THE Hardwick Gazette

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Wednesday, July 16, 2025 — hardwickgazette.org — Volume 136 Number 29

Welch Visits, Listens, Aims to Cut FEMA Red Tape

by Raymonda Parchment

HARDWICK – U.S. Senator Peter Welch stopped by Front Seat Coffee Monday, July 14, as he traveled across Vermont discussing flood recovery and his new bill aiming to fix the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Sen. Welch addressed a variety of concerns regarding FEMA and flood resiliency during his visit. Notable topics of discussion included updating flood maps and burdensome application processes, as well as streamlining funding distribution.

Several town officials were on hand and contributed to the

See WELCH, 4

Welch Unveils Bill to Reform FEMA

KILLINGTON – U.S. Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.) recently unveiled the Disaster Assistance Improvement and Decentralization (AID) Act, new legislation to improve the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Disaster AID Act was inspired and shaped by the experiences of towns and cities across Vermont recovering from historic floods in 2023 and 2024.

Senator Welch's bill will

See REFORM, 6



Town Manager David Upson, second from right, and select board member Tim Ricardello,facing away, discuss the impact of the flood on the Hardwick area with Senator Peter Welch, third from left, at Front Seat Coffee Monday morning. *photo by Raymonda Parchment*

July 10 Uneventful, Flood Mitigation Work Continues.



Woodbury Broad Band Members practice last week in a new culvert with amazing acoustics, according to Carol Ryan. That will soon be installed under Town Highway 24, through which the water of Buck Lake Brook will flow. Front row, (from left) are Lucinda Rochester, Sandy Reeks, Kathy Volk and Carolyn Stewart; standing are Stephanie Appleton, Joanne Campisi, Ruth Gaillard, Patti Garbeck, Susan Alexander, Robin Gouin, Cacky Peltz, Carol Ray and Lisa Flood. *photo by Michael Malick*

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – Weather forecasts and a National Weather Service warning last week raised concern across the region in areas affected by flooding on July 10 in both 2023 and 2024. Hardwick had heightened awareness as the anniversary approached, with media and politicians bringing awareness to the anniversary. Town Manager David 'Opie' Upson said the town was on stand-by and he attended three Vermont Emergency Management briefings during the day Thursday, but river levels were low through Hardwick and he said town leaders were not overly concerned.

The State's emergency management status was elevated, with only a duty watch and no extra staffing. Late in the day the flood watch was extended to 10 p.m., but strong thunderstorms that affected nearby areas in Greensboro did not materialize in Hardwick and there was nothing nearby to equal the rainfall that fell to the northeast of Hardwick, with over 5" in West Burke and 3.5" in East Haven.

Preparation for emergencies of all kinds has been strengthened in Hardwick and other area towns, with area residents creating support organizations and gathering supplies to assist as needs arise. Hardwick Area Neighbor-to-Neighbor is among them and had the opportunity to test its preparedness by teaming with Medical Reserve Corps. member Karl Stein in Greensboro and volunteers to set up a cooling facility at the Highland Center for the Arts during days with temperatures approaching 100 degrees several weeks ago. Stein said they were prepared for as many as 500 people to sleep at the facility if the power failed. In the end only several dozen people took advantage of the air-conductioned well-equipped facility,

See MITIGATION, 6

Beck Appointed to School Redistricting Task Force

by Paul Fixx

MONTPELIER – Caledonia County Senator Scott Beck (R-Caledonia) of St. Johnsbury is one of 11 members appointed last week to the state task force charged with drawing up Vermont's new school district boundaries. Beck brings to the task his experience as a social studies teacher on the St. Johnsbury Academy faculty.

Following his appointment, Beck said, "I look forward to this important work and providing Vermont students from all corners of Vermont with an excellent education."

The School Redistricting Task Force was created by the education reform bill, H.454. It is the first step in "transforming Vermont's education governance, quality, and finance systems" under the new law, said Scott as he signed the legislation.

The task force is to consult with the Committee on the Future of Public Education to "study and consider different configurations for school district boundaries," with the goal of developing up to three proposals with maps

See REDISTRICTING, 5



Senator Scott Beck



50th Anniversary Member-Owner Drive

July 14–27

Buffalo Mountain Market
75 Mill Street, Hardwick VT
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Come be a part of the next 50 years

- Join to be entered into a raffle for a local gift basket
- Member-owners who newly subscribe to our eNewsletter during the drive will receive 5% off a shopping trip Aug 1–8

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July 16 - July 22

New Arts & Crafts Display For Kids From Klutz

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Wishbone Salad Dressing 2/$5 15 oz.

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Junkless Granola Bars $3.99 6.6 oz.

Scott 4 Roll Bathroom Tissue $3.99 419.2 s.f.

Green Mt. Greek Yogurt $4.99 32 oz.

Food Club Frozen Vegetables $1.89 16 oz.

Food Club Frozen Ravioli 2/$5 19-25 oz.

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"If we don't have it, then you probably don't need it."

Weather Watch



A heavy fog settled over the area on Tuesday morning, making it difficult to see Caspian Lake. *photo by Dawn Gustafson*

Showers, Thunderstorms Break Heat; Sunny Start to the Weekend

by Tyler Molleur

EAST HARDWICK – Conditions remained largely hot and humid this past week as we remained under the influence of an upper-level low with multiple waves serving as the focus for slow-moving scattered showers and thunderstorms. The variability in thunderstorm location and rainfall amounts is reflected in this week's rainfall observations, which we draw from the Community Collaborative Rain Hail and Snow Network (CoCoRaHS). A reporting station on the southwest side of Wolcott came in with two and a half inches of rain (2.51 inches) this week, while a West Woodbury station less than 10 miles away report 0.15 inches in the same period. Here in East Hardwick, we were somewhere on the lower end with a total of 0.56 inches for the period.

The hyper-local variation in rainfall amounts did lead to some areas of flash flooding concerns on the afternoon and evening of Thursday, July 10, the day which for the past two years has historically brough flash flooding to northern Vermont; although the last two times were widespread. Just to the north and east of the NEK's gateway, some parts of Sutton and West Burke saw significant washouts and property damage from an area of rainfall estimated by radar and reported by the public to be upwards of five inches of rain due to stalled and training thunderstorms. To show you how powerful this was on a small scale, nearby official reporting stations in Sheffield and Wheelock had under two inches of rain in their gauges.

This week will feature a couple more rounds of showers and thunderstorms, the first of which arrives with the passage of a frontal system late Wednesday night and Thursday. As this system works its way through, we remain under the influence of hot and humid conditions, with highs in the upper 80s to low 90s. There does remain that isolated risk of flash flooding with any torrential downpours. Slightly drier air and cooler conditions settle in by Friday afternoon and last through the end of Saturday, before another influx of moisture approaches on a low-pressure wave for Sunday. Rain chances will increase throughout the day, although there is a bit of model discrepancy as to when that rain will arrive. Conditions will otherwise be mostly cloudy and more humid with seasonable temperatures. Now on to the forecast:

Wednesday: Mostly sunny with increasing clouds. Showers and thunderstorms possible overnight. High: 92. Low: 67. Wind southwest around 5 mph.

Thursday: Mostly cloudy. Rain likely in the morning, then showers and thunderstorms likely in the afternoon. High: 85. Low: 60. Wind south 5-10 mph.

Friday: Areas of fog and clouds in the morning, becoming mostly sunny by afternoon. High: 77. Low: 53. Wind northwest 5-10 mph.

Saturday: Mostly sunny. High: 81. Low: 58. Light and variable wind.

Sunday: Mostly cloudy with scattered showers. High: 82. Low: 59. Wind south 10-15 mph with gusts to 25 mph.

Police Report

Hardwick Police

Media Log

July 6: Suspicious Event, McAllister Road; Assist – Public, Mini Mart Drive; Traffic Stop, South Main St.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Rte. 14/Benway Drive; Traffic Stop, N. Main St./High St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St./Lower Cherry St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Suspicious Event, N. Main St.

July 7: Fraud, Wendell Drive; Assist – Other, Wolcott St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Mill St.; Alarm, Main St.

July 8: Motor Vehicle Complaint, Vt. Rte. 14; Animal Problem, Hideaway St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Parking Problem, W. Church St.; Fingerprints, High St.; VIN Verification, High St.; Medical, Lamoille Ave.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Vt. Rte. 15 E.

July 9: Animal Problem, Hideaway St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Suspicious Event, N. Main St.; Property Damage, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Intoxication, Maple St.

July 10: Parking Problem, South Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Citizen Dispute, Maple St.; Citizen Dispute, Canyon Drive; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Rte. 15; Assist – Agency, Granite St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St./Elm St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Slapp Hill; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.

July 11: Fingerprints, High St.; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Suspicious Event, Slapp Hill; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Vt. Rte. 15 E; Parking Problem, S Main St.; Mental Health Incident, Maple St.; Animal Problem, Mill St.

July 12: Medical, S. Main St.; Suspicious Event, Houston Hill Road; Suspicious Event, Pleasant St.; Trespassing, Mill St.; Trespassing, Mill St.; Traffic Stop, Granite St.; Suspicious Event, Highland Ave.; Wanted Person, Vt. Rte. 15 W; Trespassing, Mill St.

July 13: Accident – TCNR, Vt. Rte. 16; Alarm, S. Main St.; Trespassing, Vt. Rte. 14 S; Medical, S. Main St.; Assist – Agency, Elmore Pond Road; Traffic Stop, Mill St.

Hardwick Police

Rollover Crash, Burglary

On June 26, at 9:10 a.m., the Hardwick Police Department responded to Craftsbury Road north of Gates Salvage for the report of a rollover motor vehicle crash. Investigation revealed there was only one vehicle involved. The juvenile operator of a Honda CR-V was traveling south when the vehicle left the road on the west side before rolling over and landing on its wheels in the drainage ditch well off the road surface. Rescue and Fire were also called to the scene. The operator of the vehicle was wearing a lap belt and shoulder harness at the time of this crash and did not sustain any serious injuries.

On July 12, at 7:45 p.m., Roberto J. LaRochelle, of Barnet, was arrested on an active warrant and subsequently lodged at Northeastern Regional Correctional Complex in St. Johnsbury. LaRochelle was cited to appear in Orleans Court on Monday, July 14, at 12:30 p.m.

On July 14, at 4:22 a.m., the Hardwick Police were called for the report of a burglary on Wolcott St. Hardwick Police, Morristown Police and the Lamoille County Sheriff's Office all responded to the scene. The offender had left personal items behind which enabled Hardwick Police to develop a suspect.

While investigating this first call, the Hardwick Police were called to a second location very close to the first, where a male stranger had bee found sleeping in a home. The homeowner rousted the male and ordered him to leave. This homeowner had provided police with a very precise description of the offending male, which matched the appearance of the male suspect developed from the first call. Additionally, the suspect had left a food item at the second location that had been taken from the first.

A third call regarding a male walking around on Woodbury St. resulted in the apprehension of the suspect, identified as Paul McPhetres, of Randolph. McPhetres was taken into custody without incident and arraigned later that day in the Superior Court of Vermont, Caledonia Unit, on the charges of Burglary, Felony Unlawful Trespass and Unlawful Mischief.

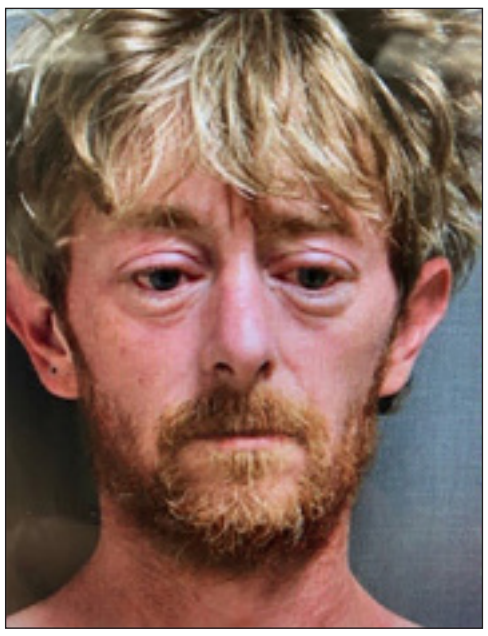
He was released from the courthouse on pretrial Conditions of Release.

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

Vermont State Police

Two-Vehicle Crash, Domestic Disturbance

On July 7, at 12:49 p.m., Vermont State Police responded to a two-vehicle crash on U.S. Rte. 2 in a work zone. Investigation into the crash determined Shirley Maynard, of Cabot, did not see traffic was stopped and ran into the back of Jonathan Bullard, of St. Johnsbury. Maynard complained of chest pain after the crash and was transported to Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital. Bullard sustained minor injuries and was cleared by EMS. Maynard's vehicle was towed by Mountain View Auto. Vermont State Police were assisted by Vermont Fish and Game and Danville Fire Department and Rescue.



Raymond Stevens-Reil

On July 5, at approximately 10:35 a.m., the State Police received a report of a domestic disturbance at a residence on Creek Road in the town of Craftsbury. The State Police responded to the scene and learned that Raymond Stevens-Reil, of Craftsbury, had committed multiple crimes, some being Aggravated Domestic Assault and Burglary. Stevens-Reil was located by the State Police and the Orleans County Sheriff's Office and was subsequently arrested and transported to the Derby Barracks.

Woodbury Fire Department

Open House



Woodbury Fire Department will hold an open house to tour the new fire station and equipment Saturday, July 19, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 3618 Route 14, Woodbury. Fire prevention materials, 911 street number signs and memorial bricks to purchase will be available. Department volunteers will be on hand to answer questions. photo courtesy social media

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Police Report

Cabot Fire Department

Car Fire



Firefighters from Cabot, Marshfield and Walden respond to a car fire on U.S.2 in Cabot Sunday afternoon. The car was a total loss.

courtesy social media photo

Car a Total Loss After Fire

by Cabot Fire Department

CABOT -- Cabot Fire responded to a car fire on U.S. Rte. 2 Sunday afternoon. The operator of the vehicle was uninjured, however, the vehicle was a total loss. A brief closure of Rte. 2 was required during fire suppression efforts. All three Cabot apparatus and 11 Cabot firefighters responded. They were assisted by mutual aid partners from Marshfield Fire and Walden Fire. "We are greatly appreciative of their prompt response and support during the incident," said the social media post.

The call occurred less than a month after the Cabot Department's recent training on motor vehicle incidents, including car fires.

AWARE Report

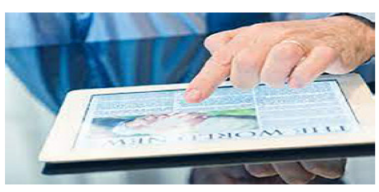
HARDWICK – Ten people used AWARE services between July 6 and July 13. The AWARE 24-hour hotline is 802-472-6463.

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.

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Welch

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discussion, along with others from neighboring areas like Wolcott and Elmore.

Hardwick Zoning and Floodplain Administrator Kristen Leahy updated Welch on flood recovery and resiliency projects in the area.

Select board Chair Eric Remick was present, as well as Town Manager David Upson and board member Tim Ricardello. Police Chief Mike Henry was also in attendance.

