose (left) visits with Youth Librarian Rachel Funk after the floors in the original library were refinished to reveal her original late nineteenth century beauty: lustrous, rich red and golden brown oak flooring. Staff has begun to prepare for a move to the new addition.

photo by Paul Fixx



An exterior light came on above the new entrance to Hardwick’s Jeudevine Library for the first time last week, as the library addition nears completion, with a hoped for soft opening Memorial Day weekend, according to Librarian Diane Grenkow.

photo by Paul Fixx

ANOTHER OPINION

What are Your Dreams for the Future?

by Liam Crannell

EAST ALBANY – At 18 years old I moved to the Northeast Kingdom and I fell in love. I fell in love with the mountains, the farms, and the lakes. But mostly, I fell in love with the people. In the Northeast Kingdom, people show up for one another. We share backyard garden abundance with one another. We pull a stranger's car out of a snowbank because it's the right thing to do.

I found others like me, and we got to work earning our place in this community. We work on farms, in restaurants, and in schools. We feed your families. We care for your children and your grandchildren.

After work, we sit by the lake and talk about our dreams. We dream of buying homes, starting farms, and raising children in the Northeast Kingdom. I'm 26 now, and every time I return to the lake it seems as if there's one less young person present to talk about their dreams.

"This tent's been alright for the past six months, but it's getting

cold and I can't find a place. I'm moving out of state".

"Does anybody know any rentals near Greensboro? Erich is raising our rent another \$1,100 per month, there's no way we can afford that".

In 2020 I searched desperately for housing in the NEK during the height of Covid-19. There was nothing on Craigslist or Facebook. I'm not proud to admit this, but I went on Airbnb and I begged. I messaged nearly 100 hosts, "Have you ever considered renting this unit long term?" One person responded, "Of course! You are welcome to book a long term-stay through Airbnb". It would have been \$3,000 per month, and I made \$18 an hour.

On 2024 Town Meeting Day in Albany I volunteered to administer a public opinion survey on behalf of a local nonprofit. I talked to Betsy, a retired local. "Question number one: what do you think are the housing needs in Albany?"

Betsy said, "I don't support government subsidized housing. I think we offer too much help and

that everyone should just take care of themselves".

"Okay Betsy, question number 2: What do you think is a reasonable cost for a family in Albany to spend per month on housing?"

Betsy said, "\$500".

I went home and I laughed in my studio apartment that cost nearly twice as much as \$500, and wondered if I've fallen in love with a Northeast Kingdom that doesn't love me back.

Recently, Greensboro residents voted to block the development of affordable housing units in the town hall. The newspaper headline felt like a punch in the gut. I still dream of a future in the Northeast Kingdom, but I fear for our beloved towns such as Greensboro.

I picture an abandoned school house, shutters closed because there are no kids in the neighborhood. I picture half the houses empty for half of the year, no neighbors to pull your car out of the snow bank. I picture canceled dinner plans and a sign on the door of your favorite restaurant that

says "Sorry, closed due to staffing".

Greensboro residents who opposed this project have adopted the slogan "Save Town Hall". However, without a community of people, a town hall is merely an empty building. Some residents expressed concern that the project was "too big" for Greensboro, despite the design being based on a thorough Housing Needs Assessment. Others raised concerns about septic, despite project developers having designed and pre-approved a septic management plan. At the core of this movement is thinly-veiled classism, and the misguided (perhaps subconscious) desire to keep Greensboro wealthy, white, and elderly.

I am writing on behalf of the next generation of Vermonters, and our dream of a future in the Northeast Kingdom, to say that we bring life into Greensboro. I will continue to fight for my dreams and my future, but to the residents of Greensboro, this battle is on you. What are your dreams for the future of Greensboro?

Liam Crannell is a resident of East Albany

Health Care Administrator, Fire Thyself

by Mellie MacEachern

I've worked in health care policy for 10 years, with a specific emphasis on reproductive health care access. In this time, it has become public knowledge that the United States leads the developed world in maternal mortality, and maternal morbidity has gone woefully understudied.

Rather than addressing this issue, it has only become worse. A new report published in the Journal of the American Medical Association demonstrates that between 2018 and 2022, rates of maternal mortality rose by more than 25%.

The brunt of these increases is borne by racially marginalized women in Black and Indigenous communities. But another major factor in these high rates of maternal mortality is geographic. Rural distance from health care services is highly correlated with poorer outcomes in maternal health care, lower uptake of preventative services and higher risk for postpartum complications.

Except in Vermont. This state, despite its limited resources and difficulty attracting providers, is one of the best places in the country not only to give birth but also to be a woman with any sort of health concern.

The Commonwealth Fund 2024 State Scorecard for Women's Health and Reproductive Care not only locates Vermont as one of the states with the lowest rates of maternal death, but also ranks it second overall for performance on women's health care.

Copley Hospital's birthing center is crucial for this ranking, this bucking of a horrifying national trend by a little rural state. Late last year, dozens of midwives, doctors and administrators signed an open letter to the community raising awareness that the hospital's leadership has proposed shuttering the birthing center to cut costs.

I've also been made aware of Copley's supposed financial difficulty. In the wake of Covid-19, hospitals across the country have slashed budgets by locating

excesses in the actual delivery of care. It's interesting that these excesses are never rooted out of the administrative side of hospital operations.

Even the Act 167 report by consulting firm Oliver Wyman, which Copley's consultants are using as guidance for hospital policy, notes that administrative costs at the University of Vermont Medical Center were remarkably high, contributing to burdensome costs for patients and payors.

In a Front Porch Forum post last week, the Copley board of trustees explained that while UVM charges \$17,000 for births, Copley only charges \$7,000. They fail to explain how this could be relevant when the report they cite is explicit about the unfairness of UVM's costs and the reason they're so high.

National estimates suggest that over half of all hospital employees are administrators, not those who deliver care. This fact has always interested me, so when I was visiting the birthing clinic at Copley Hospital prior to the

birth of my daughter last summer, I asked the nurse how many administrative superiors her nursing unit had. She named six or seven positions in the 25-bed facility that oversaw nurses alone, and those nursing managers did not practice.

Managers tend to cost facilities quite a bit more than actual nurse providers. It may be worth investigating these excesses before condemning an untold number of rural women to assured medical complications or even death in the name of an under-scrutinized bottom line.

Administrators should consider cutting themselves before turning on these crucial resources.

Mellie MacEachern lives in Craftsbury. She moved to Vermont in 2021 with her husband to begin a family. She is a freelance health care policy reporter for industry publications in the Southwestern U.S., and formerly worked in health education and advocacy for Planned Parenthood Arizona. Last summer, she gave birth at Copley Hospital's birthing center.



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VOICES OF SPIRIT

Go Out and Get in the Way

by Reverend Ed Sunday-Winters

GREENSBORO - U.S. Congressman and civil rights leader John Lewis said, "With God we will find a way when there is no way." He advocated that we "find a way to get in the way. When you see something that is not fair, not right, or not just, you must have the courage to stand up, to speak up and find a way to get in the way." Lewis said Rosa Parks was a good example of doing just that.

Words are not always needed to find a way or to get in the way. Sometimes silence or prayer can open your heart and connect you to where God is leading you. Prayer helps, but mostly when taken into action. Because God wants all creation to know grace,

mercy and justice, you may find God is out getting in the way and leading you to places where people are hurting. By getting close to those hurting places and giving what is needed to alleviate suffering, you find God cheering you on.

While I am troubled by leaders and policies that want to make it okay to be mean, to be cruel and to deprive others of their basic human rights, I am also heartened by the people working together to tend to those who are bearing the brunt of cruelty and deprivation.

When we meet and talk with migrant workers, we learn together how to respond to crises of justice. When we source healthy food and share it with families, pantries and at gatherings, we fulfill God's desire for all to be

safe and fed. When we make a visit to those who are lonely or left out, we connect in our common humanity.

When we march together to resist injustice, we carry on what Christ did in his work. His mercy, generosity and loving kindness did not stop him from getting in the way at times. Consider how he went to Jerusalem to take action where the Roman Empire was suppressing God's people.

We can do simple things that are generative and nourishing for the future; such as feeding the soil. What is generative in response to people's concerns? Encouragement,

showing interest, being as generous as possible to those in need. Whether you trust that with God we will make a way when there is no way, or follow your heart and use your hands in places where people are hurting, you are part of making the way forward.

Reverend Ed Sunday-Winters is the pastor of the Greensboro United Church of Christ.



Erna (Grimes) and Gerald Bartlett celebrated their 70th Anniversary, May 10, with family and friends at the Wolcott Town Hall. The couple met in 1954 at a dance in Eden and married soon after on May 10, 1955 in Morrisville. They started the Bartlett Family farm in the late 1960s and ran it until the late 1990s. They raised a family of three children, Doreen, Donna and Darald, and now have eight grandchildren, seven great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren. The Bartletts have lived in their current residence in Greensboro Bend since 1959.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Haiku for Turmeric Lattes

Your sweet golden warmth
Earthy essence offers peace
May we all be free

Sarah Eve
Woodbury

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

write a tight, terse verse
philosophically rich
haiku you do it??

Norma Wiesen
Hardwick

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

Gold Blossoms

Gold blossoms alight
crowns frosted with luster
Her heart is in lust
with hope he would trust
her

He fidgets with kisses
and listens to wishes
True love can grow
when targets have misses
Imperfections bring gifts
well stocked
with instruction

Perfection is glimpsed
soon after destruction
So much is said
when choosing to hear
Gold blossoms will wilt
no longer I fear

Jacob Bakowski
St. Johnsbury
Perry Heller
Hardwick

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



HARDWICK

Springfest



Fri-Sat May 23-24



Two days of music, food, fun & flowers and a commemoration of service and sacrifice

<p>Fri 3-10p Atkins Field</p> <p>Free Concert & Dance Party</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Beg, Steal or Borrow</h2> <p>Farmers Mkt • Food Trucks</p>	<p>Sat 8a-5p Downtown</p> <p>Fun Run</p> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Parade</h2> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Street Fair</h2> <p>Memorial Baseball Game</p>
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Street Fair - Cubmobile Races • Shopping Cart Races • Human Truck Pull
Pet Show • Bounce House • Kid Games • Lawn Games • Face Painting •
Basketball • Cornhole • Ping Pong • Volleyball • Street Hockey • Music -
The Sara Whitehair Band • Lake Party • Bleeding Hearts Family Band

More info at hardwickdowntown.org












OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Spring Brings Broderick's Saxon-Merino Lambs



Twin lambs huddle beside their mother, Athena.
photo by Raymonda Parchment



Housed in a metal tub in the kitchen, lambs Victory (left) and Curio (right) poke their head over the edge in the hopes of a snack, while their companion Lucky looks on.
photo by Raymonda Parchment



Named for her persistent curiosity, Curio proves herself worthy of the name in her attempt to leap out of the tub to inspect her surroundings.
photo by Raymonda Parchment

by Raymonda Parchment

EAST HARDWICK – Spring has sprung, with several new faces arriving to the Green Mountain Merino farmstead. Located in East Hardwick, Kevin and Karen Broderick have been cultivating a symbiotic relationship among the sheep and hops for some time. This year introduces a new line of Saxon-Merino ram genetics, acquired from Tasmania. The first Saxon-Merino babies arrived last week.