Sen. Welch began by reflecting, saying even now it's shocking to see the remnants of the past two floods such as massive displaced trees spotted on his commute to Hardwick that morning. "Reminiscing about seeing the devastation, you guys did an amazing job," he remarked.

The Senator is visiting nine towns and cities throughout the state: Hardwick, Lyndon, Barton, Burke, Killington, Ludlow, Weston, Barre and Montpelier, meeting with community leaders and flood-impacted Vermonters.

The tour also serves to introduce Welch's new Disaster AID Act, which aims to restructure FEMA with the goal of cutting red tape, thus empowering state and local governments. The bill will support hazard mitigation efforts, make the delivery of disaster aid more efficient and effective, and provide technical assistance to small towns and communities impacted by natural disasters.

He first spoke to the power of local involvement, "Local response is intense, immediate, more helpful than anything else, but they need to get back to their lives." The senator was referring to the often long, rigorous process of applying for FEMA assistance.

According to Sen. Welch, the bill preserves FEMA funding with the intention to provide local governments with decision-making authority. "We want to take advantage of local leadership," he said.

"The experience you had here in Hardwick, it's universal," said Sen. Welch. Continuing, he emphasized that natural disasters should not be a partisan issue. "There are things we can do in D.C., to empower local people to make decisions, to act."

The bill also aims to prevent the current and future administrations from withholding funding for natural disasters. Senator Welch voiced concerns specifically regarding the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, Kristi Noem, whose alleged mismanagement of FEMA has garnered national attention. Sen. Welch remarked,"I don't have much confidence in her ability to lead." In combination with the current administration's budget slashing fervor, Noem's recent comments on the concept of eliminating FEMA have left many wondering if the institution will survive the next four years. Senator Welch outlined what getting rid of FEMA means for individual states, "No state has the fiscal capacity to respond to a hundred year weather event, every year. It's not possible, it's gotta be a 'we're all in this together' mindset with natural disasters." To summarize, states would have to fund disaster relief efforts by themselves via taxation or other means, a nearly impossible feat, warned Welch..

The Disaster Aid Act boasts simplified procedures for projects costing less than $1 million, with cost overruns that were previously unavailable. Advances on public assistance would be available, in an effort to prevent towns from borrowing large sums while waiting for FEMA funding to come through. Overall, the bill aims to make the delivery of disaster aid more efficient and less arduous to obtain. Town Manager Upson attested to often onerous procedures, "We're still waiting on money from 2023 projects. It's turned into a negotiation, a chess game," he said.

Sen. Welch noted that inconsistency at the federal level has been a key frustration for local authorities working with program managers assigned by FEMA to towns applying for disaster aid, with the purpose of providing technical and logistical support. "I heard from many towns, there's a turnover rate every three months. Some towns have had 12 to 13 managers," said Welch. Attendees agreed, explaining that the sudden reassignments often cause delays in the already exhaustive application process, with sometimes having to begin steps anew. "There are some practical things we can do to make Hardwick's situation more manageable," concluded Sen. Welch.

The introduction of the Disaster Aid Act coincides with the anniversary of the 2023 and 2024 floods. More information can be found via welch.senate.gov

Town Reappraisal Process Underway

by Paul Fixx

CALAIS – A town-wide reappraisal process began last month in Calais, with property owners receiving a postcard in the mail to let them know when the reappraisal team would be coming to their property.

Each property will be visited and inspected by representatives from the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC), the town's reappraisal firm. Property values will then be recalculated based on current market value.

Reappraisals are required to equalize property values throughout Vermont, which is necessary for the state Property Valuation and Review Tax Department to fairly set the education tax rates for all municipalities.

The reappraisal team collects physical characteristics of each property that include the square footage of buildings, land size, numbers of bedrooms, numbers of bathrooms and the quality and quantity of amenities.

Assessors will be making their way through town, visiting every parcel, verifying measurements of buildings, taking a photo of the front of each building and correcting property data when needed. Data collectors may also ask questions about the property as it relates to property value. In addition, the quality of materials in the interior, as well as the condition of the interior predicts the amount of depreciation to apply.

This reappraisal process will not affect 2025 property taxes as it will not be completed before 2025 property taxes are calculated.

Homeowners are not required to permit the reappraisal team to enter their home. Since the sole purpose is to collect the correct data to assist in providing a fair and equitable value of the property, a number of additional questions could be asked if an assessor is not granted entrance.

At the end of the reappraisal process there is an opportunity to challenge the new assessed value.

Each property owner will be given a personal code that can be entered at nemrc.info/Calais following the visit and will give access to data collected on the property. An email address will be provided for messaging NEMRC to advise them of any inaccurate data found there.

Many factors are involved in how a change in a property's value will affect the taxes assessed on it. Taxes are determined by dividing the total town budget, as approved by voters at town meeting, by the total assessed value of all town properties, the grand list. The grand list will change in the wake of the reassessment, so it is likely that most or all town property values increase. If there were no change in the town budget and a property's value increases in exact proportion to the total valuation of all properties, its taxes wild not change. If a property's value increases more as a percentage than the town average, its taxes will increase, and if the property value increases less than the average as a percentage, its taxes will go down (assuming no change in the town budget).

At the end of the reappraisal process, the town will share information about attending hearings for property owners to challenge the new property values.

Contact the town office at townclerk@calaisvermont.gov or (802) 456-8720 with additional questions or concerns.



Morrisville Water and Light General Manager Scott Johnstone (left) with Nick LeBlanc, line foreman and Hero Award recipient; and Rusty Shedd (right), electric plant superintendent. *social media photo*

LeBlanc Receives Hero Award for Extraordinary Courage

by Paul Fixx

MORRISVILLE – Nick Leblanc, a Morrisville Water and Light Department line foreman has become the first recipient of a Hero Award created by the village trustees to recognize extraordinary acts of courage. LeBlanc responded to the scene of a Wolcott crash and subsequent fire, pulling the car's driver from a car that crashed into a burning barn on his way home from a power restoration call in the early hours before dawn on May 17.

LeBlanc reacted quickly; hearing the driver's voice, he broke the rear window and working with two other passersby extracted the driver, continually moved him away from the heat of the fire as it grew to engulf the whole barn, called 911 and stayed on the scene until the driver was safely on his way to receive medical attention.

In giving LeBlanc the award, village trustees recognized his heroism in "putting himself at risk to pull another to safety. His bravery exemplifies the true spirit of service and selflessness."

Bruce Fortmann, who arrived at the scene on his way home to Hardwick from a day in the Burlington area said LeBlanc had reacted decisively to smash the rear window of the small silver car with a cinder block,

In a social media post, the Hardwick Fire Department said, "Awesome job Nick! One very lucky individual to have someone willing to take those chances for someone they didn't even know; [a] true hero!"

Redistricting

Continued From Page One

designed to reorganize the state's 52 supervisory unions, 119 school districts serving roughly 80,000 students. Those proposals are to establish districts with between 4,000 and 8,000 students and balance a wide range of measures, to "create the least amount of disruption to students as possible." The General Assembly will then review those proposals beginning with its January 1, 2026 session, deciding on one.

David Wolk, Gov. Scott's appointment to the task force, is a former education commissioner who has served as president of Castleton University and Rutland City Superintendent of Schools While signing the bill, Gov. Scott said the legislation was "just the beginning," with future legislative sessions charged with continuing public education reform. It "will be just as difficult and just as important as what we did this spring."

House and Senate leadership made their appointments last week too, with five appointments from each.

The Senate appointments announced last Monday by Sen. Ginny Lyons (D-Chittenden Southeast), for the Senate's Committee on Committees, were to include one retired or former Vermont superintendent, one retired or former Vermont school business manager and three current members of the Vermont Senate, not all from the same party nor the same school district. Appointed were Dr. Jennifer Botzojorns, retired Kingdom East School District Superintendent; Chris Locarno, retired Central Vermont Supervisory Union Director of Finance and Facilities; Sen. Beck; Sen. Martine Gulick (D-Chittenden Central) and Sen. Wendy Harrison (D-Windham).

On the House side, Vermont Speaker of the House, Representative Jill Krowinski, announced her appointments to the task force last Tuesday. The speaker was to appoint three members of the House, one former superintendent and one former school business manager or school board member. Those appointments are Rep. Edye Graning (D - Chittenden 3); Rep. Rebecca Holcombe (D - Windsor Orange 2); Rep. Beth Quimby (R - Caledonia 2); Dr. Jay Badams, recently retired as Superintendent of SAU 70, the nation's first interstate school district, serving the Hanover and Norwich school systems and Kim Gleason, a Grand Isle resident who served a six-year term on the State Board of Education.

With task force members appointed, Beck said Wolk will now set the date of a first meeting before August 1.

Last week Beck said he expects the first meeting of the task force will be spent establishing a process leading to the December 1 recommendations it is charged with developing. At that first meeting members will likely review parts of H.454 relevant to the task force's work, receive a briefing on the current organization of school systems in the state, learn about available resources to guide their work and begin to hear testimony from interested parties, said Beck.

At least two public hearings for gathering feedback from members of the public regarding school district consolidation and proposed boundaries are to be held by the task force.

During the summer Beck said he intends to attend Caledonia County school board and supervisory union meetings and looks forward to hearing from constituents. Email Beck at sbeck@leg.state.vt.us

Mitigation

Continued From Page One

even being offered an assortment of foods left over from recent events there.

Other preparations are not so obvious. White there are no automated river and stream level monitors in the area, Upson said the town's Zoning and Floodplain Administrator Kristen Leahy now works with five stream watchers, residents throughout the area who live nearby to rivers and streams, monitoring and reporting on them as happened last week. Those real-time reports from experienced observers helped town staff know the rivers were low.

Upson said, "We always have our finger over, but never took the cover off" during this event.

Hardwick Police Chief Michale Henry said, "There were no issues here, everything was good."

While other towns have borrowed to deal with repairs needed after flooding the past two years, Hardwick has had fund balances available, allowing it to borrow, mostly from water and sewer funds, while it waits for federal and state reimbursement for necessary emergency and less critical repair work. As reimbursement has come in, those funds have been repaid, makin themg available for their intended purpose, or future emergencies.

On the second anniversary of the 2023 floods, the town continues to manage projects created to repair past flood damage and mitigate it in the future. A handful of bridges are slated for future work, including replacement of the temporary bridge at the west and of Hardwick Farms Road and permanent replacement of the destroyed bridge across East Main Street near Greensboro Bend, from Route 14 to Toussant Hill and Stannard Roads

Five areas of town have received the brunt of the recent past flooding and remain the focus of current and future work. Areas impacted by the Lamoille River area in downtown Hardwick, the Wolcott Street commercial district, and East Hardwick. Cooper Brook affects the area near Vt. Rte 14 south of town, and the Granite Street Historic District. A municipal planning grant in that last area has Leahy working with them to develop neighborhood responses to flooding. A survey is currently being circulated to gather information from residents in that area. Options for relocating the fire station, which has been regularly flooded in that area, are being studied.

In downtown Hardwick work on the retaining wall between the Village Restaurant and The Civic Standard is expected to begin soon. It is hoped that a study of the Lamoille River corridor through the downtown can be funded following a federal cutback this spring that cancelled the opportunity for a possible grant. A project for that area has been very roughly estimated to cost $7 million

In the Wolcott Street commercial district, upgrades to the waste water treatment plant are being looked into to mitigate the impact of future floods, The impact of Jackson Dam on area flooding is being studied and a larger scale flood proofing concept is being looked into.

Along Cooper Brook several properties may be elevated.

Ten properties flooded in each of the last two years' flooding have either been acquired, or are in the process of being acquired. Those 20 flooded properties will be, or have been, demolished and will be reclaimed to become green space, never to be built on again under agreements tied to their purchase.

Housing in those properties, which included the Inn by the River's 12 rooms plus the owners residence will be gone forever, creating a significant gap in Hardwick's housing stock.

A lengthy list of other work already done or underway includes acceptance of the Hardwick Emergency Management Plan that is now being updated in real time, a review emergency action plans for the Hardwick Electric Department's many dams, volunteer mobilization for supply and support during emergencies working with Hardwick Area Neighbor to Neighbor, NEKO and KURRVE.

While the regular work of town staff continues as usual, additional work due to the flooding has added to the workload and the select board is now looking to hire a Director of Public Works to take on some of that additional burden.

Reform

Continued From Page One

cut red tape and empower state and local governments to access recovery assistance when it is needed. The bill will support hazard mitigation efforts, make the delivery of disaster aid more efficient and effective, provide technical assistance to small towns and communities impacted by natural disasters, and block the White House from withholding funding for disaster response. He will officially introduce the *Disaster AID Act* next week, coinciding with the anniversary of the 2023 and 2024 floods.

Senator Welch will visit Killington, Ludlow, Weston, Barre, Montpelier, Hardwick, Lyndon, Barton, and Burke to meet with flood-impacted Vermonters and discuss the Disaster AID Act. He will hold

Over the course of consecutive summers in July 2023 and July 2024, Vermont experienced severe storms which caused catastrophic flooding, washouts, and mudslides. Homes, farms, businesses, and public infrastructure were destroyed, and communities were left reeling. In the immediate aftermath of the destruction, FEMA provided lifesaving on-the-ground assistance, working with local organizations and the state. In the long-term, however, FEMA's response has not met the needs of communities.

Senator Welch's Disaster AID Act will cut red tape and ease cumbersome requirements that restrict state and local governments from tailoring solutions to local circumstances. The bill will also provide technical and financial resources for small towns and communities that lack administrative capacity, and restrain future administrations from arbitrarily turning off the funding spigot for communities in the midst of disaster recovery.

The Disaster AID Act is supported by leaders across Vermont, including Governor Phil Scott.

"After facing devastating floods over the last two summers, Vermonters have seen firsthand, the value of federal support and assistance from FEMA workers. However, we've also experienced gaps between response and recovery, and we need to make changes that better support responders on the ground and those trying to rebuild. I appreciate Senator Welch taking on the challenge to create an expedited, more efficient, and flexible emergency management system," said Governor Phil Scott.

"Hardwick has faced devastating impacts from back-to-back floods in 2023 and 2024, with repeated damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure along the Lamoille River. One example is 41 Brush Street, a residential property now hanging precariously over the riverbank due to severe erosion. The home is slated for a FEMA-funded buyout, and additional stabilization is needed to protect surrounding properties. FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities program is essential for communities like ours, not only for rebuilding but for implementing long-term solutions that reduce future risk. Without sustained and accessible funding, rural towns will be left in a cycle of damage and short-term fixes. Senator Welch's Disaster AID Act provides a path toward more timely and effective recovery, especially for Vermont's hardest-hit towns," said Kristen Leahy, Zoning and Floodplain Administrator and Resilience & Adaption Coordinator for Hardwick.



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HED Presentation, Hearing on Rate Increase, July 23

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – Hardwick Electric Department customers (HED) recently received notice from the Vermont Public Utility Commission of a hearing on the department's proposed rate increase.

The virtual public hearing by the Vermont Public Utility Commission is to "receive input concerning the tariff filing of the Town of Hardwick Electric Department requesting an overall rate increase of 13.24% effective June 1, 2025," said the notice.

The virtual public hearing will follow an HED presentation Wednesday, July 23, at 6:30 p.m., where the Town of Hardwick Electric Department will describe the rate increase and be available to answer questions.

The public hearing will begin at 7 p.m., or immediately following the HED presentation.

Participants and members of the public may access the public hearing online at meet.goto.com/423177253, or call in by telephone to (571) 317-3116 with access code: 423-177-253. Participants should download the GoToMeeting software application in advance of the hearing at https://meet.goto.com/install. Guidance on how to join the meeting and system requirements may be found at gotomeeting.com/meeting/online-meeting-support.



Community volunteers haul trash out of the Lamoille River in June.
courtesy photo

Flood Clean-up Continues on Lamoille River

by Chris Morris

WOLCOTT – A crew of professional stewardship staff and community volunteers partnered in June to haul trash out of the Lamoille River in the Wolcott area. The cleanup, organized by the Northern Forest Canoe Trail (NFCT), was part of ongoing recovery efforts following severe flooding from the last several years. The work was carried out in partnership with the Lamoille River Paddlers Trail and funded in part by a Flood Recovery Grant from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC).

"The Lamoille River is one of Vermont's greatest natural resources," said Alex Delhagen, the NFCT's assistant trail director. "It's ecologically important as part of the Lake Champlain Basin and provides an economic impact to the communities it passes through, as it provides fantastic recreation opportunities for paddlers, anglers, swimmers and more. We're committed to doing our part to restore it to a more pristine state."

The focus of this year's river cleanup in the Wolcott area saw crews remove larger items, including refrigerators, fuel tanks and barrels. The NFCT contracted with a trash removal service to dispose of the items properly. In addition to the cleanup, the NFCT facilitated a community paddle-pedal event along the Lamoille in Johnson.

Electric Department Customers Qualify for Rebates, Incentives

by Liz Baum

GREENSBORO – Hardwick Electric Department (HED) customers qualify for rebates and incentives offered by the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) and Efficiency Vermont that can help residents save money.

On behalf of member utilities, VPPSA administers a rebate and incentive program for customers, including incentives for income-qualifying customers. Examples include: up to $2,500 off new electric forklifts or stock chasers; $1,500 off commercial ride-on electric lawnmowers; savings on new purchases of e-bikes, electric scooter and motorcycles; rebates on new residential electric lawn and garden equipment; new and pre-owned electric and hybrid vehicle incentives partnering with local dealerships, home weatherization and heat pump rebates.

HED also offers rebates administered by Efficiency Vermont, addressing home energy efficiency, including appliance rebates, home heating solutions and ventilation. Income qualifying renters, property owners and homeowners can benefit from low-to-no-cost products and free or low cost weatherization services.

VPPSA was established by the Vermont General Assembly on July 1, 1979. VPPSA's membership includes several municipal electric utilities including HED, to which it provides energy services programs to help customers transition away from fossil fuels. For more information visit vppsa.com/resources/rebates/2025-vppsa-rebates-incentives and www.efficiencyvermont.com/vppsa

The Greensboro Energy and Climate Action Committee is available to answer questions and work with residents interested in affordable energy improvements to save money and protect the environment. Learn more at greensborovt.gov/energy-committee



Jeudevine Library patrons can now check out a Strider bike with or without pedals, and a helmet for its rider. *photo by Diane Grenkow*



Emmett Avery parks his bike at the new Jeudevine Library bike rack funded by a grant from the Vermont Community Foundation. A fountain inside the library's new addition is available to fill up water bottles.
photo by Diane Grenkow

Understanding Dog Communication Subject of Library Program

by Paul Fixx

GREENSBORO – Deb Helfrich led a program titled "Woof! What's the dog saying?" in Fellowship Hall Friday for about fifteen people in which she demystified aspects of dog communication and being safe near them.

She walked those who attended the Greensboro Free Library program through observing ways a dog can respond to events in its environment and understanding how it may be feeling based on its body language. She helped identify common dog-human misunderstandings too, saying "Dogs are individuals."

While many people worry about safety around dogs they are unfamiliar with, she said 77 percent of dog bites come from a family pet, making it important to understand what they are communicating.

Training approaches have changed as a greater understanding of how dogs communicate has developed in recent decades, Helfrich said. She shared many benefits of understanding what the body language of a dog may mean that include helping people bond with new puppies, identify and prevent behavioral issues, prevent bites and injuries and inform approaches to training.

Dogs and humans communicate in very different ways, she said. Understanding the ways dogs communicate leads to a better understanding of how they interpret the world, view people, learn to cope and fit in. A head raised or lowered; ears up, down, turned forward or back; a mouth open or closed, with a tongue in or out; a head turned toward or away from a visitor or disturbance; a raised paw forward, or back and many other things, all contribute to understanding a dog's response.

Noticing when a dog's body language shows it is relaxed, happy, warm and fuzzy or not so, is sometimes easy to tell from its body language, but can be subtle, she said. A dog's eyes are among the first cues to its response. They can be relaxed and set apart, or narrowed with a furrowed brow, indicating worry, helping to identify its state. Ears perked up and turned forward can indicate alertness, while drooping or turned back, a more relaxed state.

After talking about how to deconstruct a dog's body language, Helfrich gave audience members a chance to test their skills by showing photos of dogs interacting with other dogs, people, cats and noises; asking what each response might mean. Most interesting for those attending the program seemed to be photos of dogs in which elements had been masked out. Her reveal of the masked sections, showing other dogs, humans and cats, to which the original dog was responding, made each response more clear.

Helfrich's primary goal was to help dogs and humans live safely and happily together, she said. At the end of the program she answered audience questions and provided web addresses for free access to supplementary learning materials.

Helfrich operates Gold Star Dog Training, offering programs at libraries and regular training classes in the northwestern part of the state.



Greensboro Librarian Bianca Caputo (left) talks with dog trainer Deb Helfrich following the "Woof! What's the dog saying?" program she led in Fellowship Hall last Friday about learning to understand how dogs communicate.

photo by Paul Fixx



Jessica Zaleski speaks at an Oct. 17, 2019, meeting of the Caledonia County Republican Committee. The Northeast Kingdom prosecutor took the job in 2019 and plans to leave office July 25.

file photo by Justin Trombly, VTDigger

State's Attorney Zaleski to Step Down

by Ethan Weinstein, VTDigger

ST. JOHNSBURY – Caledonia County State's Attorney Jessica Zaleski plans to resign as the county's top prosecutor on July 25.

The Caledonian Record first reported the decision last week.

In an interview, Zaleski said the choice was sparked by a desire to move closer to her parents in North Dakota. She's tapped Claire Burns, a deputy state's attorney, to take over the office in an interim capacity.

State's attorneys in Vermont are elected every four years. Following a resignation, the local political party of the resigning prosecutor submits names to the governor for consideration. The governor then appoints a replacement — typically from the list of suggested candidates.

Though she cited family reasons for her departure, Zaleski noted that "everything" about the job had changed during her tenure, making the work more challenging.

"The caseload, the volume of violent crime, particularly homicides, the inability to properly staff the office in a way that controls and manages the workload," she said.

The judicial system would benefit from more staff in all roles, Zaleski said, including defense attorneys and judges.

Vermont's stubborn court backlog, exacerbated during Covid-19, has been a constant focus for prosecutors, the defense bar and lawmakers in recent years.

According to data from the Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs, most prosecutors have more than 200 criminal cases on their docket. Since the end of 2023, the number of pending homicide dockets statewide has increased by about 30%, from 90 to 117, as of May. Zaleski's office has prosecuted a number of high-profile shootings and homicides, including a case involving a 15-year-old charged with second-degree murder last year.

Caledonia County has the second most severe case backlog in the state, according to state data, measured by the percent of pending cases older than the state's disposition guidelines recommend.

Reflecting on the challenges she's encountered on the job, Zaleski cited frustrations with Vermont's juvenile justice system, particularly the lack of a secure detention facility for children and youth offenders. In the rural Northeast Kingdom, accessing resources, like mental health and substance use treatment, is a constant concern for community members, she said.

Despite the job's difficulties, the prosecutor said there was much to enjoy about her work.

"The experience generally has been exhausting but incredibly fulfilling. I'm very proud of the work that we've done under incredible pressure and lack of resources," she said.

Zaleski is one of at least three prosecutors to leave office in the past year. Former Windham County State's Attorney Tracy Kelly Shriver stepped down mid-term in July 2024. Last month, longtime Windham County Deputy State's Attorney David Gartenstein retired.

Antiques and Uniques
Saturday, July 12, Craftsbury Common



The Birdhouse Band (from left) Roy MacNeil, guitar; Andrew Koehler, keyboard; Mavis MacNeil, saxophone and Annie Rowell, play the Steely Dan tune, "Dirty Work," singing harmonies on the lyrics, "I'm a fool to do your dirty work," Saturday on Craftsbury Common at the 52nd annual Antiques & Uniques Festival. photo by Paul Fixx

Crowds Flock to the Common for Antiques and Uniques Festival

by Alex Strand

CRAFTSBURY COMMON – The sun beat down on crowds of visitors to Craftsbury Common on Saturday. The common was filled by large tents, bright signs and all manner of antiques and uniques. Among them were car parts, dishwear, candles, hot sauce, gin and textiles. Below are a few of the visitors from across Vermont, and what they brought to the show.



Holly Spier brings stones, crystal, fossils and minerals to the festival from Jeffersonville. She also makes custom jewelry using the materials, and sources them from mineral shows across the northeast. photo by Alex Strand



The welcome tent at Craftsbury Common is manned by a volunteer committee. This year was the 52nd year that the festival took place, drawing over 100 vendors. photo by Alex Strand



Ashley Phelps of Green Mountain Garden Bed creates jewelry, lampshades and terrariums from local wood and plants. She visits the festival from Burke, where the majority of her materials are sourced. photo by Alex Strand



Ed Lemery of the Eclectic Shed sells jewelry and picture frames made from wood and other materials foraged in Vermont. Each wooden piece is carefully covered in beeswax sourced from Maple Hill Apiaries in Barton.
photo by Alex Strand

School Districts, Adult Learning Feeling Impacts of Funding Pause

by Corey McDonald, VTDigger

VERMONT – School districts and adult learning centers across Vermont are beginning to feel the impact of the $26 million in federal funding President Donald Trump's administration is withholding from the state.

The U.S. Department of Education told state education officials on the evening of June 30, less than 24 hours before the funds were set to be dispersed, that they would be conducting a review of the grant programs. No timeline was given for when that would be completed.

The funding pause was part of a broader freeze by the Trump administration of more than $6 billion nationwide for after-school and summer programs and English language instruction.

Six federal grant programs were affected, including Title IIA and Title IIIA grants, which respectively fund professional development for teachers and staff, and support services for English language learners.

In Vermont, the grants for years have helped fund nearly 100 after-school and summer programs, serving more than 10,000 students, as well as an array of English language programs, according to the office of Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.

The abrupt pause in funding has left many school districts in limbo. The announcement, which came just days before the Fourth of July holiday, has sent school officials scrambling to realign their budgets without federal funds.

That is likely to be a tough task for some districts. In the Winooski School District, the funding pause has left a roughly $700,000 budget hole for the high-poverty district, according to the district's director of finance and operations, Sarah Haven.

The district has primarily used those dollars to fund staff salaries and has signed contracts with its staff through the 2025-26 school year, Haven said.

Because the district is a designated high-poverty district, officials have been able to pool those federal grant dollars together and have primarily tied them to salaries, Haven said.

"The hardest thing about what's happened here is that this decision came after we had done a lot of financial planning, and we're caught really off guard," said Michael Eppolito, the director of curriculum and learning with the Winooski School District.

Eppolito said he expects to cut programming that is not vital.

"We need to start looking anywhere we can to trim things that are not essential," he said. He pointed to a digital program teachers use to support math and English language arts instruction in the classroom.

Haven said she expects leadership to begin developing an action plan in the coming weeks. Any changes to the district's budget allocations will need board approval.

She anticipates the district will be able to manage the hit this upcoming school year but said harder decisions may need to be made during next year's budgeting cycle.

Other districts took similar hits to their budget. The Essex Westford School District had allocated in its fiscal year 2026 budget more than $400,000 from federal grant funding, according to Mark Holodick, the district's new superintendent.

"It's a significant source of funding for us," he said. "We've already had a number of internal meetings. We're beginning to plan accordingly if these dollars are not released."

In the Harwood Unified Union District, Superintendent Michael Leichliter said the funding pause is forcing the district to pause professional development programming.

"We've already been in that trim-back mode," he said.

Holodick, likewise, said his district over the past two years has cut $10 million from its budget.

"What I don't want to see is the mindset shift from the expectation being, 'We are providing an outstanding education to our students,' to 'This is an adequate educational system where we're getting by,'" he said.

Local school districts are not the only organizations that are affected. The grant money also helped fund adult learning centers, institutions which offer residents a path to earn a high school diploma or GED, as well as offer English language classes and workforce development programs.

Tara Brooks, the head of Vermont Adult Learning, which runs adult learning services in seven counties throughout the state, said the funding pause will "drastically impact our ability to serve students."

Her organization last year served nearly 1,500 residents, helping some earn their GED or bolster their English language skills.

Brooks estimated the pause will amount to a nearly $500,000 hit to her organization. If the funds are not released, she said she will have to cut staffing.

"We already have wait lists for a lot of our bigger locations, so in Chittenden and in and some of our southern locations. It's only going to increase the wait lists that we have if we have to reduce staff."

Sean-Marie Oller, who operates The Tutorial Center in Bennington County, said the roughly $36,000 cut to her organization means she will have to cut back on night classes.

The Vermont Agency of Education has yet to hear from federal officials since their decision last week, according to Toren Ballard, a spokesperson for the agency.

Ballard said the agency is "closely coordinating with the governor, the attorney general and our congressional delegation on next steps, as well as continuing to provide intensive support to school districts."

It's unclear what the Trump administration will ultimately decide about the funds. Similar federal funding cuts in other sectors have resulted in litigation against the federal government.

Sanders wrote to Secretary of Education Linda McMahon and Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought last week, demanding they immediately reverse what he called "their illegal and unconstitutional decision" to withhold those funds.

"Your unexpected and cruel decision has sent shock-waves, distress and heartbreak in local communities all over America who now may be forced to cancel or substantially delay summer school activities that had been planned for months," Sanders wrote.

"Further, your illegal actions have denied teachers the funding they rely on for professional development," he added. "Important services for English learners have been halted. Thousands of school principals, superintendents, and school board members may be forced to lay off dedicated staff. And school district budgets in every State and community have been negatively impacted. That is beyond unacceptable."



Winooski High School on Feb. 14, 2025.
photo by Neal Goswami, VTDigger

Patrick Barham, a spokesperson for Sanders, said they have not gotten a response to their letter.

Some are holding out hope that the funds will be released. Brooks said her organization is "in a wait-and-see mentality."

Catherine Kalkstein, the head of Central Vermont Adult Education, which serves Washington, Orange and Lamoille counties, said her organization is relying on reserve funds in the meantime.

"We don't want to impact our students in any negative way and disrupt the services that we're currently providing," she said.