The Easter season was action packed for the Broderick's, with many new faces joining the flock around Holy Week. The first ram lamb arrived on Good Friday, April 18. Hera lambled twin ewes the following day. Persephone lambled a single ram on Easter Sunday. Ewe 0015 lambled twin ewes on April 21, with Demeter's single ram arriving the next day. Athena also lambled a single ram. Ten lambs total have thus far joined the flock, which now amounts to 28 sheep.

Kristin Gallagher of Aurora Spinnery was present, to help skirt wool using Broderick's new skirting table. "I think it's called skirting because you take the edge away," she explained. The harvested wool is laid out in one piece, spread on the skirting table to inspect the wool. Generally speaking, there are two stripes on the side that are the best wool, Gallagher said. "Often behind the neck and along the back is where vegetable matter is, so that's what we're going to look for. A lot of farms have a hard time with grazing animals, so there could be burdock in the fleece." Gallagher also checks for length, ideally three inches, and tests the strength of the fibers. Color variations in the wool can signify a stress or change in minerals in the diet. "Often having a baby is a stress, there could be a break in the wool. Anywhere that's not on the very tips, that can be a problem for processing because it will break." Breakage in the wool can result in pilling, which is less than desirable in finished products.

The flock is shorn once a year, preventing a myriad of potential health complications

such as urinary tract infections and mobility issues. Timing is key. The Brodericks book Mary Lake of Can-Do Shearing, located in Tunbridge, a year in advance. The ewes must be shorn prior to the lambkin's arrival, again for both comfort, hygiene, and quality control.

"They have to get shorn, because they've been bred to grow the wool at the rate that they do," Broderick added.

"You want to shear them before they lamb, it prevents the fleece from getting dirtier, and it's more comfortable for the lambs too because they can find the udder. We don't want to do it too early because they're cold," said Karen.

The Brodericks highlighted Hera, a ewe with a colorful character and some notable quirks. This year is Hera's last year lambing. "She's difficult," he said with a laugh. "She might go, because she's so difficult." Reviewing her highlights, Hera has proved herself an escape artist, refuses to nurse her young, and will not follow Broderick himself but will follow the other sheep. "If she gets loose, it takes us a day to find her, get her and get her back."

Summing up her character, "If anybody was going to be a serial killer in our flock, it would be this one," said Broderick. But in spite of her quirks, she reportedly always has really healthy twins. "Their wool is so good, they never have any problems. Other than that she won't take care of them."

Athena, however, is more of a pet. "I would definitely sell Hera," he said with a laugh, "I wouldn't ever sell Athena. She is like a dog, if you go over and put your hand in she'll let you sort of scratch her."

This year, Hera's twins are housed in the Broderick's kitchen alongside a ram from a first-time mother. "Hera, always rejects. She's really good, she makes really good healthy lambs with wool that's really good, which is why I've kept her. She will not let them nurse, she cleans them up, and once that's finished, she's done. She's like, "okay, your job," and she acts like she doesn't even know who they are."

Inside the Broderick's home, in the middle

of the kitchen, rests a large metal tub. The tub belonged to Karen's parents, from when they first got married and started their own farmstead.

The tub serves a temporary home to three lambs, Lucky, Victory, and Curio. Karen explained the story behind the unique monikers and more. "Our first born was this guy, we call him the lucky one. Lucky, because the mom was actually rejecting him, and was kicking him." Atop Lucky's head was a small bruise, evidence of his rough introduction. "Kevin scooped him up, and had to warm him up before he could start feeding him." Otherwise, the temperature difference can send lambkins into shock.

The lambs are bottle fed every four hours. Victory is named for Karen's mother, a nod to her middle name. Curio was named for her persistent curiosity, made evident by her attempts to leap out of the tub numerous times. The trio will be moving into a pen in the barn shortly, as they'll be large enough to leap out of the tub soon. The Brodericks are in the process of completing their new home, along with other additions to the barn.



Java, son of Hestia, pokes his head up by the stall. Java has a mocha color gene, hence the name.
photo by Raymonda Parchment

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The House of Life: a Quiet Revolution



The interior of the Green Mountain Monastery features stained glass depictions of the story of creation, including an eye to the future looking out into the forest. In early May Sister Gail Worcelo said she sees faith not as a retreat from the world, but a deeper engagement with it.

photo by Kristiana Prasetyo

by **Brigitte Offord**

GREENSBORO – Sister Gail Worcelo strolls through the tranquil grounds of Green Mountain Monastery in Greensboro, pointing out walking trails, gardens and their prayer yurt.

When she's not traveling the world visiting her fellow sisters, she splits her time between prayer and working in these gardens. Those two things are deeply connected, she says.

For her, the monastery is more than a religious space; it's a working vision of faith-based environmentalism in action.

"The whole thing is the integration of faith and ecology," she said. "They're very intertwined. It's our responsibility to take care of the planet, which is God's creation."

The Green Mountain Monastery is an "ecozoic" monastery, a term coined by the late Thomas Berry, a cultural historian and Catholic priest. Sister Gail, Sister Bernadette Bostwick and Father Thomas Berry co-founded the monastery in 1999.

Ecozoicism emphasizes living sustainably and thinking of the earth as a community that needs protecting.

"Ecozoic," Sister Gail explained, "stems from the Greek eco, house, and zoic, life: a 'house of life' for the

Earth, rather than its domination."

"We are at a crossroads," she said. "We can build a house of life, or a technozoic era that destroys it."

The monastery has been a lifelong mission for Sister Gail, who always felt a calling to become a nun.

"I was just seven years old on a school ferry trip when I saw a group of sisters walk in and suddenly, I knew. I just knew I was meant to be one of them," she said.

She was living as a Passionist nun at St. Gabriel's Monastery in Clark's Summit, Pa., when she met Thomas Berry. He was a priest and one of the scholars teaching classes. Sister Gail was inspired by his dedication to environmentalism.

Berry wrote in one of his books, "A truly human intimacy with the earth and with the entire natural world is needed. Our children should be properly introduced to the world in which they live."

In 1983, he gave a speech calling for a religious order devoted not only to humanity but to the Earth itself. Sister Gail was so moved she asked to study with Berry.

In 1994, she helped found the Sisters of the Earth Community, dedicated to the healing and protection of the environment.

"There was never a group founded to meet the needs of the planet to care, tend to the earth, the waters, the air and to speak on behalf of the



Sister Gail Worcelo stands at the entrance to the Green Mountain Monastery in Greensboro earlier this month.

photo by Brigitte Offord

earth community," she said.

In 1999, the Sisters of the Earth Community founded the Green Mountain Monastery. She said Vermont was the perfect place for it. "We really wanted to come to a state that we felt was open to care for Earth. There was a huge northeast organic farming association, people dedicated to the land."

Today, the Sisters of the Earth Community has a network of "co-sisters" and mission partners worldwide, with sisters in Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia and Canada.

Many are involved in biodynamic farming, food security initiatives and "Earth law"; a movement that promotes legal rights for nature itself.

In March, Sister Gail helped stage a theatrical production at the Greensboro United Church of Christ, "The Animal Lawsuit Against Humanity," based on a 10th-century tale where animals sue humans for exploitation.

The verdict? A call for mutual respect.

"Thomas Berry believed we needed a legal system that recognized the rights of rivers and forests," she said. "We're finally beginning to listen."

Care for the planet is inseparable from spiritual practice, Sister Gail said. With its numerous gardens, a straw-bale hermitage for

silent retreats and a walking meditation labyrinth, Green Mountain Monastery embodies that belief.

Stained glass depictions of the story of creation line the walls of the monastery. It ends with an eye to the future looking out into the forest.

Sister Gail sees faith not as a retreat from the world, but a deeper engagement with it. Her community hosts retreats for those seeking stillness, artists looking for inspiration and anyone needing a break from a noisy, tech-driven world.

"Sometimes people just need a place to be quiet. To be heard. To connect with the land," she said.

Throughout the year, Sister Gail leads meditative nature walks to help people get in touch with themselves and the planet. The Monastery also runs retreats year round, and they have plans to make them more accessible to local residents.

In a world of rising political tensions, climate anxiety and spiritual searching, the community's vision offers a counter-current, one centered on simplicity, soil and sacredness.

"It's about remembering this planet is our lifeboat," she said, "We can't let it sink."

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

YANKEE NOTEBOOK

Many of the Travel Problems Solved

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – My oldest child, Virginia, turned 65 this past week. This sort of thing usually evokes, on social media, the comment, “Goodness! Where did the time go?” I shall avoid that; I know perfectly well where the time has gone since that sunny spring day in Keene Valley, N.Y., with robins hopping on the green lawn between the dying snowbanks. It’s been a long, adventurous, sometimes slogging career from there to here (you may read “career” in any sense of the word you like).

She went to college in the State of Washington, and except for occasional visits, has never come back East. But thanks to email, we’ve kept in touch, so I’ve been able to follow her course for many decades.

In recent years she’s taken up long-distance hiking and cycling. I believe she’s walked the Camino de Santiago across Spain twice, and once across France. This year in mid-July she’ll tackle Spain again, probably, she says, for the last time. We talked for a while about the logistics of the thing. I was amazed to hear she gets along on the trail with an 11-pound load, including the clothes she’s wearing. I wished when she told me that, that we’d been talking on Facetime, so I could properly register my astonishment and respect. I travel light myself, but that kind of discipline is in a league different from mine.

Which reminds me: I’m packing for a trip myself. Virginia and I spoke briefly about that. Ten days in Austria; I’ll be back home about the time you read this. But the big push this week is to get three columns written in advance to cover my absence from the computer. I have two done so far. “What’s the third one about?” she asked. I admitted that I had hardly the foggiest; she suggested I write about how much easier and more pleasant travel and border crossings are in Europe compared to here.