"But," Kalkstein added, "it's not something we can continue to do long term."

Holodick hoped that officials at the federal level would "come to their senses and release this funding, not just for kids in Essex Westford or Vermont, but for the students across this country right now."

OSSU Superintendent not Alarmed by Fed Funding Cuts

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union School (OSSU) Superintendent David Baker expects programs at its member schools to continue without interruption despite the U.S. Department of Education's abrupt halt to distribution of Federal funding to Vermont schools announced June 30.

As reports come that the Vermont Agency of Education and Vermont schools across the state are concerned about the effect of the halt on the six Federal grant programs it supported, Baker said, funds directed at OSSU schools "are restricted to Title 2 and Title 4, so they don't affect our large Title 1 allocation."

The effect of those cuts to the supervisory union is limited because, "We can . . . use any rollover and we do have enough of that to continue most of the programs we have in place," said Baker. Continuing his optimistic tone, Baker added, "It might have to be at a slightly reduced rate and we may eventually have to make some tough decisions but we're not panicking until we absolutely have to panic."

EDITORIAL

A Better Future is Being Built

As the July 10 anniversary of unprecedented flooding in the area approached, I was thinking a lot about how our towns have responded and, with this year's reprieve from more of it, what this post-flood era might look like. Mostly there doesn't seem to be a debate about why the 100, or 500 or thousand year flooding events happened, then happened again just a year later. Those in the area seem to accept a new weather reality as days with temperatures over 90 degrees have increased, daily rainfall totals over two or three inches are no longer rare and buildings that have been dry for decades, if not a century, aren't anymore.

The response to flooding in area towns was immediate and ongoing: Town officials, road crews, residents jumped when they needed to, helping stranded residents; repairing washed out roads, culverts and bridges, providing supplies and equipment to muck out, dry and clean flooded homes and businesses, filling out mountains of state and federal paperwork with proposals, plans, budgets, itemized lists and invoices.

New organizations have been created, and new ways of thinking about the local response to emergencies have been developed.

The environmental and human landscape have both changed. Rivers and streams have charted new courses, homes and businesses have been washed away, or flooded and removed, to become green space.

In Hardwick, The Inn by the River is gone, creating a park next to a riverbank that's at least 50 feet closer to Vt. Route 15 than it was. Twenty homes in newly flood prone areas will have been bought out and removed if plans move forward as expected. The fire station will likely be moved, and the wastewater treatment plant made more resilient to future high water events.

Plainfield is creating a whole new neighborhood on higher ground, to replace lost housing, including the now aptly named Heartbreak Hotel.

Widened bridges throughout the area will allow a greater flow of water; hopefully enough for the foreseeable future, but engineers only have the past to guide them. No one really knows what the future will bring.

What we do know is that connections are being built. Community meals have been happening for years and new ones have sprung up, creating opportunities to build further connections unrelated to politics or divisive national rhetoric.

It's impossible to list the many unsung heroes who stepped up to respond, many of whom continue to do so, among those who've made a difference are road crews throughout the area who hauled, dumped and placed mountains of gravel, stone and bridge parts; continuing to do so as the need arises.

Town clerks have been on the job, taking calls for assistance of all kinds, then helping or referring their townspeople to the appropriate place for assistance.

Jeudevine Library staff have taken calls for Hardwick Area Neighbor-to-Neighbor, a new organization created in response to flooding that Helen Beattie has been instrumental in making a permanent part of Hardwick's emergency response plans. She has helped to create and document processes for it that are rumored to have been mentioned as an example to follow by someone at a conference far away.

In Greensboro, the Highland Center for the Arts recently became home to an emergency cooling center, using the network developed in response to flooding.

Hardwick's David Upson has been on the job through it all, learning to navigate state and federal assistance and funding pipelines, almost always with a positive attitude and cheery greeting.

Kristen Leahy is an unsung hero of Hardwick's flood response efforts. Diligent, devoted to the people who have been affected by flooding, she seems to be everywhere and to have a handle on everything flood and zoning related.

Northeast Kingdom Organizing (NEKO), started roughly a decade ago by the Center for an Agricultural Economy was ready to respond when the call came for help mucking out homes, as were The Civic Standard and kuRRve.

Organizations from other places came to help, with Team Rubicon's Greyshirts appearing to aid those in the area post-flood.

Throughout it all, the organizations and people stepping up to help seem to have built stronger, more resilient connections between themselves and the people they have helped. Those connections don't seem to be dependent on the organizations to continue, but will be strengthened and their networks of connection will continue to expand.

It seems Vermonters in this area are responding effectively to change and building a better future for themselves. I'm looking forward to it.

Paul Fixx, editor

LETTERS FROM READERS

Look Forward to Bread and Puppet

To the editor:

I look forward every year to Greensboro's Funky Fourth parade, and a big part of that anticipation is the Bread and Puppet contingent of the only band in our parade, the amazingly high stilt dancers, the peace dove and the humanitarian comment mixed in there somewhere. Keep it coming.

Janet Long
Greensboro

THE Hardwick Gazette Since 1889

The Hardwick Gazette is published every Wednesday except the first week in January by Northeast Kingdom Public Journalism, Inc., 82 Craftsbury Road, Greensboro, VT 05841
Tel. (802) 472-6521. E-mail: News@HardwickGazette.org. Web: HardwickGazette.org
The Hardwick Gazette, P.O. Box 9, Hardwick, VT 05843

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

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Submissions of Content and Deadlines: The Hardwick Gazette is published late on Tuesday each week with Wednesday's date. Submit 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 attempt to confirm receipt of obituaries. Call to confirm receipt of any obituary submitted Tuesday if it is important it appears in that week's edition. Photos capturing news and community events are welcome with details with the full name of each identifiable person, what is happening, when and where the photo was taken and why it is newsworthy. When sending photos, 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.

E-mail addresses to send us messages: ads@hardwickgazette.org for advertising inquiries including display ads and business directory submissions; editor@hardwickgazette.org for corrrections, letters to the editor, story ideas, website or newsletter questions and comments; news@hardwickgazette.org for all submissions of calendar of events, news storiess, obituaries, births, press releases and everything else.

Another Opinion

HED Charged with Providing Affordable, Safe, Reliable Energy

by Sarah Braese

HARDWICK – Hardwick Electric Department (HED) has a long and colorful history of strong civic engagement and local governance. Incorporated in 1897, HED was created to preserve energy democracy for a thriving local economy and rural communities. HED is charged with providing affordable, safe and reliable energy to all of its customers; a mission that has held true for over a century.

With a unique proximity to the people, local energy democracy ensures the voice of customers and key stakeholders are heard.

In an increasingly complex and interconnected energy industry, my vision is to ensure energy democracy withstands the next hundred years with community at the heart of HED.

Governed by a locally elected/appointed Board of Commissioners, HED has navigated the changes of grid modernization to deliver energy and electricity while maximizing the value of ratepayer investments.

Today, Vermont's rules and regulations prescribe nearly every aspect of electric utility business operations, from customer billing to renewable energy power purchases and interconnection of distributed energy resources. The growing complexity of grid modernization presents HED with a unique challenge and an even more unique opportunity.

Most large utilities across the country long-ago invested in legacy business operations technology {e.g. information technology (IT) or operational technology (OT) systems, aka IT-OT}. With rapid innovation and computing capabilities now available, system integrations are proving exorbitantly costly to meet today's complex distributed energy network requirements.

As HED's general manager, my mission is first to listen to and observe the unique patterns of localized, community growth to discover system needs. Guided by local needs, I share and implement a collective vision to navigate HED through the grid modernization journey. As you can imagine, this work is increasingly complex and can sometimes occur at a glacial pace.

In the meantime, HED's leadership and staff continue to improve and refine internal operating procedures while carrying forward long-awaited investments that exponentially increase our operational capabilities and system visibility.

Ongoing investments and projects include but are not limited to: a new phone system to better manage calls and serve customers; website improvements and upgrades to support better communication and customer relations; grid infrastructure and outage management system mapping (GIS and OMS); advanced metering infrastructure (AMI); renewable energy investments including energy storage, distributed energy resources and continued progress towards repairing the Wolcott Hydroelectric Generating Station (which has been offline after suffering damage in both the 2023 and 2024 flooding); as well as supporting customer transitions away from fossil fuels through rebates and incentives, and launching innovative pilot programs for electric vehicle supply equipment (EVSE) charging and more.

While the past can sometimes be hard to forget and the future is unknown, I am committed to better telling HED's story today. My vision is bright for what HED can be, as a partner and key asset to the communities it serves. I ask that you join me on this journey and help us navigate those waters together with a vested interest and supportive understanding of the challenging opportunities ahead.

Sarah Braese is the general manager of the Hardwick Electric Department.

Voices of Spirit

The Promised Land is a Fragile Promise

by Rabbi Lev Friedman

NEWTON, Mass. – In the Hebrew Bible, Moses, the great liberator of the Israelites, only glimpses the Promised Land from afar. After forty years of leading his people through the wilderness, he dies just outside its borders. The moment is both tragic and profound: a symbol of longing, of striving toward justice, yet falling short.

The Promised Land is a metaphor. For my ancestors, America was the Promised Land, the Goldeneh Medina, the Golden Land, a refuge from the perilous existence of Jews in Eastern Europe. It offered not just hope and the possibility of earning a living, but the promise of justice and equality before the law.

Today, that dream feels more fragile. Civil rights, voting rights and protections for minorities are being systematically destroyed.

Antisemitism is often called the world's oldest and longest hatred, and it is rising yet again. Immigrant families are being torn apart by ICE agents empowered by a hostile administration. We fear we may not live to see justice and mercy restored.

I was born in the middle of the twentieth century, just five years after WWII and two years after the founding of Israel. My father returned from the war a decorated hero; his body broken, his spirit mostly intact. The war left its mark. My paternal grandmother's extended family, eighty souls who remained in Europe, were murdered during the Holocaust, a small fragment of the six million Jewish lives extinguished.

We were the lucky ones. Our families had found refuge in America before the doors slammed shut. We went to bed secure in President Roosevelt's Four Freedoms: freedom of speech, of worship, from want, and from fear. We believed this was our country. Our parents fought for it. My father received the Bronze Star for running messages through hostile territory. Over 550,000 Jewish Americans served in the armed forces.

Israel was central to us. After centuries of ostracism, persecution and deadly pogroms culminating in the holocaust, we had a safe place to go that would take us in. We planted trees, celebrated agricultural and technological achievements, and followed each war that Israel never asked for with worry and pride. In 1948, 1956, 1967 and 1973, and today Israel defends its right to exist against overwhelming odds.

In my twenties, I lived and worked on a kibbutz. I love the country deeply. But like my despair over America's leadership today, I struggle with Israeli policies, especially in Gaza. I hold both truths at once: love for Israel and deep concern for its actions.

There's a Jewish story about the Schools of Hillel and Shammai, who debated fiercely for years. A heavenly voice finally declared, "These and those are both the words of the living God." (Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 13b). Judaism teaches that multiple truths can coexist — and must be held with respect. It's difficult, but not impossible.

People ask me, "How can Israel's actions be reconciled with Jewish values?"

My answer to this is: Judaism is a religion. It teaches justice, compassion, and care for the vulnerable. It offers a spiritual and ethical framework. But it is critical to recognize that Israel is not a Judaism state. It is a Jewish state founded on the Zionist principle that Jews, like all people, deserve a nation that serves and defends them.

Is that a contradiction? Perhaps no more than calling the United States a Christian nation. Love thy neighbor or turning the other cheek have not been guiding principles for our country. America was built on slavery and stolen land, not biblical love.

In the Torah, the five books of Moses, the heart of a just community is summed up in three commandments: love your neighbor (Leviticus 19:18), love the stranger (Deuteronomy 10:19), and love God (Deuteronomy 6:5). Who can argue with that? Yet the machinery of state rarely runs on divine imperatives.

Today, many older Jewish Americans, including me, are bewildered by many of the younger generations' disconnection from Israel. They did not grow up with Israel's founding mythos or existential struggles. They see a country with a powerful military and struggle to reconcile that with Judaism's call for justice. They are not wrong, but they must remember why Israel exists.

Those with antisemitic views hold all Jews responsible for Israel's policies. They blame Israel for all the region's problems, ignoring Iran and its proxies: Hamas and Hezbollah. As a result Jewish college students are afraid to attend certain campuses. Jews are barred from some activist causes. Jews are being attacked and murdered here and abroad. This is why we need Israel.

Like Hillel and Shammai, there are two other truths we must hold: the miracle of Israel and its necessity, born from two thousand years of persecution and the ashes of genocide, and the reality of Palestinian suffering. These truths are not mutually exclusive. Holding them together is painful, but also the path toward integrity.

Like Moses, I hope we will return to the Promised Land of our shared Judeo-Christian values of love, mercy and justice for all including the strangers among us. And may the day come soon when we see Israel living in peace with her neighbors. "And no one will study war any more." (Isaiah 2:3-4)

Rabbi Lev Friedman calls himself a free-range rabbi. He is mostly retired but writes and teaches on occasion. Lev is also a singer-songwriter and finger-style guitarist. He lives in Massachusetts and summers in the Northeast Kingdom.

Our Neighborhood

Community Support for Athletics Strong, Despite Distractions, says Hill

by Alex Strand

HARDWICK - Hazen Union Athletic Director Aaron Hill just completed his first year as director and coach, after coaching and teaching for 25 years. In his time at the high school, he has learned extensively about today's changing youth, athletics and hard work.

He is originally from Hardwick, began coaching while he was still in college at UVM, and has stayed at the school ever since. He expressed a love for Hardwick and Hazen Union's years of traditions and sportsmanship, especially given the rise of the internet.

"I find that there are more distractions for the kids, in some ways more opportunities to do other things. But overall, I feel like the internet and particularly phones have really not been a good thing for the kids' health, mental and physical health. Overall, it's harder for kids to concentrate and for longer periods of time," said Hill.

He explained that less students are participating in sports than when he began, all over the state. He worries that children are having a harder time committing to hard things, not just because of the internet, but also because of parents and adults that fail to push them.

Still, Hazen maintains a rare school spirit and tradition in comparison to other towns, said Hill.

"There's a real pride in the athletics at Hazen that is kind of a throwback to the past. Most communities do not have the support that we have. If you go to games, say at the Barre Auditorium, where we play our semi finals and championships, our community support is by far the biggest of any teams that go there," he said.



Hazen Union Athletic Director Aaron Hill photo by Vanessa Fournier

He referenced the tradition of wearing replicas of the old Hardwick Academy jerseys once a year, maintaining a connection to the town's history.

The community helps to take care of the athletes as well. Whether a child needs a new uniform or admission to Hill's annual summer basketball camp, he knows the community will offer financial support.

This week and next, Hill will be running the 24th annual basketball camp at Hazen Union, with sessions for younger children in the morning run by varsity athletes, and sessions for high schoolers in the afternoon.

Hazen Union is always in need of more fans, and is also in need of coaches for various sports team, said Hill. For more information, reach out to Hill at ahill@ossu.org.

Monthly Musings

Trish Passmore Alley

Precious Presence

by Trish Passmore Alley

June 30 was WholeHeart, Inc.'s last day as a nonprofit. July 1 was my precious pup, Emerson's, sixth anniversary. He passed on our way to the veterinarian after pawing his obituary. In lieu of flowers, donations to WholeHeart were encouraged. Emerson was WholeHeart's Ambassador of Unconditional Love. He graced many WholeHeart board meetings. The love-seeds he inspired will live on. I can palpably feel his precious presence.

Decades ago, I learned that presence is a contemplative way of being in the world. Poet Naomi Shihab Nye describes contemplation as taking a long, loving look. Emmy was good at that. I thought of him recently when an infectious disease doctor told me after an MRI to pay close attention to my feet. He was referring to recurring ulcerations, not to Emerson, who spent days at my feet while I was reading or writing, always patient with his patient. To celebrate our country's independence, I am pausing for my paws.

I recently read "The Pursuit of Happiness: How Classical Writers on Virtue Inspired the Lives of the Founders and Defined America" by Jeffrey Rosen, president and CEO of the National Constitution Center. Rosen, who heeds Abigail Adams' advice to John to "remember the ladies," points out that the Founders followed what we consider to be mindfulness practices. In fact, they fretted about a future president who did not devote daily time to self-reflection and self-discipline. They would be horrified by today's verbal vomit. The author's favorite founding President was John Quincey Adams. Rosen writes, "Adams' daily commitment to moral self-accounting led him to transcend his youthful pragmatism and political ambition and to become one of the leading antislavery voices of his time." Adams himself wrote that "You will never be alone with a poem in your Pocket." He understood writing poetry as self-improvement. A book of his poetry was published posthumously.

One of the many benefits of reading and writing for me is that I can do it with my shoes off, a positive for my paws! I had to laugh when I recently heard Ocean Vuong say in an interview with Krista Tippett, "Take off the shoes of your voice . . . The future is in your mouth."

I am currently reading "All That She Carried: The Journey of Ashley's Sack, a Black Family's Keepsake" by Tyla Miles for a National Society of Colonial Dames of America book group. It is both a heartbreaking and heart-opening story of Black women's love passed down through generations from slavery to freedom. It reminds me of Lu, my mother's Black housekeeper, who grew up in North Carolina. She lovingly referred to me as, "my chile." I spent many hours sitting in the big blue chair in her room while she was ironing, basking in her precious presence.

Trish Passmore Alley holds an MBA in Organizational Development and Behavior. A published author and poet, her career has included teaching at the collegiate level, owning several small businesses in manufacturing, engineering, and retail, and founding and operating three social profits in Greensboro, A published author and poet, she posts brief, monthly blogs at gracefulmischief.com When her column refers to Grace, it is a presence in her life, and it is capitalized. She now lives in Shelburne.



Weeks Gone By

Local Lumps, Thursday, July 16, 1925

HARDWICK – With the painting of the new bridge, a very pretty battleship gray color, and the new cement sidewalks, on each side, at each end of the bridge, Hardwick may well boast of as nice a bridge as can be found in any town.

Natural Dirt Road Roads

HARDWICK – Much favorable comment is heard from motorists from other states who visit Vermont regarding our natural dirt roads. There may be a question as to their durability and permanence, but motorists certainly enjoy riding over them. They have many advantageous features that the macadam and cement highways in other states lack. [Ed. Note: People recently driving on Hardwick's Center road might understand this comment. That road is scheduled for paving this summer.]

Lawn Party

HARDWICK – The Altar Society of St. Norbert's church will hold a Lawn Party or Radio Carnival, Tuesday, July 21st, on the lawn opposite the Memorial building. Various things will be on sale, such as ice cream, coffee, frankfurters, home-cooked food, candy and aprons. Free entertainment will be given in the evening. In case of rain the Carnival will be held in the K. of C. hall.

Beauty Shoppe Changes Hands

HARDWICK – The Beauty Shoppe, located on the second floor of the Hardwick Inn, owned and conducted by Mrs. Josephine Smith for the past two years, has been sold to Miss Doris Chasse, who graduated from Hardwick Academy this last spring. This shoppe is one of the best equipped parlors of the kind that can be found in this section of the State, everything being modern in every way, and machinery, tools, etc., of a kind that can make the old young and the plain-looking better.

Miss Chasse will leave around the first of August for New York to take a course of study and instruction in this art, and Mrs. Smith will continue to conduct the business in Miss Chasse's name until her return.

The Gazette bespeaks for the new owner and manager a continuation of the already well-established business in Hardwick's concerns.

Are You "all in" on a Hot Day?

EAT good white bread, with good butter on it or soaked in chilled milk. It will freshen you up wonderfully. White bread and milk or white bread and butter, is turned into working energy quicker than any other food—and is more digestible than any other bread, as well as more nourishing. This is proved by the investigation and chemical analysis of eminent food authorities.

Dr. H. E. Barnard, director of The American Institute of Baking, Chicago, says: "Herman N. Bundesen, Health Commissioner of Chicago, says that good white bread is the greatest resistance-builder against infection and organic diseases, especially when this white bread is made of milk or eaten with at least one quart of milk per person per day."

White bread and milk are easily and perfectly digested and supply energy, mineral salts, vitamins and body-building solids. It is the ideal food for summer—and equally good in winter. Eat more white bread.. You will look better, feel better. Good white bread is truly "The Staff of Life."

ARE YOU "ALL IN" ON A HOT DAY?

Hardwick Bakery

E. M. JORDAN, Prop.

Hardwick, Vermont

GLAD---To Have Your Business

ANY BUSINESS THAT tries to get along without a bank is a very small business, even then it is not too small, but that its financial affairs should be handled through a bank.

A BANK IS one of the most important factors in the business life of the country.

TRANSACT YOUR business through our bank, no matter how small it is now—we may help make it larger.

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"The Bank That Satisfies"



Remains of the old sugarhouse behind Hazen Union High School lie in a heap after its recent destruction. *photo by Ross Connelly*



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Yankee Notebook

An Interview Sticks With Me

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – There are several good features of my current racket of working with a television program rooted in the outdoors. I get to visit places I'd never have been able to get to myself, or, in some cases, even heard of. I get to meet and interview some very interesting people. And I learn stuff the best way possible: by being immersed in it with the guidance of experts who live it.

Every once in a while, even with that, an experience or an interview sticks with me afterward, long after I'm back home. That was the case this past week when the crew and I visited the Kilhams, Ben, Debbie and Ethan, at the Kilham Bear Sanctuary in the woods of Lyme Center, N.H. out the Grafton Turnpike a short distance beyond the Dartmouth Skiway.

During our forty years of living in Hanover, my family and I often heard about the bear sanctuary not many miles north of us. But it turns out that we harbored many misconceptions about its operation. We knew that Ben Kilham took in sometimes dozens of orphaned bear cubs, nurtured them through infancy, and then released them into the wild. Boy, I thought, the woods around his house must be full of bears! I wondered how the neighbors managed to deal with that.

Then came this assignment and a chance to find out how he does it. He's been at it for over thirty years now, and has the process pretty well routinized. I drove over from Montpelier early on a Monday morning to film an interview with him. We started indoors, in the air-conditioned conference room of what appeared to be a new office-storehouse-bear barn. Kiki, who'd been excited outdoors by the smell of bears, had been running in circles. In the conference room, Ben proffered her a sturdy and experienced hand, and she settled down beside his chair for a scratch. He found her sweet spot in about a second, and within a minute she was lying on her back for a belly scratch. Clearly, Ben knows his business.

His wife, Debbie, does too. She brought a platter of freshly baked cookies piled high enough for a Hollywood production crew.

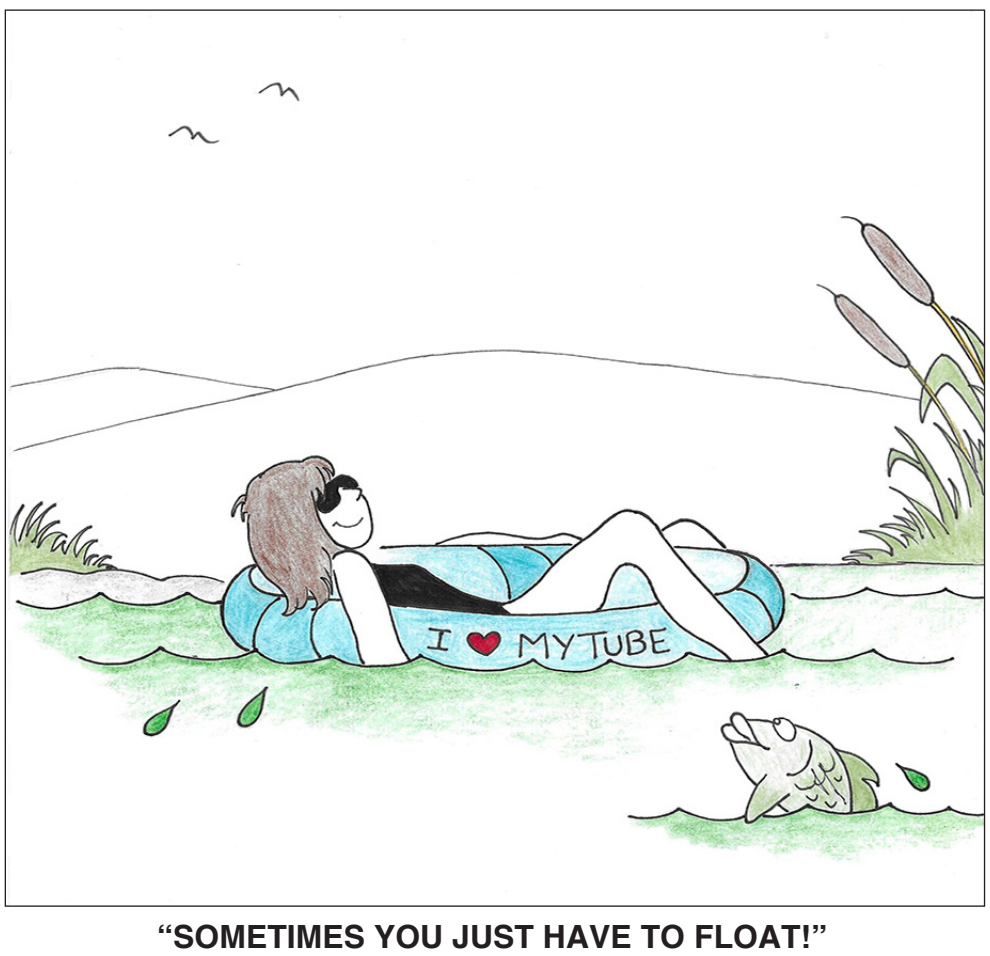
I felt an instant affinity for both of them, but especially Ben. He's in his seventies, and has recently developed symptoms of Parkinson's. I shared my neuropathy with him, and we settled into comfortable lawn chairs on the deck of the building. "You've probably done this before," I ventured. "Yes," he smiled. "About a thousand times." Ben and Debbie have been interviewed, filmed, and written about six ways to Sunday. Still, there was a lot I needed to know about his operation.

The newborn orphan cubs begin to come in during late winter, when mother bears and their cubs emerge from their dens. The mother, in one way or another, is killed, injured, or falls ill, and the tiny cubs are left to forage for themselves, which they can't do yet. The commonest cause of orphanage seems to be that the mother is shot while raiding a chicken coop. As human habitation moves ever farther into the woods, it encroaches on the bears' ancestral home, and a coop full of chickens, especially in the early spring, is like an ice cream truck in a summer neighborhood.

The cubs are brought to the sanctuary mostly by fish and wildlife agents. Ethan, who's lately taking over the day-to-day routine of caring for them, dons coveralls that look not a lot unlike a bear and tries to act like one in his interactions with them. Visitors are not welcome at the center, in order to keep the cubs as "wild" as possible. Bears naturally fear humans more than people fear them, and to keep everybody safe, the center tries to avoid habituation.

The little guys, 23 of them, are in a large screened room on one side of the barn. They wrestle just like puppies, climb as fast as cats up handy chunks of tree trunk, swing in an old suspended tractor tire, and splash happily in a tub if water. The yearlings, on the other side, were much quieter while we were there, preferring to spend the hot day lounging quietly in their loft. They're let out now and then to an electric-fenced patch of woods with ponds for splashing and dens for retreating to at hibernation time. When they're ready to leave, the agency that brought them picks them up and releases them somewhere. Thus is a calamitous beginning to a new life transformed into a second chance for a creature that the Kilhams are certain is one of the most intelligent to share our space on this part of the earth.

Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



"SOMETIMES YOU JUST HAVE TO FLOAT!"

Meeting Memo

Wednesday, July 16

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

Thursday, July 17

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

Monday, July 28

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





In the Garden

Growing Strawberries Requires Sun

by Deborah J. Benoit

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. – If seeing strawberries at farmers markets and roadside stands starts a dream about harvesting this sweet, juicy fruit, give it a try.

Strawberries (Fragaria × ananassa) are a perennial fruit hardy in United States Department of Agriculture Hardness Zones 3 to 9, depending on the variety. If you're located in Zone 4 or colder, mulching or other protection against winter cold is advisable.

A strawberry plant is about 12 inches high and 24 inches wide when mature. They commonly spread through above-ground runners (called stolons) that root and produce new plants.

Strawberries need a sunny location to grow, with at least six hours of direct sun daily. Insufficient light can result in slow growth and lack of fruit. If there is not a garden spot that will provide full sun, consider growing strawberries in a container that can be put in a suitable place.

For the best results, choose a location with rich, fertile soil that drains well. Adding a layer of mulch to a strawberry bed can help retain moisture, prevent weeds and regulate soil temperature.

A soil test will tell you about a soil's pH, available nutrients and micronutrients. It will also recommend the type of fertilizer that will benefit the plants you're growing. For more information, see go.uvm.edu/soiltest.

There are different types of strawberries to choose from that will produce berries at different times during the growing season. Within those types are numerous varieties that will determine the size, sweetness and other qualities of the strawberries you grow.

June-bearing varieties send out runners in the spring as daylight hours increase. They bear one large crop each year in June.

Everbearing varieties bear fruit when there is at least 12 hours of daylight and continue to do so throughout the season until summer's end. Day-neutral varieties will produce berries in June, again in July and once again in August.

The best times to plant strawberries are in the spring/early summer or in the fall. Avoid planting in excessive heat.

Strawberries can be purchased as single plants ready for the garden or in bundles of bare roots. Starter plants can be transplanted into the garden following a period of acclimation. Keep the crown at soil surface level when planting and water in well. For more information on transferring plants to the garden, see go.uvm.edu/starters.

If purchasing bare-root plants, they'll appear lifeless, but they're actually dormant. The bundled roots should be separated and soaked in water for about an hour. Remove any dead leaves and plant with the crown level at the soil's surface in either the garden or in pots. Be sure to water well. Before long, new growth will appear.

If growing stronger, better-producing plants, remove the flowers from June-bearing varieties during the first year. For everbearing and day-neutral varieties, remove all flowers early in the season, but let subsequent flowers remain for a late-season harvest.