She’s right. Even though the Americas are at the moment not exactly the Miss Congeniality of the global beauty pageant, we tend to get waved through border crossings without even as much scrutiny as we get at American security screenings. To be fair: Recently, when my pal Bea and I traveled to Quebec, we

expected some grumpiness and suspicion at the border, thanks to the Donald’s threat of punitive tariffs. But both going and coming, we encountered guards who I swear were rehearsing for solo auditions at The Second City. Real comedians. One extra agent on the way back even gratuitously translated the Greek of my license plate. Nice.

Europeans, perhaps because of their extra centuries of living conjointly, seem to have many of the problems of travel solved. France features more friendly secondary highways and roundabouts at junctions. The roundabouts take some getting used to, there are so many, but they do make life easier and safer. They’re really well marked for directions; and if you miss your exit, you just go ‘round again. You learn the meaning of Prochaine Sortie and Nächste Ausfahrt and get over laughing about it.

Bicyclists travel often in pelotons. In the United States they’re the object of wrath, especially of pickup trucks; in Europe, where any peloton may contain the next winner of the Tour de France, traffic slows behind them, and when there’s room to pass, the cars flash their left turning lights and give them a full lane as they pass. Not a single flying Budweiser can to be seen.

You can see a touch of Europe when you cross the border on the way to Montreal. The street lights, high up and bright as kliegs, are sleek and aluminum. The highway is about as safe as in daylight.

My wife and I drove across the famous Millau Viaduct (Google it) one day, at least recently one of the highest in the world. She couldn’t look out the window. Luckily, I could. Cable-stayed, like the Zakim Bridge in Boston or the Penobscot Narrows Bridge in Searsport, it’s a spectacular way to bear a four-lane highway across a gorge.

Of course there are occasions for the flashing autostrada signs, Trafico Intenso, and the locals do rather zip around us old guys who don’t know where we are or how we’re going to get there. But the comfort of having your restaurant table for the whole evening, if you like, is priceless. A tiny cup of espresso after dinner is just lovely. And no matter where you go or what borders you cross, it’s Euros everywhere. Very civilized. We do our best to act the same.

Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



“LET’S WORK OUT A DEAL, GRIM. IT’LL BE BEAUTIFUL!”

MEETING MEMO

Wednesday, May 14
Greensboro Select Board, second Wednesday of month, 6:30 p.m.

Thursday, May 15
Hardwick Select Board, third Thursday of month, 6 p.m.

Tuesday, May 20
Cabot Select Board, third Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.

Craftsbury Select Board, third Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.

Marshfield Select Board, third Tuesday of month, 5:30 p.m.

Hardwick Electric Department Board of Commissioners, third Tuesday of month, 6 p.m. unless otherwise warned.

Plainfield Select Board, third Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, May 21

Wolcott Select Board, third Wednesday of month, 6 p.m.

Monday, May 26
Calais Select Board, fourth Monday of month, 7 p.m.

Town Clerks
Cabot: cabotvt.us
Calais: calaisvermont.gov
Craftsbury: townofcraftsbury.com
Greensboro: greensborovt.gov
Hardwick: hardwickvt.org
Marshfield: town.marshfield.vt.us
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



Gomphrena, an annual, is great in arrangements.



Zinnias are quick to bloom from seed.

There is a Place for Annual Flowers

CORNISH FLAT, N.H. – In recent years there has been a push to reduce lawn and to substitute native trees, shrubs and perennials that support pollinators and birds. I am all for that. Entomologist Doug Tallamy's excellent new book, "How Can I Help: Saving Nature in Your Yard" explains the case well, and will answer all your questions. Nonetheless, there is a place for annual flowers, both native and from other continents.

Unlike most perennials, almost all annual flowers have the advantage of blooming all summer. Keep cutting off the flowers to use in vases (or to remove tired blossoms) and most will continue blossoming until frost. Some take a rest in the heat of summer, but produce again later on. And bees and moths do visit most of them, too.

I recently discussed growing annual flowers with Anne Sprague, long-time co-owner of Edgewater Farm in Plainfield, N.H. They sell nearly 1,000 different kinds of annual flowers each year and also sell bouquets of flowers all summer at their farm stand. Anne told me that they start their annual flowers by seed, starting some as early as January in order to have plenty of big, gorgeous plants for sale when they open up in late April.

Anne said that gardeners who want to plant large numbers of annuals would do well to start them by

seed in the house. I have done that, and enjoy tending my babies from March or April until June, when I plant them outside. Of course, to be successful starting flowers or vegetables indoors requires a plant stand, lights, heating pads and the requisite starting mix and six-packs to grow them in. And the time to visit them every day, providing water as needed.

So for example, it is already too late to start lisanthus, one of my favorites, by seed. It takes 17 days to germinate and then, in my experience, it sulks (like a teenager told to put on different clothes before going out) for another few weeks before putting on any real growth. I've grown it, but don't bother most years. I'd rather save the effort for other plants that grow more quickly, so I just bought two four-packs of lisanthus from Edgewater Farm.

Anne started our discussion by saying that bouquets do well with greenery to fill in between and around flowers. She likes to use fragrant fillers, and recommended cinnamon basil with violet stems, green leaves and a pleasant aroma. According to the catalog of Johnny's Selected Seeds, the plants grow to be 28-30 inches tall with violet stems. They also sell a number of red or purple-leafed varieties.

Anne also recommended a native perennial called Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*) as a fragrant filler. It produces small white blossoms in late summer. She said to pick it in the evening, soak it in deep water overnight, and then use in a vase the next day for best results. I've grown it for years, but never used it as a filler. I make a very pleasant herbal tea with it.

Many annuals have dozens of named varieties of the same species, so Anne shared some of her

favorites. For zinnias she likes the Benary Giant series, the Oklahoma series, the Queeny series and Zowie Yellow Flame. Give them plenty of room, she said and keep cutting them to get more blossoms. Be sure to cut off the first blooms totally to encourage branching.

Anne likes snapdragons, particularly Chantilly and Potomac. They are long lasting in a vase, and come again when cut. For globe-shaped flower heads she likes one called Ammi, especially Green Mist. Dara is similar, with three- to five-inch lacy umbels on strong stems, usually seven to 15 stems per plant. They come in white, dark purple and pink and are similar to Queen Anne's lace

What other annuals does Anne Sprague like? Broom corn, celosias of all kinds, but particularly Sylphid, with greenish blossoms. Blue Horizon, a tall ageratum. Frosted Explosion, an annual decorative grass. Orlaya is like an annual baby's breath. She said beneficial insects love it. Gomphrena and Statice, both have a QIS series that is superlative. They can be used fresh or dried. Gomphrena, also sold as globe

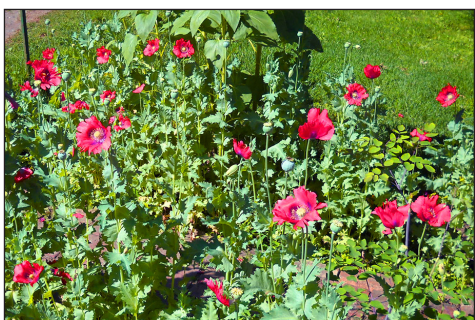
amaranth, comes in several bright colors.

It's possible to plant some annuals by seed in the garden after we are done with frost. Sunflowers are wonderful and easy. I particularly like those with more than one blossom per stem. I leave them up in the fall for snacking by the birds. Zinnias are quick to blossom from seed, so I often plant a short bed of mixed colors of zinnias by seed—they provide a riot of color and are good cut flowers.

Annual poppies are some of my favorite flowers, even though they do not last well in a vase. If you let your annual poppies drop seeds where they grow, they will come back, year after year. Or you can harvest seeds and plant them elsewhere next year.

I can't begin to describe and recommend all the wonderful annuals, so go to your local family-run garden center and talk to someone who can guide you. You'll fall in love with annuals, I guarantee it.

Homeyer's website is Gardening-Guy.com and has many of articles from previous years. He receives e-mail at henry.homeyer@comcast.net or P.O. Box 364, Cornish Flat, NH 03746.



Annual poppies are a good annual flower, but it does not do well in a vase.



Lisianthus comes in several colors and lasts forever in a vase.

THE OUTSIDE STORY

Of Ferns and Other Fantastic Fractals

by Michael J. Caduto

READING – Fractals are sometimes referred to as a “visual representation of math.” They can be observed in the spatial arrangements found in many familiar forms, patterns, and shapes in nature: from the branching of trees, ferns, river systems, and lightning, to the patterns found in leaves, seedheads, crystals, seashells, snowflakes, clouds, hurricanes, and geologic terrain. The intricate branching patterns of blood vessels and respiratory structures are some intimate expressions of fractals in animals.

As a fractal grows, the pattern replicates itself on a larger scale. The mathematical foundation for our understanding of fractal geometry was laid by the German mathematician, Felix Hausdorff, during his groundbreaking work modeling the mathematics behind geometrical shapes and patterns. In 1918, Hausdorff introduced the Hausdorff (fractional) dimension, a model that shows how to calculate the dimensions of spatial patterns that replicate, or repeat, at different scales.

The word fractal was first used in 1975 by Benoît Mandelbrot, a French-American mathematician, who described intricate shapes and patterns that repeat even when an object is viewed at different levels of scale. Mandelbrot defined a fractal as, “a rough or fragmented geometric shape that can be subdivided in parts, each of which is (at least approximately) a reduced-size copy of the whole.” No matter whether you are looking at a fractal zoomed in or from a distance, each view

resembles the same pattern.

Ferns are among the best and most accessible examples of fractals. The leaves of each fern, which are called fronds, form the self-same pattern when viewed at any distance or scale. In fact, one of the most well-known formulas in fractal geometry is the Barnsley fern. In his 1988 book, “Fractals Everywhere,” Michael Barnsley, a British mathematician, describes how he created this fractal to simulate the frond of black spleenwort (*Asplenium adiantum-nigrum*), a common European fern.

The fiddlehead pattern of a sprouting fern is a perfect example of a fractal. The familiar fiddlehead is a classic shape which, along with the similarly spiral-shaped nautilus, has inspired countless works of art and sculpture, from the carved spirals at the tops of violins and other stringed instruments, to the ingenious spiral staircases in the designs of the iconic Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi, and even to the spiral path at the start of the yellow brick road in “The Wizard of Oz.”

The spiral-shaped fiddlehead of a sprouting fern is formed by the petiole, or leaf stalk, as it unfurls into a frond. As the leaf stalk grows, each pinna, or leaflet, at first appears as its own minute fiddlehead. The next time you look at a lacey fern frond, try focusing in gradually closer and you will see how the overall pattern created by the entire frond is repeated in each of the gradually smaller elements that branch off of it.