For a good crop of ripe, red berries, plant strawberries in a location that receives at least six hours of direct sun daily and has rich, fertile soil that drains well. *courtesy photo*



Adding a layer of mulch to a strawberry bed can help retain moisture, prevent weeds and regulate soil temperature. *courtesy photo*

This enables the plants' energy to be focused on growth rather than fruit production early on.

In the fall, leaves can be mowed or cut back. Mulch well in late fall to protect strawberries' shallow roots during the winter.

If trying to identify a pest or disease affecting strawberries, or if there are questions about growing them or home gardening in general, contact the University of Vermont Extension Master Gardeners Helpline by phone at (802) 656-5421 (Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. from April to October) or online year-round at go.uvm.edu/gardeninghelp.

Deborah J. Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from North Adams, Mass., who is part of the Bennington County Chapter.

Business Briefs

News & Citizen Available at Retail, Public Spots

by Paul Fixx

STOWE – The News and Citizen, distributed free throughout Lamoille County and in neighboring Caledonia and Orleans County towns, announced last week that the paper will no longer be delivered to U.S. Post Office boxes.

The change was made "with you, the reader, in mind," wrote the paper's parent company, Vermont Community Newspaper Group (CNG) in an editorial that appeared in the July 10 edition. Due to months of reader calls, emails and visits "from readers who haven't received their papers in a timely manner, delivery to P.O. boxes will stop."

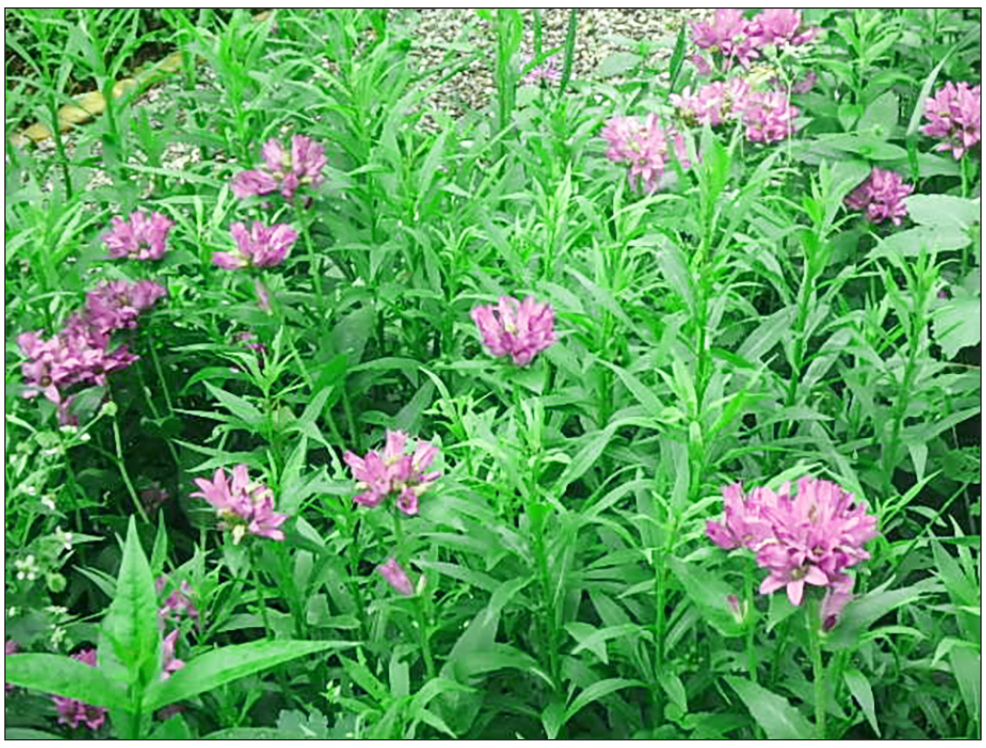
The paper will be available in more local outlets on Thursday, the same day it arrives from the printer. A list of over 30 places to pick up a copy of the paper appears in the editorial and is available at its web site, vtcng.com.

"It's also important to note that rural route addresses currently receiving the paper will still get them every week," said the editorial. It also noted that readers will "continue to find every paragraph and pixel online."

While sharing benefits of the change for readers, the editorial acknowledged there's a financial reason for making the change as well. As timely post office deliveries have declined, the cost of those deliveries has increased, "it's a decision made with an eye to our company's bottom line, even as the delivery speed has been declining, postal rate increases have been skyrocketing."

The importance of having local news was shared in the editorial too. "As a weekly printed newspaper, our advantage over television stations or digital-only newsrooms is and always has been our boots-on-the-ground presence in the communities we cover. As we often say in the weekly newspaper biz, we might not get there first, but we can do it better, and we'll stick around long after the other folks have left town."

In the Garden



Campanula glomerata spreads by root, but is not a thug. courtesy photo



Sea holly or Eryngium courtesy photo

July Flowers Worth Growing

by Henry Homeyer

CORNISH FLAT, N.H. – July is a great month for blossoms but only if you have planned for that to happen. Many gardeners go to their local nurseries in May and June, selecting plants in full bloom. But when July comes along, those gardeners are tired or hot or at the lake or in the mountains, and forget to keep on buying plants. Not me. July is a great month for blossoms: on trees, shrubs and perennials. Here are a few of my favorite July plants.

The most dramatic of my July bloomers are my Itoh peonies. These are hybrids of herbaceous and tree peonies that were developed in the mid-twentieth century by a Japanese plant breeder named Toichi Itoh. Unlike their parents, the blossoms of the most commonly sold ones are yellow, not pink, red or white. In fact, I've never seen anything but yellow ones for sale.

I have a "Garden Treasure" Itoh, and counted 46 buds on it earlier this summer. The stems of Itoh peonies are stronger than on ordinary peonies, so I don't feel the need to support them. The blossoms on mine are five- to seven-inches in diameter. And instead of blooming all at once, they bloom over a period of several weeks. These perennials are very pricey, but worth every dollar. And they last well in a vase.

Another favorite July bloomer is a small tree called Stewartia. I only got mine four years ago as it is a Zone 5 plant, and I was previously in a cold Zone 4 location and unwilling to take a chance on it. I'm still here in Cornish Flat, but our winters "ain't what they usta be," so I got one four years ago. It has a plethora of one-inch creamy-white flowers with yellow centers that are lightly fragrant, and exfoliating bark with patches of gray, orange, white and brown that is pleasing all year. I plan to prune mine to keep it around 12 feet tall, though it could go to 20 feet tall or more if I let it.

Then there is sea holly ((Eryngium amethystinum). This was a challenge for me to grow. Not because it is delicate, but because it really only thrives in dreadful soil: sandy, infertile and dry. My soil is normally high in organic matter, moist and great for most plants. The flowers are blue, numerous and spiky and great in dried arrangements. Florists love it. If you have crummy soil, this is for you. Never fertilize it.

This year my two wisteria vines started blooming on June 19, though they usually do not bloom until July 4. For decades gardeners in northern climates lamented they could grow wisteria, but couldn't get any blossoms. That is because those vines bloom on buds set the previous summer. But "Blue Moon" and "Amethyst Falls" bloom on new shoots that grow in the spring. Wisteria need trellises or supports and are vigorous growers. In southern climates, some wisteria can be invasive, spreading out everywhere, but I have never had a problem with mine. They produce hundreds of blue flowers, though to me, the blossoms smell vaguely of cat pee. "Blue Moon" re-blooms again for me later in the summer, though not profusely.

By now we're all aware that native trees and shrubs support our birds and pollinators. According to research done at the Mount Cuba Center, a botanic garden and research center for native plants in Delaware, the best of the hydrangeas is a native one called "Haas Halo," a variety of Hydrangea arborescens, or smooth hydrangea. I have it, and love that caterpillars eat the leaves. After all, it takes 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to feed a clutch of chickadees from hatching to fledging. It blooms well in shade, and is fast growing.

For exuberant perennials that spread, bloom well in July in sun or part sun and serve as great cut flowers, it is hard to beat the clustered bellflower (Campanula glomerata). Yes, some people consider it a thug as it can spread by root or by seed, but I find it easy to remove if it oversteps its welcome. The clusters of small blue-violet blossoms form two-inch balls on 24-inch stems and are a delight to grow.

I grew up in Connecticut where the mountain laurel (Kalmia latifolia) is the state flower. There it grows in the wild under the high canopy of oaks and other deciduous trees. It has small, dark evergreen leaves that look good all winter. The small blossoms are usually pink to white with stripes of pink, though now growers have varieties that are deep pink or even red. It does best in acidic soil. It will grow in full sun to full shade, but flowers best with moderate amounts of sunshine. Mine get morning sun only.

Another flower I love is called Kanutia macedonica, a perennial with no common name. Unlike most perennials, it blooms all summer, producing wine-red one inch flowers on thin stems. Each flower resembles a tiny dahlia or double peony. It loves sun and rich soil, but blooms in part shade, too. Not a great cut flower, but a worthy addition to any garden.

A great shade perennial I grow for its foliage is called "Sun King" Aralia. This plant has bright yellow-green leaves that just pop in a full or part shade garden. Mine gets bigger every year. Now, five-years old, it stands almost five feet tall and more than five feet across. It's in rich, fairly dry soil and gets some morning sun.

So if July in your garden is just ho-hum, get thee to a garden center and try something new.

Homeyer can be reached by email at henry.homeyer@comcast.net. His articles appears each month.



Itoh peonies are great in a vase. courtesy photo

The Outside Story



A blacklegged tick, also known as a deer tick, which is a carrier of Lyme disease. Blacklegged ticks now account for 99% of reported tick bite illnesses in Vermont, and more than half tested carry Lyme disease.
photo by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention via AP



lone star tick, which carries alpha-gal syndrome, an illness that leads to the development of a red meat allergy, is not fully established in Vermont.
photo by Judy Gallagher via Wikimedia Commons

Tick Populations Rise, Health Officials Urge Precautions

by Alice Finno

VERMONT – Invasive plants, new housing development and climate change are boosting tick populations in Vermont, officials say, prompting new concerns about diseases the tiny arachnids carry.

Although ticks have been present for a long time in Vermont, the population has grown substantially, said Patti Casey, environmental surveillance program director for the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets.

The blacklegged tick, or deer tick, is the type most frequently spotted in the state and responsible for 99% of the tick bite illnesses reported to the Vermont Department of Health.

"We are a high-incidence state for several blacklegged tick-driven tick-borne diseases," said Natalie Kwit, public health veterinarian for the state Department of Health. "For Lyme disease, we have had over 1,000 cases in 2023."

According to the 2018-22 Tick Pathogen Surveillance Report by the Department of Health, more than half of the blacklegged ticks analyzed carry Lyme disease, an infection that can be transmitted to humans and cause symptoms like fever, fatigue, headache, skin rash, and if left untreated can affect heart, joints, and the nervous system. In Vermont, Chittenden, Windsor and Rutland counties had the highest prevalence of blacklegged ticks infected with the disease.

Ticks can be found any time of the year when the temperature is above freezing, with their peak activity being in May and June and then again in October and November. Ticks survive by biting their host for blood, which leads to the transmission of diseases.

Other tick bite illnesses recorded in Vermont are anaplasmosis, babesiosis, hard tick relapsing fever, and Powassan virus disease, which is very rare.

Since 2015, Vermont has had the nation's highest annual number of cases of anaplasmosis. Symptoms are similar to those of Lyme disease except for the skin rash. The most common effects are fever, muscle aches, chills, malaise and headaches, but the disease can also cause people to develop anemia, low white blood cell counts, low platelet counts and elevated liver enzymes. The illness can have serious consequences if not treated, especially for old patients or people with health problems.

The American dog tick, brown dog tick, squirrel tick and woodchuck tick are other common ticks found in Vermont. The lone star tick, which carries alpha-gal syndrome, an illness that leads to the development of a red meat allergy, is not fully established in Vermont.

"We're not seeing any of the lone star tick-driven tick-borne diseases in Vermont in humans, so we're pretty confident that they're not here, but it doesn't mean that they can't geographically expand to be in Vermont in the future," Kwit said.

To prevent tick bites, Casey suggests wearing long pants tucked into socks and long-sleeve shirts when spending time outdoors in areas where ticks prosper to spot ticks more easily if they end up on clothes. Spraying EPA-registered repellents or treating clothes with permethrin is also recommended to keep ticks away.

Once home, it's advisable to put the clothes in the dryer on high heat for 10 minutes to kill potential ticks and take a shower, checking the body and scalp to spot bumps.

If you find there is a tick, it should be removed quickly using tweezers, grabbing the tick as close as possible to the skin surface and pulling upward steadily, and then cleaning the area with rubbing alcohol, soap and water. The Vermont Department of Health provides detailed guidelines on how to remove ticks.

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets allows people to send ticks to be identified. The agency doesn't test the ticks for diseases, but it will inform people of the species, sex and age of the tick, giving them information they can tell their doctor to assess the best course of treatment in case they later develop symptoms.

Since many people don't realize they have been bitten by a tick, experts recommend being on the lookout for potential symptoms, especially after outdoor activities.

The agency also conducts a tick surveillance program in collaboration with the Vermont Health Department and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, collecting ticks across Vermont to test them and gather data on tick species, their habitats and the diseases they may carry.

Casey said the program has been temporarily suspended this year due to uncertainty surrounding funding. The priority has instead shifted to mosquito surveillance to track illnesses such as Eastern equine encephalitis.

"Most of us live in Vermont, in part, because it's so beautiful, and we like to be outdoors in it. And it's just that things have changed a little bit, and now we need to be very vigilant about interactions with ticks to try to avoid tick bites," Casey said. "The good news is that if we're careful, we can really drastically lower our risk for contracting a tick-borne illness."

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HARDWICK GAZETTE

The Outside Story

Treetop Gem: Brilliant Blackburnian Warbler

by Laurie D. Morrissey

HOPKINTON, N.H. – One recent morning, trying to find the source of a warbler trill high in a white pine tree, I was rewarded with a brilliant flash of orange. It was my first sighting of a Blackburnian warbler, one of the most beautiful songbirds in the northern woods.