Of course, not all ferns are intricate laceworks. Walking fern (*Asplenium rhizophyllum*), which



Ferns

is rare in most of the Northeast, has undivided fronds. Other fern fronds, including those of sensitive fern (*Onoclea sensibilis*), are simple divisions off of the main stem. Fronds of the ethereal maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) has individual pinnae branching off of each striking black stem. The fronds on some ferns, such as long beech fern (*Phegopteris connectilis*) are divided two times, while the most delicate ferns, including evergreen wood fern (*Dryopteris intermedia*), are divided three times.

Two of my favorite examples of how nature weaves the threads of geometry into beautiful green tapestries, are the lacey arching fronds of northern maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), which grows in moist, shady woodlands,

and the tall, lush bushy masses of royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) that commonly grows in and along wetlands. Both are found throughout New England.

The variety of shapes among ferns reveals that there are many examples of fractals found in the natural world. These are visually striking expressions of the hidden geometry that lends order to the fascinating forms that we see. As the ferns begin unfurling this season, take a moment to contemplate their patterns and reflect on fractals.

Michael J. Caduto is a writer, ecologist, and storyteller who lives in Reading. He is author of “Through a Naturalist’s Eyes: Exploring the Nature of New England.” Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol.

Home Fries by Kay Spaulding



A forsythia bush heralds spring in the parking lot at Greensboro’s Highland Center for the Arts, Friday, May 9.

photo by Paul Fixx

OUR COMMUNITIES

Bird Walk, May 17

HARDWICK – There will be a bird walk on Saturday, May 17, at 7 a.m., with Scarlett Podolin and Eleanor Hammond on the Hardwick Trails. Meet at the trail kiosk behind Hazen Union parking lot. For information, call Norma Wiesen, (802) 472-6517.

Bird Walk, May 17

MARSHFIELD–On Saturday, May 17, 7:30 to 11 a.m. (rain date Sunday, May 18, 7:30 to 11 a.m.), there will be a Spring bird walk at the Stranahan Town Forest. Bob Popp and Betsy Ziegler will identify some of the many species of birds who are returning to Vermont woods after a long spring migrations. They will show how to identify species by both sight and sound, and also discuss bird behavior and ecology. Meet at the Stranahan Town Forest parking lot at the beginning of Thompson Road right off of Hollister Hill Road. The event is co-sponsored by the Marshfield Conservation Commission and the Jaquith Public Library. For more information, email jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or call (802) 426-3581.

Plant Swap, Garden Project, May 18

MORRISVILLE– Lamoille County 4-H and the Lamoille Regional Solid Waste Management District are teaming up to host a Spring Plant Swap and planting project on May 18 from 10 a.m. to noon. During the event, 4-H'ers will prepare a flowerbed and plant flowers under the building's sign. Other youths are welcome to help. All materials will be provided.

The event will be held rain or shine at 29 Sunset Drive, where both organizations are based. The public is invited to donate plants and take some home. In addition, there will be take-home educational resources, trivia, a raffle and opportunities to learn about upcoming 4-H programming and what each organization does in the community. Lamoille Soil compost also will be available on-site for sale.

Annuals, perennials, bulbs, tubers, houseplants, root cuttings, trees and shrubs will all be accepted. They should be pest- and disease-free and individually labeled with the plant's name or cultivar and care instructions. To request more information, please contact Holly Ferris at holly.ferris@uvm.edu or Erika Schaper at outreach@lrswwd.org.

Community Night, May 21

MARSHFIELD – Twinfield Community Night will be held Wednesday, May 21, beginning at 5:30 p.m., at Twinfield School. Pizza will be served from the pizza oven, with bike rides, community building games and live music at 5:30 p.m. At 6:45 p.m., "Twinfield's Got Talent" will be presented in the school, as well as a display of student art work.

Meditation Workshop, May 24

MARSHFIELD – A free meditation workshop will be held Saturday, May 24, 1:30 p.m., at Jaquith Public Library. Barry Wyman will introduce meditation in a non-religious workshop co-sponsored by the Marshfield Resilience Hub and the Jaquith Public Library. For more information, email jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or call (802) 426-3581.

Cadow Leads Book Discussion, May 29

MARSHFIELD – Author Kenneth Cadow will lead a discussion about his 2024 Vermont Reads book, "Gather," on Thursday, May 29, 6 p.m., at the Twinfield School Library. The event is co-sponsored by the Jaquith Public Library in Marshfield and the Cutler Memorial Library in Plainfield. Free copies of the book *Gather* are available at both libraries. For more information, email jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or call (802) 426-3581.

Vaccine Drop Will Help Prevent Rabies Spread

WATERBURY – The U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services, in coordination with the Vermont Department of Health, will conduct a special spring rabies vaccine bait drop beginning May 5 to help combat rising rabies rates in wildlife.

The early distribution will deliver approximately 350,000 units of oral rabies vaccine bait in areas of Addison, Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans and Washington Counties. Officials say that the increased frequency of bait drops will help slow the spread of the rabies virus among wildlife, but that it takes time for enough animals to become immune.

The spring bait drop, now in its third consecutive year, comes in addition to an annual bait drop that occurs in August. During the bait drops, rabies vaccine – in the form of a sweet-smelling oral bait that is attractive to raccoons and skunks – will be dropped from low-flying airplanes in rural areas, by helicopter in suburban areas, and placed by hand from slow-moving vehicles in residential areas.

Without treatment, rabies is

fatal to both humans and animals. The virus is spread primarily through the bite of an infected animal. In Vermont, rabies is most often detected in raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats and woodchucks. Pets and livestock can also get the disease if they have not been vaccinated for rabies.

Since March of 2022, rabies has expanded into Chittenden, Franklin, and Caledonia Counties, where 95 animals have tested positive for rabies— 58 raccoons, 21 skunks, eight bats, three foxes, three woodchucks, a bobcat, and a rabbit. Prior to this outbreak, no rabid land mammals were detected from these counties since 2017.

The vaccine bait packs are not poisonous and are not harmful to people, pets, or wildlife. If you find a bait pack, please don't touch it unless necessary. Leave the bait undisturbed so it can be eaten by wildlife. If the bait must be moved, use gloves or a plastic bag. If your pet eats a bait pack, or if a child brings one home, let officials know by calling the Vermont Rabies Hotline at 1-800-4-RABIES (800-472-2437) or call the toll-free number printed on the bait.

Service Award Nominations Sought

CABOT – The Cabot School Board and the Cabot Select Board are soliciting nominations for the 2025 Cabot Community Service Award. This award will recognize a Cabot resident whose contributions of time, talent and energy over a number of years have had a significant positive impact on Cabot School and/or the broader Cabot community. Previous recipients of this award have contributed to the community in a number of ways: through planting trees,

coaching, mentoring, organizing and helping with community-wide activities, and serving on various boards and committees. Last year's recipient of the Cabot Community Service Award was Dean Deasy. Letters of nominations may be sent by June 1 to Cabot Select Board, Chris Tormey, chair, Cabot School, 25 Common Road, Cabot, VT 05647, or Mike Hogan, chair, Town Clerk's Office, 3084 Main St., Cabot, VT 05647.

OUR E-MAILS

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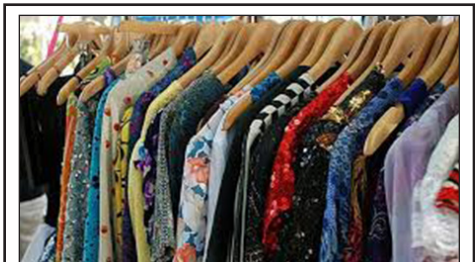
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EDUCATION

Area Students Testify About Education Bill

by Paul Fixx

MONTPELIER – A student from Hazen Union School (HU) and six from Craftsbury Academy testified to a joint meeting of the House Education Committee to which the Senate Committee was also invited, Friday, April 25. The subject was H.454, an education bill that has received attention inside and outside the statehouse this session. The act is designed to transform Vermont's education governance, quality and finance systems

Madeline Crank, a HU middle school student, said she valued being able to choose from a wide range of classes, including band, music and foreign languages, but especially history. She expects history will help her avoid hurting others by accident.

Crank said, "even in a small class with just 14 kids, it can be hard for everyone to stay focused sometimes. If there are 25 or more kids, it would be even harder for the teachers to give everyone attention." A rule about class sizes might hurt small schools like Woodbury, she said.

Not everyone learns the same way, which should be a part of how decisions about schools are made, Crank said. "Some students do better in small schools and, if those schools had to close, it would be really hard on the families and the kids who live there.

CA freshman Ada Allen shared a portrait of life at a small school, saying to legislators, "As you make decisions about our states' schools, I hope you remember voices like mine." She made the point that small schools do not mean small opportunities as she shared that she has had valuable learning opportunities. Her teachers have given her one-on-one time to help her find out what her "passions are and work through stumbling blocks and challenges," she said

Allen participates in a mentorship program, allowing her to connect with younger, elementary school students. She said the connections made in a smaller school are valuable and opportunity rich.

Leanne Harple (D), who represents Craftsbury, Greensboro, Albany and Glover in the Vermont House, serves on the House Education Committee and was there listening to the student's. "It was great to hear directly from students about what they value most in their small rural schools. I

think that a lot of legislators underestimate what smaller schools are capable of achieving and what they add to our communities."

Kosmos Gletsos, in tenth grade at CA said he's currently taking two advanced placement classes. Some of the advanced classes are very small, but allow students to "learn the subjects that are right for them . . . I find myself learning much more in my smaller classes than I do in larger groups of students."

Next year, Gletsos said he'll be attending the Creative Media program at Green Mountain Technology and Career Center, which allows him to take an alternate route to graduate. As a small school, CA does not limit how educated he is able to become, he said.

Raz Mille, a Craftsbury Academy sophomore, said, "I believe the H.454 proposition is unnecessary. If it isn't broken, don't fix it." He said his class of seven "are very successful despite going to a small school," noting that he's the first Vermonter to win the International Science School award.

Mille said he and his classmates are like family. Just a month and a half ago he said they traveled to Boston where they took classes at MIT, emphasizing that it's clear what they are doing is working. He pointed out CA is just three years away from graduating its two-hundredth class and the community does not want to put that history aside.

CA freshman Oryon Hart said the school offers a "tight-knit community and personalized learning, as well as great opportunities within the sports that I love, such as skiing and biking." Fun and educational opportunities outside the classroom have been valuable to his education, he said.

Iris Jacobs, in seventh grade at CA, said the small school, where she knows all her classmates and teachers, makes classes feel comfortable. The teachers know each of their students personally and "have a fun way of teaching that helps us learn a lot."

Educational field trips every week and a lot of hiking help teach us about the environment, said Jacobs. Rock climbing, ice skating and practicing chess have all been part of the curriculum and Craftsbury has been the state chess champion two years in a row. "It's a good thing to learn about more than basic school material," she said. "Craftsbury is a very good



Students from Craftsbury Academy (CA) expressed concern about provisions of H.454, in testimony to a joint House and Senate Education Committee meeting, Friday, April 25, were (from left) back, O'Ryon Hart, Kosmos Gletsos, Raz Mille and House Education Committee member Rep. Leanne Harple; front, Rue Jacobs and Iris Jacobs. Not shown are Hazen Union School student Madeline Crank and CA student Ada Allen, who testified over Zoom.

courtesy photo

school and we should keep it how it is."

Rue Jacobs, a Craftsbury fourth grader said, "I learned a lot in school." She highlighted her experience in the school's woodlot and studying the 1800s and said, "I love my school."

Harple said, "These students spoke confidently and articulately

about the rich and unique opportunities that they have experienced by being Craftsbury students. It was clear to everyone listening that they take pride in their school and they want to see it survive for many years to come. We should all be proud that this is our next up-and-coming generation of Vermonters.

OUR COMMUNITIES

Disasters, Disabilities Forum, June 1

PLAINFIELD – A free public forum and workshops for households having persons with disabilities, chronic illness or debilitating old age who want to be prepared for flood or fire evacuation and sheltering will be held June 1, at the Plainfield Town Hall from 2:30 to 5 p.m. This is also preparation for caregivers and shelter workers. This event includes informed speakers with strong experience for disaster readiness and the aftermath, as well as personalized workshops to review household plans.

Featured speakers include Jacque Kelley, emergency preparedness specialist with the Vermont Department of Health on the topic of "Preparing Your Household for Evacuation and Sheltering;" Kendra LaRoche, executive director of Special Needs Support Center, speaking about "Supporting Persons with

Disabilities in a Public Shelter;" and Gary Gordon, emergency services coordinator for Washington County Mental Health, speaking about "Anxiety, Anger and Hopelessness During a Disaster."

The second half of the event will focus on workshops and problem-solving, in direct conversation about "Go Bags, Documentation and Resources for Fast Departure;" "Household Discussions to Plan Escape Routes and Destinations;" "How to Acknowledge Strong Feelings in Disaster Times;" "Strategies for Shelter Workers to Meet Special Needs and Disabilities;" "Talking Together and Working as a Household Disaster Team;" and "Public Disaster Notifications to Reach Persons with Disabilities."

Plainfield Town Hall is located at 18 High Street (Route 2) in Plainfield

BUSINESS BRIEFS

New Burke Mountain Resort Owners Plan Major Upgrades

by Habib Sabet, VTDigger

BURKE – After nearly a decade in federal receivership, Burke Mountain Resort finally has new owners.

On Friday, Bear Den Partners LLC, a group with longstanding ties to the Northeast Kingdom ski area, officially closed on the \$11.5 million deal to buy the 72-year old resort.

Bear Den Partners includes Burke Mountain Academy, the elite alpine ski racing school located in the area, and the Graham family, who briefly owned the mountain in the early 2000s. Also included in the new ownership group is the Schaefer family, owners of the Berkshire East Mountain Resort in Massachusetts.

The group first announced its bid to acquire Burke Mountain in early April, and a federal judge formally signed off on the deal last week.

At a Tuesday press conference celebrating the sale, representatives from Bear Den Partners outlined their plans to revamp the ski resort, which they have previously said would cost about \$30 million in total.

“I think we have an opportunity to really unleash the potential here with the right capital investment to drive important automation and improvements in snowmaking, especially,” Ken Graham, chair and co-founder of Bear Den Partners, said Tuesday. “We’re prepared. We’re coming in swinging, I’d say.”

As a first order of business, the owners intend to triple the resort’s snowmaking capacity at Burke Mountain Resort by this coming winter with the hopes of considerably lengthening the resort’s ski season, Graham said.

The group also plans to expand the skiable terrain on the

mountain.

Jon Schaefer, who expects to helm the resort’s operations, said in an interview that the group was beginning the permitting process to begin renovations on the mountain “right away” and that minor lift upgrades could expand access as soon as next season.

Eventually, he said, the owners hope to cut entirely new trails on the mountain, adding new runs for skiers of all levels. “In time there will be some more transformative changes,” Schaefer said.

Prior to the sale, Burke Mountain Resort had been languishing under court-ordered receivership since 2016, when the business was seized by the federal government after regulators accused its former owner, Ariel Quiros, of widespread fraud.

At the time, Quiros, a Miami businessman, was funding upgrades to the resort and other projects in the surrounding area with money gained through the EB-5 visa program, which pairs foreign investors with large-scale development projects in the U.S. in exchange for legal residency status, and was accused by regulators of orchestrating “a Ponzi-like scheme.”

Regulators accused Quiros and others of misappropriating \$200 million of the more than \$350 million they raised from foreign investors. In April 2022, Quiros was sentenced to five years in prison for his role in the scheme, while two others: Bill Stenger, former president of Jay Peak Resort, which Quiros also owned, and William Kelly, a longtime friend and adviser to Quiros, received 18 month sentences.

As the court ordered receiver of both Jay Peak and Burke Mountain, Michael Goldberg, a Florida-based lawyer, continued



Representatives from Bear Den Partners discuss their plans to revamp Burke Mountain Resort at a press conference on Tuesday, May 6.

photo by Habib Sabet, VTDigger

to operate both resorts before selling the former to Pacific Group Resorts in 2022 for \$76 million.

But Goldberg struggled to offload Burke Mountain Resort, announcing on multiple occasions that he was on the cusp of reaching deals that subsequently fell through.

Meanwhile, Goldberg has said in court filings, the ski area

was operating at a large deficit on a year to year basis while incurring expenses from deferred maintenance.

“The receiver himself and the staff under receivership did the best they could, but there was this huge amount of uncertainty,” said Willy Booker, headmaster of the Burke Mountain academy. “It’s a huge moment to have that chapter closed.”

OBITUARIES

BEN THURBER

CRAFTSBURY COMMON – A celebration of Ben Thurber’s legacy will be held Saturday, May 24, 1 p.m., at the Church on the Common. A reception will follow the service. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to United Church of Craftsbury (Deacons’ Crisis Fund), P.O. Box 46, Craftsbury Common, VT 05827.



Ben Thurber

JEANNETTE BROCHU

HARDWICK – The family of Jeannette Brochu, who passed away on April 4, invites friends and loved ones to her interment service to be held at Fairview Cemetery in Hardwick on Friday, May 30, at 2 p.m. Memorial

donations in Jeannette’s name may be made to the Craftsbury Community Care Center, Craftsbury, VT or St. Norbert’s Church, Hardwick, VT.

Jeannette’s full obituary may be viewed at dgfunerals.com.

HELEN DIMICK

EAST HARDWICK – The family of Helen Dimick, who passed away on October 19, 2024, and Ernest “Pete” Dimick, who passed away on December 19, 2013, invites friends and loved ones to the

interment service to be held at Sanborn Cemetery in East Hardwick on Saturday, May 31, at 10 a.m.

Helen and Pete’s full obituaries may be viewed at dgfunerals.com.

GREENSBORO LAND TRUST Stakeholder Notification/Public Notice Application for Certification

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. The Greensboro Land Trust (GLT) gained its initial accreditation in 2009, which was renewed in 2014 and again in 2020. GLT is applying for its third renewal. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant’s policies and programs. The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how GLT complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrust-accreditation.org. Comments may also be mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 38 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866.

Comments on GLT’s application will be most useful by July 19, 2025.

Robinson's Art Amazingly Rich in Imagination

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

GREENSBORO – An extraordinary exhibition of the works of Montpelier artist Delia Bell Robinson is ongoing at the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro, entitled “The Major Arcana, The Tarot Project,” consisting over 75 paintings and some 113 colored clay whistles. Also called “A Tarot Journey,” it consists of Robinson’s revisioning of 22 of the 78 tarot cards, known as the Greater Mysteries, in both paintings and small sculptures. In addition, there are paintings of the tarot as an autobiographical framework of her own life, plus other paintings related to the tarot theme.

Tarot cards originated for use in divination and fortune telling, the earliest record being in Italy in 1377. The development of woodcut printing in the early 15th century popularized the tarot deck and cards used in games and gambling. The oldest surviving complete

tarot set is from 1491 and is named the “Sola Busca.” The most popular modern version of the tarot was designed by Pamela Colman Smith in 1909 and it referred to as the Rider-Waite-Smith edition.

Interpretation of the cards connects to the fundamental archetypes of human life and through intuition to explore a deeper sub-conscious levels of human minds. The visual symbols on the tarot cards are complex and often combine opposites in perplexing ways.

In this series, Robinson has a format of 12-inch by 12-inch paintings of acrylic on canvas. She gives a unity to the 22 works by making them like wheeled floats in a parade, a visual metaphor for a journey through life.

Her imagination is amazingly rich and original in creating a more contemporary vision of the traditional tarot figures, often with delightful humor. Her compositions are dynamic and the colors harmonious, and her works have what might be described as a highly sophisticated naivete. Like all significant works of arts, her paintings take us into another world.

The Major Arcana starts (or ends) with The Fool, who has contradictory characteristics of recklessness but also adventurous daring, here depicted somewhat precariously on an aerial lift from a truck.

The Magician is first in the order of cards, “making the impossible feel tangible,” juggling improbable objects in front of a Gypsy wagon. The High Priestess evokes “the unseen realm of veiled knowledge, secrets, insight, intuition and dreams.” She directs a herd of elephants into a “sanctuary...for those in cosmic harmony to step into the boundless all.” The Empress represents “abundance and pure emotion transforming and ripening into something new,” shown seated in a float of a sheltering golden bird. The Emperor can be good or evil, in this case amusingly presented as running after his wheeled platform and empty throne. The Hierophant is another figure having contradictory possibilities, harmonizing “the sacred with the everyday,” or being repressive.

The Lovers feature Adam and Eve and the serpent with the proverbial Tree of Knowledge, but with angels flying off with baskets of apples to make applesauce. As an archetype the pair represents “balance and a deep understanding of love in all its forms, celebrating the harmony of opposites. The Chariot symbolizes unstoppable action, willpower, forward momentum and progress. The vehicle here is pulled incongruously by a tiger and/or dog, racing dangerously through an intersection with threatening cars.