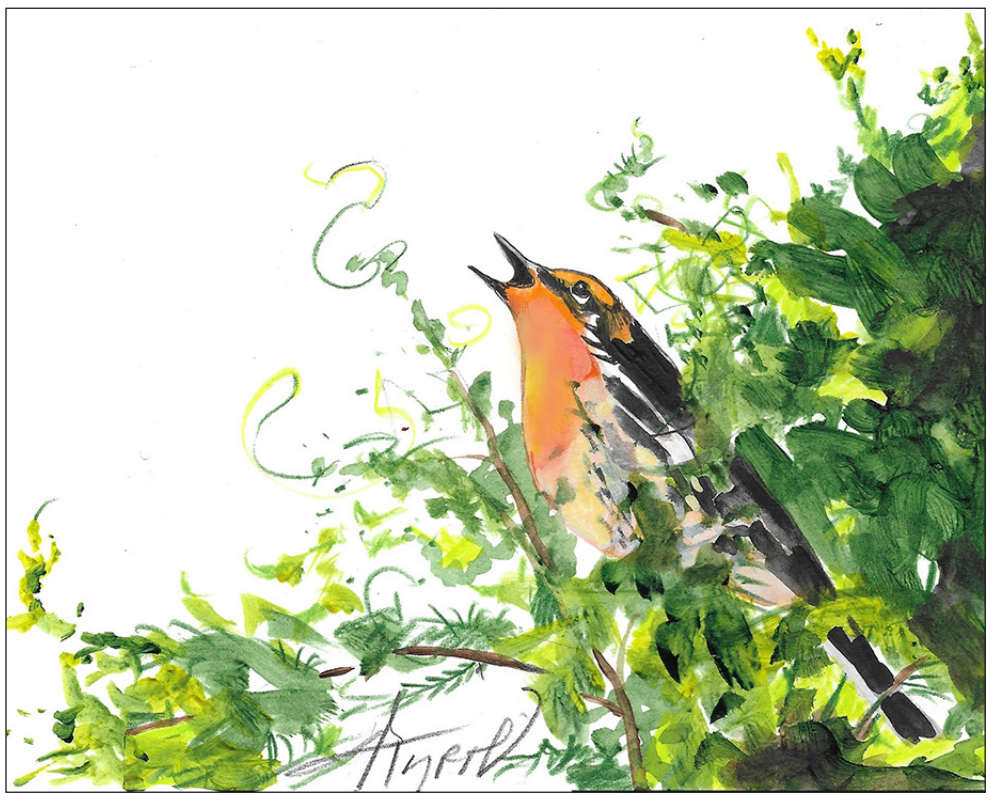
While Blackburnian warblers are not uncommon in mature conifer and mixed hardwood forests, they can be hard to see, since they forage and nest high in the branches. But once spotted, they are easy to identify. These avian gems are medium-sized, four to six inches long. During breeding season, the male has a bright orange throat, yellow and black facial markings, white wing patches and a black back with white streaks. The female is a paler, yellower version.

"The Blackburnian warbler is one of my favorite birds, with its fiery orange plumage and ethereal song," said Tim Duclos of Vermont Audubon. "They're some of the first warblers to return each year, and I'm always excited to see and hear them." Despite their ability to evade searching eyes, they are also more common than a number of other warblers. "They may not visit your feeder, but they might be right behind your house," said Duclos.

Blackburnians arrive in the Northeast in May. Males return first and potential mates come a few days later. Males sing from the tips of evergreens and the outermost branches of mature deciduous trees, where they deliver two main songs. Renowned birdsong expert Donald Kroodsma refers to these two vocalizations as dawn song and day song. In "Birdsong by the Seasons," he describes listening to 12 males on one morning in western Massachusetts and analyzing their songs. Each male has a unique take on the dawn song and the day song and may have more than one version of each.

My first Blackburnian was singing its day song, an increasingly rapid series of two-note phrases ending with a slightly longer one. I would need to be up before sunrise to hear the dawn song, a series of quick rising whistles followed by a high-frequency chatter and ending with such high notes that most people cannot hear them. Kroodsma describes the beginning phrase of the dawn song as sounding like the bird is juggling pebbles in its throat.

During courtship, male Blackburnian warblers flick their tails and peck at branches to attract the attention of potential mates. The females build nests as high as 80 feet up in the branches of hemlocks and other conifers. They lay three to five eggs in a tiny cup lined with lichen, moss and grass. These birds are gleaners, hopping around



Blackburnian Warbler

in the branches and foraging for insects by starting near the base of a branch and moving outward before moving to the next branch. Besides insects of all kinds, Blackburnian warblers feast on caterpillars, including spruce budworm larvae.

Unlike some warblers, which are in steep decline, the Blackburnian appears to be stable. According to conservation biologists at the Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE), the population trend of the Blackburnian warbler over the past 35 years is flat, though there have been fluctuations up and down.

"Blackburnian and other mature-forest warblers appear to be doing well now that our forests consist of more climax stands of older trees, a habitat that is rather stable over the long-term, barring major logging or large-scale events such as ice storms, fire, disease and insect outbreaks," said VCE's Steve Faccio. "The warblers with the steepest declines tend to be those that utilize early successional habitat, such as blue-winged and chestnut-sided warblers."

Deforestation in the bird's winter habitat in Central and South America could affect the Blackburnian warbler along with other neotropical migrants. Climate change also presents a threat. "We're seeing more extreme weather events than in the past, causing birds to get blown off course or stranded for long periods of time," said Duclos.

This time of year, Blackburnians are well hidden by foliage. But when I hear a trill in the treetops, I look up. If a ray of sunshine strikes the throat of a Blackburnian warbler at just the right angle, I get to see the avian gem in all its glory.

Laurie D. Morrissey is a writer who lives in Hopkinton, N.H. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol.



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Sunday in East Hardwick, this hydrangea was in full bloom.
photo by Dawn Gustafson

Our Communities

Moss Identification Walk, July 17

CRAFTSBURY – A moss identification walk with ecologist Jeff Parsons will be held July 17, at 5 p.m., with a walk through a cedar swamp in Craftsbury. Parsons will identify different types of mosses. Meet at the Craftsbury Academy Woodlot, 1880 Wylie Hill Road, Craftsbury Common. Wear sturdy shoes for hiking in places that may be wet, and take insect and tick precautions. For more information, contact the library at (802) 586-9683.

Forester Answers Questions, July 17

VERMONT – Vermont Coverts will present University of Vermont Extension Forester Ali Kosiba online n Thursday, July 17, noon to 1 p.m., to discuss key issues and questions around forest and woodlands facing Vermont landowners. The session will start with a brief presentation followed by time to answer questions. Register at vtcoverts.us to submit questions.

Frankel to Speak, July 21

GREENSBORO – Eve Frankel, The Nature Conservancy (TNC-VT) Vermont state director since 2023, will speak at the Greensboro Land Trust (GLT) annual meeting in Fellowship Hall, Monday, July 21, at 7:30 p.m. Frankel joined TNC-VT as director of communications in 2014. After graduating from American University, Washington, D.C., she pursued independent study in Ghana under the School for International Training in Putney. Before joining TNC, she worked with renewable energy companies on wind and battery energy storage. GLT and TNC have collaborated closely since the former's founding in 1992. TNC-VT's first natural area was Barr Hill, established in 1971.

This event is open to the public.

Mihaly to Speak, July 22

CRAFTSBURY – Children's book author Christy Mihaly will be reading from her books at the Craftsbury Public Library on Tuesday, July 22 at 3:30 p.m., and all children will be invited to pick out two free books as part of the summer readers program. Mihaly is an award-winning Vermont children's author who has written over 40 books. She will read her book, "Hey, Hey, Hay! A Tale of Bales and the Machines That Make Them," a rhyming picture book about a mother-daughter team bringing in the hay. Her other picture books include "Patience, Patches!,"a dog's-eye view of a new baby's arrival in the family, and "Free for You and Me: What Our First Amendment Means."

Craftsbury Public Library hosts programs for school-aged children every Tuesday and Friday at 3:30 p.m. through early August. For more information, contact the library at (802) 586-9683.

Colors of the Wild, July 30

MARSHFIELD – Wednesday, July 30, at 6:30 p.m., a Vermont Natural History Museum program will explore some of the differences in animals' visual experiences and how plants and animals make use of sight and color. While human beings live in a world of color and detail, many animals see things a little differently. More info at jaquithpubliclibrary.org or (802) 426-3581.

Teen Summer Snacks, July 31

HARDWICK – Thursday, July 31, at 11 a.m., ages 12 to 18 can make summer snacks like watermelon pizza, s'mores dip, and more. For more information, contact jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

Education

Winter Named to the Dean's List

MEDFORD, Mass. – Shea Winter of Plainfield, Vt., Class of 2028, was named to the dean's list at Tufts University for the spring 2025 semester. Dean's list honors at Tufts University require a semester grade point average of 3.4 or greater.

Exercise Class, Tuesdays

GREENSBORO – The Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging offers a new Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program (AFEP) class at the Highland Center for the Arts on Tuesdays at 11 a.m. These gentle, low-impact classes are for adults looking to improve strength, balance, and flexibility, especially those managing arthritis. Registration forms will be available on site.

For more information, contact esanderson@nekcouncil.org or (802) 751-0431. The Highland Center for the Arts is located at 2875 Hardwick St.

Fair Sparrow, July 31

MARSHFIELD – Fair Sparrow features the vocal and instrumental talents of three Central Vermont musicians, Patti Casey, Ally Tarwater and Susannah Blachly. Native Vermonter Patti Casey is a singer, songwriter and instrumentalist, a touring musician, a founding member of the Bluegrass Gospel Project and a member of Woods Tea Company. Ally Tarwater is a musician, songwriter and music educator with expertise in flute, voice and ukulele. In addition to Fair Sparrow, Tarwater performs with Rootbound, the Vermont Philharmonic Orchestra and Pipe Dreams Flute Quartet. Susannah Blachly is a fiddler, tunesmith, and singer-songwriter who has performed with numerous bands over the years and produced four albums of original music, two of which were ranked among the Ten Best Albums of The Year by Seven Days. There will be a book and bake sale and food vendors. More information at jaquithpubliclibrary.org or (802) 426-3581.

Taming Knotweed, Thursdays, Saturdays

by Craftsbury Conservation Commission

CRAFTSBURY -- The Craftsbury Conservation Commission offers twice weekly training on eradicating invasive knotweed at its Eradication Test site on Town Highway 19 across from Little Hosmer dam. Opportunities are available two times each week in summer on Thursday at 4:30 p.m. and Saturday at 11 a.m. During one hour, volunteers will learn how to eradicate knotweed and dispose of it properly. Bring water, bug spray, gloves, assorted clippers and shovels. This project is funded by a watershed grant from Vermont Fish and Wildlife. No RSVP is needed.

Business Briefs



Caja Taqueria, operated by Bryan Palilonis, reopened Tuesday, July 9 for the summer, with a rotating menu from its taco truck, just off the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail at 154 W. Route 14, Hardwick. Hours are Tuesday to Friday from 11:30 a.m., for lunch, through 7 p.m. The Caja Madera taco truck is at Highland Lodge for Margarita Mondays from 4 to 8 p.m. through September 1.

courtesy photo

OUR E-MAILS

news@hardwickgazette.org
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Education



Kelly Locke, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union assistant director of student services highlights Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union's (OSSU) recognition as a Gold Level District of Distinction by the Northeast Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports Network. OSSU was the only recipient from the state of Vermont to receive the distinction. photo by Lisa Stinson

OSSU Support of Positive Behavior Receives Gold Award

by OSSU staff

AREA SCHOOLS – Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) was recently recognized as a Gold

Level District of Distinction by the Northeast Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (NEPBIS) Network. OSSU was the only recipient from the state of Vermont to receive this distinction.

PBIS is a strategic, systems approach that enables schools to create a culture of positive behaviors

through teaching and acknowledgement and to promote a safe and equitable learning environment for all students.

All OSSU schools incorporate unique strategies to promote and reinforce a culture of positive

behaviors, including weekly community meetings and individual recognition. Students are rewarded with grade-level and whole-school PBIS celebrations throughout the school year once they have earned a certain number of positive behavior points.

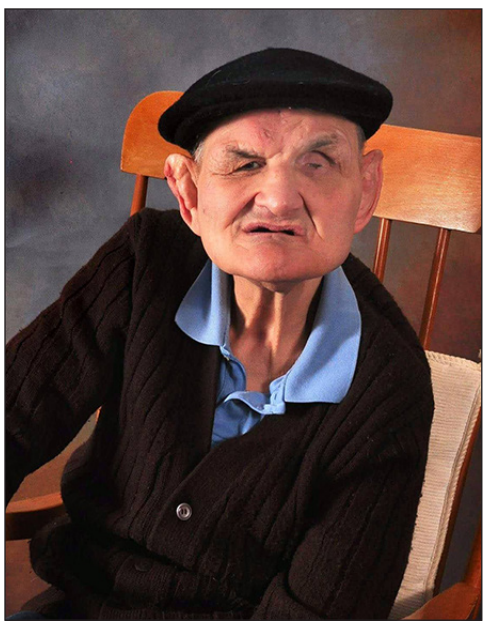
"We are incredibly proud to be recognized as a Gold-Level District of Distinction by NEPBIS," said Kelly Locke, OSSU assistant director of student services. "This honor reflects the unwavering dedication, collaboration and hard work of our educators, staff and students across the SU. Together, we've built a strong foundation for positive behavior, inclusive practices and a culture where all learners can thrive."



Phoebe Bunten set up a table selling chocolate chip cookies, lemonade and blackberry lemonade at the Hardwick Farmers Market Children's Market Day, Friday, July 11. photo by Paul Fixx

Obituaries

Larry Joseph Gendron

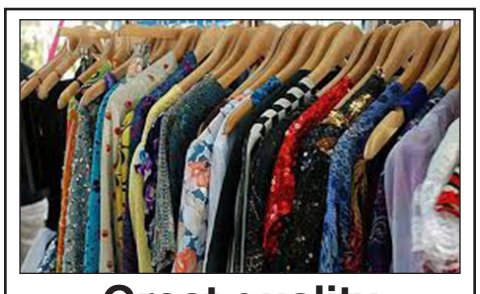


Larry Joseph Gendron

HARDWICK – Larry Joseph Gendron, 76, left his earthly dwelling to join his parents. He passed away Monday, July 14, at the home of his sister and respite provider, Sandra Gendron. He was born in Burlington, February 12, 1949, to parents Mildred (Rockwell) and Edmund Gendron. Larry was hospitalized at the age of two months with spinal meningitis which left him unable to hear or speak. He attended the Austine School for the Deaf in Brattleboro, before being transferred to the Brandon Training School where he resided until he was placed in a group home in Rutland. He was later relocated to the Northeast Kingdom to be closer to his family where he had numerous home and respite providers whom he loved dearly. The family wishes to thank his most recent home care provider, Carol Boivin, who lovingly shared her home in Hyde Park with our brother for 15 years. Larry had a loving personality, never met a stranger he didn't like and was a child at heart. He could easily melt our hearts with his excitement, his joy of life and love for everything family. He leaves an immeasurable empty place in our hearts. Larry enjoyed playing Connect Four, going out for creemees, going for drives, being with his family, swimming, bowling and participating in Special Olympics. Larry was predeceased by his parents. He is survived by his nine siblings: David Gendron (Elaine); Linda Perry; Deborah Brown (Ronald); Mary Jane Fradette (Mario); Michael Gendron (Ruth); Janet Davis (Edward); Brenda Barton (Tom); Sandra Gendron and partner, Elwin Sheltra; and Carol Slayton (Edward). He is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and his paternal Aunt Marion Howard of Burlington. A graveside service in Larry's honor will be held on Saturday, July 19, at 10 a.m., in Fairview Cemetery, Hardwick with a reception to follow at the Hardwick American Legion, Post No. 7. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Special Olympics Vermont, 16 Gregory Dr #2, South Burlington, VT 05403. Arrangements are with the des Groseilliers Funeral Home. Condolences and memories of Larry may be shared with his family at dgfunerals.com.