Strength is very simple but with an intriguing image: a young Afro-American girl reading a book while sitting calmly on the back of a lion, suggesting “the quiet power of patience, healing and even psychic abilities.” The Hermit embodies contemplation, sharing our knowledge, experience and “the wisdom found in introspection.” The Wheel of Fortune is whimsically shown as the “yin-yang of fate, a rotating force of inevitable change, evolution and cycles.” Justice has a large set of scales, urging us to “seek a path of integrity and truth,” with the nice touch of the Vermont State House in the background. The Hanged Man is a complicated figure, here bungee jumping but dangling upside down, signaling “that

its time to wake up and reconsider everything.” Death is number 13 in the tarot pack, presented as pairs of skeletons dancing on top of two emergency vehicles coming to a hospital, “a reminder of life’s impermanence.”

Temperance means “balance and harmony avoiding extremes . . . reconciling dualities.”

The Devil is about “bondage, imbalance and temptation,” with a rather medieval red demon seated on his throne overlooking some miserable people. The Tower signals “sudden upheaval, chaos and the collapse of what seemed unshakable.” Here the twin towers of the World Trade Center burn hideously. The Star brings to mind “soothing renewal . . . peace and restoration,” all connected to the cycles of life.

The Moon is mesmerizing, evoking the emergence of subconscious thoughts with curious awareness,” which have both positive and negative possibilities. The Sun “is associated with good outcomes, happiness, health, success, enthusiasm and attainment.” An innocent child rides a white horse in a field of sunflowers. Judgment represents “a chance for reflection, repentance and transformation,” with a huge hovering angel blowing a trumpet. The World, the last in the Major Arcana, has a nude woman superimposed on the globe of the world, which is supported by an elephant, celebrating “the culmination of life’s journey and the fulfillment found within the eternal and infinite cycle of renewal.”

The second part of this exhibition, the more personal visualization of the 21 Tarot cards of her own journey from childhood to maturity, is equally fascinating and beautiful, but space limits a review of it, as of the many small paintings and numerous whistles, though with the exception, two paintings: The Emperor Misses His Parade Float and The Tower: Into the Garbage Bin, both of which show Trump in a highly unflattering but hilarious way.

Buy the fine catalogue, “A Tarot Journey.” It’s well worth it.

This exhibition runs to May 18. For more information, check with the Highland Center for the Arts at (802) 533-2000 or online at highlandartsvt.org. Delia Robinson can be reached at (802) 505-1193 or online at delia-robinson.com



Roma-inspired music will be performed Sunday, May 18, 7 p.m. at the Adamant Community Club. *courtesy photo*

Special Brand of Gitano Music, May 18

ADAMANT – Kraatz Carromato, a Burlington-based quartet, will bring their special brand of Gitano music to the Adamant Community Club on Sunday, May 18, at 7 p.m.

Says the group’s fiddler, Kevin Fink: “The music of Kraatz Carromato is principally inspired by the Gitanos (Roma) of Spain and Camargue, France. In addition, the Roma carromato, Spanish for caravan, serves as the basis for a broader musical journey that echoes the migration of the Roma people through the Middle East and Europe, connecting Spanish flamenco and rumba with

Balkan, Eastern European, and Middle Eastern influences. Performing mostly original compositions drawn from these musical forms, Kraatz Carromato’s songs are songs of migration, of longing for a homeland, of loss, hope, and resilience. The majority of compositions are instrumental, but listeners will also hear new and traditional songs sung in Spanish, Bosnian, English and the Romani language.”

Admission is free for children under 12. The Adamant Community Club is located at 1161 Martin Road, Adamant. For more information, call (802) 454-7103.

THANKS

FOR SAYING YOU SAW IT IN THE HARDWICK GAZETTE

Local Portrait Artist, Clark, Honored in D.C.

by Hardwick Gazette Staff

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Caleb Clark, originally from Walden, has been awarded a Certificate of Excellence from the Portrait Society of America in this year's International Portrait Competition. Clark was in Washington D.C. in May to be honored for his 8.5x12 oil painting on linen panel titled "Dre."

Clark attended the National Portrait and Figurative Artists Conference in D.C. where "Dre" was displayed at the annual The Art of the Portrait presentation and received his award on the Main Stage of the Gala Banquet.

With over 3,000 entries, Clark's is one of 27 works that was judged as outstanding and worthy of distinction. The goal of the Portrait Society is to honor some of the finest portrait and figurative work being created today and to inspire and energize artists from all over the world.

A crowd estimated at 500 people were on hand for Saturday evening's awards ceremony. Clark said he was very excited he got to see first-hand many of the portraits that won awards. Because it was an international competition, Clark got to view winning portraits from around the globe.

"The whole experience was great," said Clark. "Definitely a new experience. And it was certainly a great honor to be there considering all the talent that was there. It was just an absolute honor to be recognized."

At the end of the evening, a grand winner was chosen from among the 19 finalists. Famed portrait artist Frances Bell of England took home the top award. "It was really amazing to get to see her work up close," said Clark.

Clark said the winning portrait measured about two feet by two feet. He submitted a smaller portrait of a friend named Andrea, whose nickname was Dre. "I guess I was just shocked I was recognized along with all these great artists, in the best way possible," he said. "It was just such a great honor."

Clark said he started painting seriously at about age 21 and he has been practicing his craft for the last 16 years. "I love it. . . I'm very fortunate I'm able to do this."

Clark said he will be coming up to Vermont this week to witness his father, Mike Clark, being inducted into the Vermont Principal's Association Hall of Fame in Montpelier on Friday.

Clark attended the Green Mountain Waldorf School in

Wolcott, through eighth grade. He then attended St. Johnsbury Academy where he took art classes with artist instructors Bill and Kim Darling. While at the Academy he was a member of the Intaglio Society that went to Florence, Italy, on three occasions where he studied printmaking at the famous Il Bisonte Printmaking School.

Following graduation from St. Johnsbury Academy Clark went to North Carolina, further developing his skills at The Fine Arts League of Asheville and The Fine Arts League of the Carolinas. These schools were established by Fresco Master Ben Long to preserve and develop the traditions and techniques of the Old Masters. It was here that Clark was immersed in a curriculum based on rigor and accomplishment, gaining the skills needed to explore the four major aspects of representational art: figure, portraiture, landscape and still life. He has also earned a Visual Arts degree from Goddard College in Vermont.

Clark's parents, Alicia Benoit-Clark and Mike Clark and brother Jacob reside in Walden. Caleb and his partner Elizabeth Elmore reside in Leicester, N.C. He has an art studio in Asheville and frequently displays his works throughout North Carolina at art shows and exhibits with artist colleagues.



Faces: Black and White Photographs by David Asgard Gilbert, 1964-1978, are on display at the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum through July 7. courtesy photo

Gilbert Photographs Displayed Through July 5

ST. JOHNSBURY – An exhibition of black and white photographs by David Asgard Gilbert is on display in the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, Hall Gallery through July 5.

Gilbert's second wife, St. Johnsbury native and resident Joan Weston, is the curator of the photographs and now offers them for public view. "David had immense self-confidence; he could teach himself anything," said Weston. "As the keeper of his photographic legacy, I pledged to myself to show an aspect of his complex story."

David (Asgard) Gilbert (1938-2021) was born in Waterville, Maine. He joined the Marines and specialized in aerial photography and military intelligence. He attended Colby College, majoring in English.

Gilbert earned a reputation for his human-interest photographs as

a freelance photographer for the UPI and AP wire services. He covered the war in Vietnam, and also photographed presidents, senators and other public figures. In contrast to his political and wartime photographs, he enjoyed capturing images of ordinary people on the streets or at work.

In 1968 Gilbert and Weston lived in England, then traveled throughout Europe and the Middle East. During a stop in Israel, David worked for the Jerusalem Post. Their subsequent journey back to the United States included travels by train to countries behind the Iron Curtain, which provided opportunities for more photos.

A map of the couple's travels is included in the exhibition.

The Athenaeum is located at 1171 Main St. The exhibition is free, ADA accessible, and open to the public.



Caleb Clark, from Walden, has received a Certificate of Excellence from an international portrait competition held in Washington, D.C. courtesy photo

Raucous Theater with Cast, Audience

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

HYDE PARK – If you wanted something in the completely different department of theater you certainly could have got it during the last two weekends with the Lamoille County Players production of *The Rocky Horror Show* at the Opera House in Hyde Park.

A musical based on the cult-camp classic film, “*The Rocky Horror Picture Show*” of 1975 by Richard O’Brien, it pushed the limits of the usual performances by the Lamoille County Players but was saved from being offensive by its nonstop ridiculous humor as a spoof on the genre of horror/science fiction movies and its nth-degree of hilarious audience participation, even though much of the subject matter was inappropriate for children and would have made some people uncomfortable.

Perhaps the underlying message could be summed up by the observation, “Believe me, sex is not serious!”

The plot begins with the familiar juxtaposition of an innocent, naive but clueless couple, Brad (Jupiter Rae) and Janet (Bridget Regels), whose car has gotten a flat tire on a dark and stormy night, and they seek help in a forbidding local castle. A rather ominous figure named Riff-Raff (C. Duncan) brings them inside where things quickly go from bad to worse. They become entrapped in the world of a warped scientist called Frank-n-Furter (Jack Wildwood), who is conducting “break-through biomedical research” and Frankenstein-like experiments, one of whose creations is Rocky (Nate Beyer), whose muscular body is very much like that of Charles Atlas. But on closer inspection Frank thinks Rocky should build up his arm muscles and gives him barbells to exercise with.

Soon Frank wants to marry his own creation, amid general celebration. Brad and Janet, who just wanted to use the phone to get help for their car, move from initial uneasiness to shock at the situation they have gotten into.

The second act starts off with some discreet intercourse behind a large hanging sheet in a shadow puppet format, in which Frank deceives both Janet and Brad, much

to their pleasurable surprise. Janet subsequently gets it on with Rocky.

Dr. Scott (Daniel Miller) enters in a wheelchair and berates Frank for what he did to his nephew Eddie, while two of Riff-Raff’s companions, Columbia (Cassandra Cibra) and Magenta (Anah Witt) complain of their treatment working for Frank in the Castle. Then, one by one Rocky, Brad, Janet and Dr. Scott come in, transformed in their sexual identities, with long mesh stockings and feathery boas around their necks. But there is no happy Hollywood ending for Riff-Raff and Magenta return with guns and shoot everyone, vowing to go back to their planet of Transylvania.

Brad and Janet appear briefly to say they have learned a lot but they’re not sure if it was not all a dream.

Jupiter Rae was consistently in character as Brad and had a fine voice in all his songs, as was Bridget Regels as Janet. C. Duncan really got into his portrayal of Riff-Raff with his sinister mannerisms, while his accomplices Cassandra Cibra as Columbia and Anah Witt as Magenta both were believable in their roles, with expressive acting.

Jack Wildwood as Frank-n-Furter had great stage presence and showed superb dramatic talent in his challenging part and singing. Nate Beyer as Rocky, Daniel Miller as Dr. Scott and Kris Johnson as the Narrator were all impressive in their performances. Isaac Bessa, Wiley Delisa, Natalie Dunn, Madeleine Olson and Anna Sargent were excellent as the Phantoms with their highly coordinated dancing (choreographed by Emma St. Cyr) and vocal support. Anna Sargent was the popcorn-selling usherette at the beginning and end of the show and had a lovely voice.

Last but not least in this production was the audience itself in the fully packed house, which had a great time participating like a rowdy Greek chorus, yelling less-than-flattering expletives and phrases at the characters on stage, shooting water from spray bottles and covering their heads with newspapers when rain was mentioned, flashing the lights on their cell phones during one of the songs, and throwing toilet paper, confetti and playing cards at certain moments, generally behaving like you never have before in any live theater performance!

The very professional pit orchestra consisted of Kenneth Grenier as conductor and on keyboard 1, Patricia Jacob on keyboard 2, Danielle Transciatti-Holmberg on tenor saxophone (who had a nice solo part in one of the tunes), Daniel Graviria on guitar, Nick Allen on bass and Eliot Waring on drums. The co-directors/

music directors were Kenneth Grenier and Patricia Jacob, and the producer was Nick Allen. The numerous other members of the production team also deserve high praise.

For future shows at the Hyde Park Opera House by the Lamoille County Players, call (802) 888-4507 or go online at LCPlayers.com

Wonderful Concert of Classic Jazz, Big Band Sound

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

GREENSBORO – The Vermont Jazz Ensemble came to the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro and gave a wonderful concert of classic jazz and big band of the ’30s and ’40s dance numbers on the evening of Friday, May 2. Many of the 17 musicians have been veteran players for decades in this band, as the original group was founded 49 years ago.

The ensemble started off the program with a fast paced tune with a nice dance swing to it, “Let’s Keep Things Simple,” which demonstrated their well integrated wall of sound, with short solos by trumpet, clarinet and drum players. Next came “Love for Sale” by Buddy Rich, which featured Don Schabner on guitar and the largest saxophone player.

“A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square” went from trombone scoring to long trumpet elaborations, with a curious jumpy rhythm stretch, ending with Randy Wheeler on bass trombone. “So Soft, So Loaded” had artistic director Kyle Saulnien playing the bass viol and conducting with his hands in a theme that was shared by the piano, guitar, trumpets and trombones.

“I Got Rhythm” was a very catchy piece by George Gershwin (with lyrics by his brother Ira), but which suffered from an arrangement that lost the delightful drive of the original and cluttered up the fine melody.

Duke Ellington’s “Take The A Train” is a perpetual favorite of the jazz repertoire, and three couples took to the floor beneath the stage to dance to this piece. “The Karaoke” by Artie Shaw had a strong beat with great momentum and gave Joanne Scott a chance to do

some skilled permutations on her clarinet. “Fly Me to the Moon” was sung by guitarist Don Schabner with his expressive voice, accompanied by one of the saxophonists on the flute. “Come Fly With Me” continued his singing and got seven couples out dancing. Sissy’s Strut seemed promising but the tune got stuck in its development.

After intermission, “Mamba” had a quick tempo and curious broken rhythms with a saxophone solo and then engaging improvisations by Andy Gagnon on his drum set. “Polka Dots and Moonbeams” highlighted Tony Barrows on his saxophone, while “It Could Happen to You” brought out all the brasses in full force “Strictly Jive” by Chick Wells again filled the floor with dancers enjoying its great beat. “Crazy Rhythm” by Fletcher Henderson combined the saxophones, trumpets, trombones and clarinet in a fine arrangement.

Irving Berlin’s “I’ve Got My Love to Keep Me Warm” was a memorable song, enhanced here by Mike Craydus’ piano work. “I’ve Got You Under My Skin” by Cole Porter had a beautiful melody and well crafted lyrics, as sung by Don Schabner, which he followed with “You Make Me Feel So Young.”

“The Chicken” was the last selection on the program, involving all the players rotating in turn, with a short encore, to which the audience responded with an appreciative standing ovation. Other musicians in the band not mentioned above were Jake Whitesell, Frank Kochman, Ron Eldred, Bear Irwin, Tim Sessions, Kyle Casazza, Rich Steele, David Ellis, Cole Picard and Tom Allen.

We hope to hear many more decades for the Vermont Jazz Ensemble, keeping alive one of the most original traditions in American music.



Gazette
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with Greensboro

May 18, 3-5 p.m., Highland Center for the Arts

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Hardwick Gazette

This is the first in a series of community conversations The Hardwick Gazette will hold in its 11-town coverage area.

EVENTS

Wednesday, May 14

DEATH CAFE, 6 p.m., facilitated by Kelsey Crelin, Albany Public Library, 830 Main St., Albany. Information: (802) 755-6107, albanypubliclibraryvt.org.

Saturday, May 17

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

BIRD WALK, 7 a.m., with Scarlett Podolin and Eleanor Hammond, Hardwick Trails. Meet at the trail kiosk behind Hazen Union parking lot. Information: Norma (802) 472-6517.

BIRD WALK, 7:30 to 11 a.m. (rain date Sunday, May 18), Stranahan Town Forest, Marshfield, with Bob

Popp and Betsy Ziegler. Meet at the parking lot at the beginning of Thompson Road, off Hollister Hill Road. Co-sponsored by the Marshfield Conservation Commission and the Jaquith Public Library. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or call (802) 426-3581.

Sunday, May 18

SPANISH CONVERSATION CLASS, 1 to 2 p.m., John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road. Classes taught by Trisha Ingalls for all ages and levels. Information: (802) 586-9692.

PLANT SWAP, hosted by Lamoille County 4-H and the LRSWMD, 10 a.m. to noon, 29 Sunset Drive, Morrisville. Rain or shine. Information: Holly at holly.ferris@uvm.edu or Erika at outreach@

lrswwd.org.

Wednesday, May 21

TWINFIELD COMMUNITY NIGHT, 5:30 p.m., Twinfield School. Pizza, bike rides, games and live music. At 6:45 p.m. "Twinfield's Got Talent" will be presented, as well as a display of student art work.

Saturday, May 24

MEDITATION WORKSHOP, 1:30 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, with Barry Wyman. Co-sponsored by the Marshfield Resilience Hub and the Jaquith Public Library. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.org or call (802) 426-3581.

Ongoing Events

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

See **EVENTS**, Next Page

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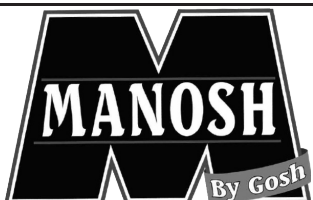
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EVENTS

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.

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

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.

PHILLIP ROBERTSON EXHIBIT, Meditations On The Landscape, T.W. Wood Gallery, Montpelier. Exhibit runs through June 20 with a closing reception 5 - 6 p.m.

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

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Choose from either a sunny loft bedroom or a semi-private, two-room walkout level with rustic half bath overlooking Joe's Pond in West Danville. Hosts and their pup seeking companionship, some shared meals, small amounts of shoveling and cleaning. Zero rent plus small utility share. Compatible dog and outdoor smoking considered. (802) 863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO

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PUBLIC NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPLY HERBICIDE

Vermont Electric Power Company, Inc. (VELCO) has applied for a right-of-way pesticide application permit through the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets for the purpose of making selective ground base applications of herbicides. These herbicides include: Aquamaster (Glyphosate), Escort XP (Metsulfuron Methyl), Garlon 4 Ultra (Triclopyr), Krenite S (Fosamine Ammonium), Polaris (Isopropylamine salt of Imazapyr) and Round Up Custom (Glyphosate). Applications will be made on VELCO's various 115kV and 230kV transmission line right-of-ways located in the following county and towns:

Caledonian County

Barnet	Groton
Lyndon	Ryegate
Sheffield	St. Johnsbury
Sutton	Waterford

Herbicide application will start on Monday June 16, 2025.

Landowners adjacent to the areas in which will be treated should contact VELCO if private water supplies or other environmentally sensitive areas are located within 200 feet of the right-of-way edge. For further information please contact:

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Please contact the state agency with any other questions, comments or concerns:

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Hazen Union player Evan LaMare, a Craftsbury Academy senior, gets ready to bunt against Thetford May 8. Thetford won.

photo by Vanessa Fournier



Hazen Union's Jacob Hayden (right) receives the ball after Tom Amber of Thetford safely reaches third base during play on Hudson Field May 8. the Panthers beat the Wildcats.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Top of the League Bares Fangs Against Wildcats

by Ken Brown

MONTPELIER – The Hazen Union baseball team ran into two of the top teams in Division I and II last week as they were blanked by Montpelier and Thetford Academy (TA), falling to 2-6 on the season.

Sophomore Jackson Mason twirled a one hitter and struck out 8 to lead Montpelier over the Wildcats at home last Tuesday 8-0. Mason carried a no-hitter into the fifth before Hazen's Jake Hayden belted a double to left. Clay Foster

led the Solon offense, going 2-3 with a pair of stolen bases. Mason helped his own cause with a double, while scoring two runs on the day. Lucas Alber chipped in with a two-run double in the win. Grayson McNaughten took the loss for the Wildcats, striking out three and walking two.

“We’re playing some really good teams in the Capital, but I feel this young team is really close to putting it all together. I wish these athletes would see what I see in them. It’s like putting together

a 1000-piece puzzle sometimes and the last piece is on the floor, and you just don’t see it,” said head coach Shaun Allen.

It didn’t get any easier for Allen’s squad on Thursday as division III powerhouse Thetford held the Wildcat offense hitless on their way to a 12-0 road win. Ollie Sarazin struck out 7 over four innings of work and Sam Parkman pitched a perfect fifth to preserve the no-hit gem for the Panthers. Thetford blew open a tight game with an eight-run fourth inning, powered by two RBI’s apiece from Xander Oshoniyi and Dempsey McGovern. Freshman Jon Sicard took the loss for Hazen, giving up 7 free passes, while striking out three. The Panthers improved to 6-1 on the season and look poised to return to the division III Final Four

for a fourth straight season after taking home the state title in 2023.

“We only reached base four times, once on a sharply hit ball to short by Owen Skorstad that could have been scored as either an error or a hit. We did a good job of staying with them for three full innings but just couldn’t hold them down. They’re a really good program, but we just need to stop getting in our own heads and believe that we can win. Once they figure that out, I really believe the tides will turn for us,” said Allen.

Hazen was scheduled to host U-32 on Tuesday before traveling to Spaulding on Thursday. They wrap up a busy week with a matchup against Lamoyille on Saturday at Hudson Fields. All home games can be streamed live on Hardwick Community Television (hctv.us).



Hazen Union head coach Shaun Allen (left) and assistant coach TJ Davison (second from left) talk with catcher Landon Miller (center) and pitcher Jon Sicard (right) between innings.

photo by Vanessa

Season Opens with Racing Memorial Day, May 25

by Thunder Road International Speedbowl

BARRE – With the 27th annual Community Bank 150, originally scheduled for May 4, postponed to Sunday, June 1, Thunder Road International Speedbowl will open the 66th season of racing on Sunday, May 25, with the 62nd Mekkelsen RV Memorial Day Classic. The 125-lap Memorial Day event kicks off the *King of the Road* track championship season for the Late Models alongside the annual visit from the Monaco Modified Tri-Track

Series. The Flying Tigers, Street Stocks and Road Warriors join the holiday special for a five-division showdown.

All four divisions originally-scheduled for May 4 will race, Sunday, June 1. Pit Passes purchased for that event will be honored on June 1, Teams must keep and present them at the gate as their rain-check.

For more information, contact the Thunder Road offices at (802) 244-6963, media@thunderroadvt.com, or visit www.thunderroadvt.com.

KEN BROWN'S TRACK & FIELD ROUNDUP

Craftsbury Academy Achieves Personal Bests at Meet

NEWPORT – Craftsbury Academy (CA) junior Soren Stelma-Leonard led all local competitors with an impressive runner-up finish last week as the Chargers joined neighboring Hazen Union and Danville at North Country for the third high school track and field meet of the season.

Stelma-Leonard ran his best time of the season last Tuesday in the 800m, beating his personal record by nine seconds. Charger teammate Owen McKibben also posted a personal best in the same event, won by Alan Esposito of North Country.

CA's Nora Van Gulden continued her impressive maiden season in varsity competition, posting a fourth-place finish in the 800m. The freshman cut more than four seconds off her best time in the event, won by Elia Garcia Jurado of Lyndon Institute. Fellow freshman teammate Natalie Hill posted a pair of personal bests in both the discus and shot put. Hill finished sixth in the discus and just outside the top ten in the shot put. Freshman Linsey Allen also posted personal records in the field events for the Chargers. North Country's Morgan Shaffer

“As expected, last week's PR's are a thing of the past. The team showed up to the event at North Country ready to push themselves even further, which was great to see.”

(shot put) and Lake Region's Brooklyn Hinton (discus) took home first place honors. Sophomore Theo Alexander (1500m) and freshman Kille Burner (discus) rounded out strong days in Newport for CA with personal bests.

“As expected, last week's PR's are a thing of the past. The team showed up to the event at North Country ready to push themselves even further, which was great to see,” said head coach Kyle Anderson.

Hazen Union also posted several personal bests on Tuesday, led by juniors Alex Bowley and Lewis LaPierre. Bowley set personal records in both the 200m and

shot put, while LaPierre achieved the same feat in the 1500m and javelin events. Senior Rowan Book ran his best time of the season in the 800m, and Chloe Dyer recorded her best throw in the javelin for the Wildcats.

Danville freshman Jaidyn Carson finished fifth in the long jump with a personal record behind event winner Maeda Urie of Lake Region. Sophomore Kyla Van Alstyne finished just outside the top ten in the 200m with her best time of the season, with Myrah Kearse of North Country besting the field.

The St. Johnsbury Academy (SJA) boys track and field team continued their march to a fifth consecutive Division I championship last week with another impressive team finish at the Burlington Invitational. Reigning Division I cross-country champion Emmett Johnson dusted Thetford's Brady Sloop by nearly three seconds to take home the title in the 800m. Former Hazen Union standout Manny Fliegelman posted a ninth-place finish with his best time of the season. Former Craftsbury Academy state champion Charlie Kehler ran his best time in the 1500m for the Hilltoppers to finish in the top ten, with senior teammate and reigning Vermont Gatorade Player of the Year Andrew Thornton-Sherman taking home first place honors.

KEN BROWN'S SPORT NUGGETS

Fielder and Moriarty Earn Top Honors for Lady Cadets

NORTHFIELD – East Calais native and former U-32 standout Caitlyn Fielder, along with teammate Ellie Moriarty (Stowe) nabbed First Team honors in the Great Northeast Athletic Conference (GNAC) last week after leading their Norwich University women's lacrosse team to a record-breaking season.

Fielder had a monster season for Norwich, leading the team in goals scored with a career-high 47. The sophomore midfielder recorded 10 hat-tricks for the Lady Cadets, including five goal games on three different occasions this past spring. Fielder has now scored 85 career goals for Norwich in just 33 games. Moriarty also earned First Team honors, wrapping up a brilliant career with the Lady Cadets as their all-time assist leader with 96. The senior attacker led the team in assists once again this season with 39, ranking in the top 65 nationally. The dynamic duo led Norwich to a program record 15-win season and back to the GNAC Final Four for the first

time in over a decade. Norwich head coach Ian Thomas was named GNAC Coach of the Year in his fourth season at the helm.

Alekson Bounces Back for Stags

FAIRFIELD, Conn. – Former Vermont Gatorade Player of the Year and Peoples Academy standout Ben Alekson bounced back from his first loss of the season with a dominant performance last week for his Fairfield University baseball team.

Alekson scattered three hits and struck out a season-high 11 over six innings of work to lead Fairfield to a 14-1 home win over Niagra on Saturday. The big sophomore righty was roughed up by Marist for seven earned runs two weeks ago but responded to shut down Niagra on an efficient 79 pitches, issuing zero free passes on the afternoon. The three-time Vermont high school state champion improved his record to 8-1 on the year and kept the Stags atop of the Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference with a 21-6 (36-14 overall) record.

Fairfield and Alekson will hit the road for a three-game series against Rider starting Thursday night to wrap up the regular season.

English Runner-up at Adamant

ADAMANT–Hazen Union track and field and Craftsbury Academy cross-country head coach Maxfield English finished second overall last week to pace all local runners at the Adamant half Marathon.

Nineteen-year-old Ezra

Merrill-Triplett of Calais edged the 49-year-old English by just over a second with a winning time of 1:25:36. English dominated his 40-49 male age division by over 11 minutes.

Montpelier's Madeline McKeever was the top female runner with a time of 1:36:21. East Hardwick's Emma Podolin and Craftsbury's Reed Holden finished top five in their 30-39 female age division.

Next up on the Central Vermont Runners Circuit will be the Barre town Spring Run on Sunday.

Season Opener, May 17, 18

by White Mountain Motorsports Park

N. WOODSTOCK, N.H. – With heavy rains having already soaked the grounds at White Mountain Motorsports Park over the previous 48-hours, and the forecast spelling more of the same until the evening hours, officials canceled the annual Open Practice Day, Saturday, May 10.

White Mountain Motorsports Park will open the 2025 season with the six-division

HK Powersports Opening Day, this coming Saturday, May 17, followed by the PASS Spectacular, Sunday, May 18, for a twin bill to headline the 33rd season opener.

Opening Day will feature the free-to-the-public annual White Mountain Car Show from 10 a.m. to noon. For more information, contact the White Mountain Motorsports Park offices at (802) 244-6963, or visit www.whitemountainmotorsports.com.

KEN BROWN'S SOFTBALL ROUNDUP

Cal United's Comeback Falls Short

DANVILLE – The Caledonia United (Twinfield-Cabot-Danville) softball team lost a slugfest to Paine Mountain and gave defending Division IV champion Richford their money's worth before falling to Vergennes last week, dropping them to 0-6 on the season.

Austin Roos' grand slam in the bottom of the seventh inning led a furious comeback by Cal United that came up just short in a 22-21 home loss to Paine Mountain. Roos, Peyton Winn, and Phoebe Crocker all recorded multi-hit games in the loss. Myah Morgan took the loss in the circle, combining with Crocker to strikeout seven on the day. Paine Mountain improved to 2-7 on the season.

Richford held off a spirited Cal United later in the week, pulling away late to secure a 24-12 home win. The defending champs jumped out to an 11-0 lead after one inning and a 14-2 advantage after three before Cal United rallied with 7 runs on seven hits in the top of the fourth. The Lady Rockets responded with eight runs in the bottom half of the inning to put the game away. Kayliese McCray paced the Richford offense with four hits

The Lady Chargers (CA) have had their own struggles in the Mountain League this season, being outscored 124-6 by opponents to the tune of an 0-5 start.

and six RBI. Kyrielle Deuso, Adi Chagnon and Vanessa Terrier combined for six more hits on the day. Chagnon recorded the win in the circle despite giving up 10 runs and 16 hits. Crocker belted a double for Cal United and Sophi Mancini, Amyra Simmons and Winn each collected two hits in the loss. It was the second most runs given up by Richford this season.

Cal United fell to Division III Vergennes 16-3 last Tuesday and their matchup with Craftsbury Academy on Friday was postponed due to inclement weather. The Lady Chargers (CA) have had their own struggles in the Mountain League this season, being outscored 124-6 by opponents to the tune of an 0-5 start. Both teams will look to get off the schneid this week with Cal United hosting BFA-Fairfax Tuesday, traveling to Paine Mountain Thursday, and hosting Richford

on Friday. CA looked for a spark against Lake Region on at home on Monday before hosting Blue Mountain on Friday.

Strong Helps the Green Knights to a Hot Start

BURLINGTON – Finley Strong and her Rice Memorial softball team dominated Burlington and Richford before splitting a pair of games with Burlington and Mount Abe last week to improve to 5-1 on the season.

Strong, the daughter of Hazen alum Jeff Strong and granddaughter of Wildcat coaching great Jack Strong, belted an RBI triple in the Green Knights 15-1 road win in their first matchup against Burlington. Bella Messineo twirled a complete game no-hitter to earn the win in the

circle, striking out seven. Alayna Havreluk was a perfect 4-4 at the plate, blasting a home run and driving in four in the win.

Strong collected two more hits, including a two-run triple, as they blew past Richford at home 29-3. Havreluk earned the win, striking out 12 Lady Rockets on the day. Strong blasted a pair of home runs and drove in three last Tuesday as they outlasted Burlington 16-10 to sweep the season series. Mt. Abe handed the Green Knights their first loss of the season on Thursday 13-7. Rice has outscored their opponents 97-33 on the season and look poised to return to the Division II Final Four for a second straight season.

Strong and the Green Knights were back in action on Tuesday at Milton before hosting Vergennes on Thursday and traveling to Enosburg on Friday.

SPORT CALENDAR

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

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

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