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Caledonia Unit, Docket No. 25-PR-02954

In re Estate of: Edward George Keene
NOTICE TO CREDITORS
To the Creditors of: Edward George Keene, late of East Hardwick, Vermont.
I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.
Dated: 7-8-2025
Signature of Fiduciary: Aren Keene
Executor/Administrator: Aren Keene
c/o Stackpole & French Law Offices
P.O. Box 819, Stowe, Vermont 05672
(802) 253-7339
marlene@stackpolefrench.com
Name of Publication: The Hardwick Gazette
Publication Date: July 16, 2025
Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Caledonia Probate Division
Address of Probate Court: 1126 Main Street, Suite 1
St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Vermont Film Gives Voice to Quiet Crisis Facing Boys, Young Men

by Kevin O'Conoor

MONTPELIER – "Gone Guys," a documentary about male social isolation and its consequences, is set to tour the state in a series of free screenings. Adjusting 90 pounds of gym weights, a Vermont teenager named Gabe introduced himself to a visiting filmmaker before noting that growing up male could be a heavy lift.

"In my experience in school, like elementary school, I got in trouble a lot," the boy told the man with a camera and microphone. "I felt very alone, and I just felt no one understood me. I think that a lot of the older generation, they might think that, you know, guys in my generation have much less drive."

Instead, many boys and young men are struggling with social isolation and consequences such as substance abuse and suicide, state and national statistics show. That's why the Montpelier-based Well Told Films is set to debut a new documentary, "Gone Guys," this week to kick off a series of free screenings throughout Vermont.

"Something is out of sync for many boys and young men, and it's showing up in classrooms, job sites and communities," Dan Smith, president of the Vermont Community Foundation, said in an interview. "We recognize the urgency and opportunity to create space for people to better understand."

Smith's organization has teamed with the state's Richard E. & Deborah L. Tarrant Foundation to sponsor the 45-minute film and follow-up talks.

"When we began researching this film, the idea of exploring the challenges facing boys and men was often met with confusion," said its director, Chad Ervin. "But in conversation after conversation, two groups understood our focus immediately: parents of boys and educators. Their reaction was almost always the same: 'Thank you. It's about time.'"

Ervin and producer Angela Snow collected data as evidence of what they call a "quiet crisis."

Men earned 13% more bachelor's degrees than women in 1970, only to go on to receive 16% fewer degrees than women in the half-century since, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Boys now make up only one-third of U.S. high schoolers with the top 10% grade point averages, yet almost two-thirds of students in the bottom 10%, the center says.

The country's work participation rate for "prime age" men has dropped from 97% in 1960 to 88% today, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. And men total 71% of all opioid deaths, while their suicide rate is four times the figure for women, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports.

The documentary features interviews with Vermont educators, mentors and young men, as well as with Richard V. Reeves, author of the internationally recognized book "Of Boys and Men: Why the Modern Male Is Struggling, Why It Matters, and What to Do About It."

"We're landing at a moment when the nation is really starting to talk about this," said Lauren Curry, executive director of the Tarrant Foundation. "I think this film invites everyone into the conversation."



A camera operator from the Montpelier-based Well Told Films talks with a Vermont boy for the new documentary "Gone Guys."

photo by Well Told Films

Addressing the rise of male disengagement, the online "manosphere" and radicalization, the film doesn't advocate for any particular solution. Instead, it offers examples such as Montpelier High School's "Healthy Masculinity" class, the University of Vermont's "Men & Masculinities" program and the Associated General Contractors of Vermont's trainings on overdose prevention and mental health.

"We always held firm to the focus of creating a film that seeks to listen to boys and young men and learn from their perspectives and priorities, not preach to them about what they should be doing," Ervin said.

The film opened in St. Johnsbury on July 11 before moving on to free screenings and discussions in Bellows Falls, Brattleboro, Burlington, Montpelier and White River Junction.

"We must hold two truths at once," said Smith from the Vermont Community Foundation. "That advancing opportunity for women and girls remains essential, and that boys and young men are struggling in ways we can no longer ignore."

Learn more at goneguysfilm.com





Wootton Prints, Paintings Feature Whimsical Imagination

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

HARDWICK – Lulu Wootton of Craftsbury is having a show of over two dozen of her prints and paintings at the Hardwick Town House this month until July 24. These works are very lively and colorful; frequently of animals with a whimsical imagination.

She says in her artist's statement, "My art allows me to allegorically present and document my insights of the world that surrounds me. I seek a balance to the current political brutality with images that depict the joy and kindness, grace and respect that are still strong elements of our lives today, despite the many confusions and fears of our era."

She has been making prints for about 10 years and has taught her craft at Sterling College and in the Wonder Arts program, as well as exhibiting widely in the Northeast Kingdom.

Describing the print process, she says, "I enjoy it when unexpected or startling images emerge from the carved lines and color overlays, noting that "printmaking can be particularly spontaneous and surprising."

Her prints in black and white or color show flocking birds in almost abstract patterns ("Taking a Garden, This Way That Way"), a chicken in front of a hen house. ("Oh, the Fox is in the town"), a cat with a butterfly ("All I ever Wanted"), a duck by cattails and water ("Little Hosmer"), an oversized ant ("Aunty, in several permutations"), a rabbit caterpillar, pig and bird in a horizontal format ("Parade"), a turtle ("The Snapper") and a mythical bird ("Phoenix").

The circus is another theme, as with a figure in the spotlight juggling ("Drama"), a clown with a circus tent in the background ("Oh, Joy"), a person on a trapeze ("Daring"), a seal balancing a ball on its nose ("Balance"), and two performers entering the circus ring, the smaller upside down on top of the other ("Ja Da"), Apparently Wootton's father was connected to the circus at one point in his life.

Other subjects are a covered bridge ("Still Life in Darkness"), a town in Croatia ("Evening on the Hill, and variations"), flowers in a vase somewhat precariously on a railing ("Out on a Ledge"), a large six section print of a shadowy figure in a winter landscape, and an amusing piece of three couples of dancing caps ("Arm and Arm with Joy"). All these prints are well composed with vibrant lines, harmonious colors, positive and negative spaces of the underlying white paper, a good sense of proportion and interesting visual textures and rhythms.

Her paintings are on a different bigger scale and more architectural in their settings. Quite delightful is one with sheep and pigs leaning over a fence observed by a cat in the lower left, surrounded by lush flowers. Similarly comic is one with a white ermine standing up inquisitively in the interior doorway of a house. Not infrequently ermine make their way into people's homes in the winter. A smaller painting of a house and trees is quit colorful, while another of an inside stairway is a bit mysterious.

The Hardwick Town House will be open on Thursday evenings at least an hour before the 7:30 p.m. performances of the Craftsbury Chamber Players and possibly at other times.

Free Concerts Begin July 22

CABOT – Cabot Arts will present free summer concerts on Tuesday evenings on the Cabot Village Common, 148 Main Street, July 22 through August 26. Concerts begin at 6 p.m. The Village Common is located at 3148 Main St. A different Food Truck will set up for each concert. Attendees should bring a lawn chair and blanket. The rain location will be at the Cabot Church.

Programs include Tuesday, July 22, Bloodroot Gap. Bloodroot Gap won the 2024 Podunk Bluegrass Festival band competition, both the judges' pick and Fan Favorite award. The food truck will be Spicey Spoke.

D. Davis and Marc Gwinn, a jazz-folk-pop group, will perform on Tuesday, July 29, playing tunes to lift the spirits. The food truck will be Maharaja Spice. Then on Tuesday, August 5, New Lost Nation, an old-time string band will perform. The MexiRico Auténtico food truck will be on hand.

Jaded Ravins, a rock-country group, will perform Americana, and country rock originals on Tuesday, August 12. The food truck will be Trina's Cuisine. On Tuesday, August 19, Sap Line, a traditional folk group, will play music rooted in New England, Maritime Canada, Scotland, Ireland and Appalachia. Stag and Thistle will be the food truck. Marsh Lights, a folk and bluegrass group, performs Tuesday, August 26. The food truck is Cabot Village Store.

For information visit cabotarts.org/summer-music-series

Book to Benefit Library

CRAFTSBURY – Longtime Craftsbury residents author Thomas Twetten and photographer Harry Miller have teamed up to create a book about Craftsbury and its people, past and present.

The book, "Craftsbury Celebration," documents over 70 homes built before 1860 that are still in use. Each page tells the history of a home and its occupants, accompanied by full-color photographs. There are short essays about various public buildings in town as well as historic photos throughout the book.

The book was created as a fundraiser, with all the proceeds from the limited edition going to the Craftsbury Public Library. There will be only 500 copies, signed and numbered by the author and photographer. The book is now available for pre-sale and shipping online at craftsburypubliclibrary.org/craftsbury-book. Physical copies can be purchased and picked up at, or after, a book launch on Friday, August 8, at 6 p.m.

Details about the launch events will be announced at a later date.

Art Show Opening, July 20

MARSHFIELD – An art show opening and poetry reading will be held Sunday, July 20, 2 to 4 p.m., at the Jaquith Public Library. "Cut and Paste" and "Fire, " a ceramic and collage exhibition by the collagistas and ceramicist Betsy Chodorkoff will be on exhibit with two- and three-dimensional collages by Carole Hass, Lori Stroutsos, Suzanne Rexford-Winston, Gabrielle Dietzel, Julie Tessler, and Ellen Urman. Mary Elder Jacobsen and Jane Shore will read their poetry. Refreshments will be served.

For more information at email jaquithpubliclibrary.org or (802) 426-3581.

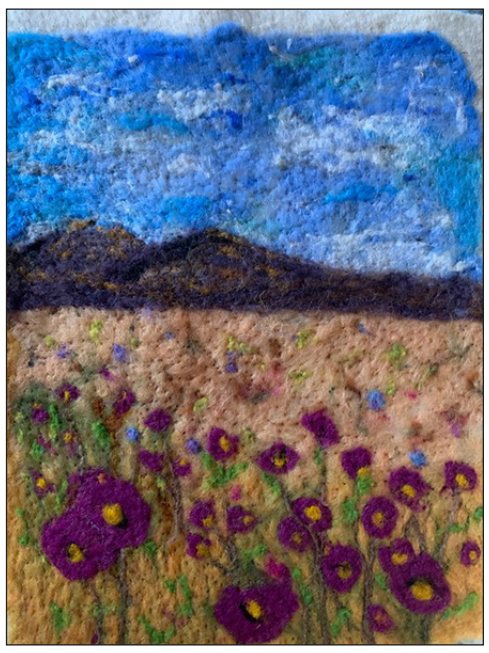
Shakespeare Festival Presents "Woman to Woman"

PLAINFIELD – The newly formed Green Mountain Shakespeare Festival presents "Woman to Woman: Two-Woman Scenes from Shakespeare," conceived by Tom Blachly, and featuring Savannah Yates and Maeve McCurdy, July 31, Aug. 1 and Aug. 2 at 7 p.m., and Aug. 3 at 2 p.m., in the Greatwood Dining Hall on The Creative Campus at Goddard, 123 Pitkin Road.

Tickets are available at theaterengine.com, along with an Elizabethan meal served beforehand for an additional price.

See News Happening In Your Town? Let Us Know!
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Summer Music from Greensboro
presents
The Neave Trio
Tuesday, July 22nd, 2025, 7:30 p.m.
Hailed by *Fanfare* magazine as 'having exceeded the Gold Standard and moved on to Platinum', the Neave Trio has emerged as one of the finest young ensembles of its generation. It has been praised for its 'bright and radiant music making' by the critic Robert Sherman (WQXR Radio), and described as 'a consummate ensemble' by the *Palm Beach Daily News* and 'a brilliant trio' by MusicWeb International.
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Tickets at the door: $22. Children under 18: free
www.SummerMusicFromGreensboro.net



Christine Foster "Moon Shadows"

Foster, LaPré Grabon Exhibit through Aug. 3

EAST HARDWICK – Artwork by Christine Foster and Marie LaPré Grabon will be on exhibit at White Water Gallery through August 3. The show, "Painting With Wool," features needle-felted paintings and hooked wall hangings. Both artists are inspired by nature and family. An opening reception for the artists will be held on July 20, 4 to 7 p.m., and will also feature music by Joseph Grabon. Gallery hours are Sundays from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment.

For more information call (802) 563-2037.



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Chamber Players Feature Works by Hayden, Brahms, Bowen

REVIEW

by David K. Rodgers

HARDWICK – The Craftsbury Chamber Players gave its first concert of the summer season in Hardwick at the Town House last Thursday evening, featuring significant works by Haydn and Brahms as well as a less known English composer, Bowen, scored for four, three and two musicians respectively.

The "Quartet Op. 76 No. 2 in D Minor," entitled "Quinten," was written later in Hayden's life, 1797, when he was freer in his musical experiments, it has been said to be influenced by his much younger compatriot, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791). The work features a reversal of the order of effects. With Amy Sims and Brooke Quiggins on violins, Kenji Bunch on viola and Francis Rowell on cello, this quartet started right off with an engaging melody, a little darkly shaded in the minor key at first but switching quickly into a lighter ambiance, and then back again several times throughout this initial allegro movement. Haydn's music is very precise and clear, full of light and the four players brought a complementary precision to this performance.

The second section, Andante di molto piutorto allegretto, had a pleasant theme with a dignified rhythm, in a slower tempo, along with sophisticated variations not necessarily predictable. The Menueto, Allegro ma non troppo had dance-like rhythms with some insistent short strokes on all the strings, while the fourth movement, Vivace Assai was softer and more delicate, having interesting texture in the interplay of the instruments.

York Bowen (1894-1961) was a precocious student at the Royal Academy of Music in London and his "Sonata in c minor, Op. 18" for viola and piano, composed in 1905, was an attempt to give the viola more of a repertoire, which with the exception of Berlioz's "Harold in Italy" and a few other works it never received much in the 19th century. Kenji Bunch on viola and Monica Ohuchi on piano gave a very sympathetic rendition of the three parts of this piece.

The Allegro moderato began in the lower range of the viola and developed a great flowing momentum in the melody, which explored the romantic richness of color and feeling the viola is capable of, here with a masterful interplay of the piano and viola in their sensitive interpretation. The second section, Poco lento cantabile, had a quite lovely tune and appropriately to the cantabile indication, did have a singing voice like a folk song. The expressive, darker shades of the viola, with nuanced restrained, juxtaposed with the lighter texture of the piano, made this a well integrated performance. The Finale: Presto, was very lively in its much faster tempo, with jaunty, dance-like rhythms, building towards the swirling climax of the theme, all harmoniously scored.

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897) completed his "Trio No. 2 in C Major, Op. 87" between 1880-82, which was played by Amy Sims on viola, Frances Rowell on cello and Monica Ohuchi on piano. Brahms lived in the shadow of Beethoven, but curiously he never went as far as the beyond-the-beyond experiments of Beethoven's late piano sonatas and quartets. But he does have an intriguing beginning to this trio like his mentor before developing the gorgeous melody of the initial Allegro moderato of the first movement. The combination of instruments unfolds in layers of sound and rhythms, with each player being featured in turn. The Andante con moto had a slower pace, again with solo passages to methodically enhance the themes, with echoing resonances from the other instruments. The Scherzo had a particularly beautiful tune with a joyous feeling, very much from the heart. There were truly sublime moments, with repeated dramatic glissandos down the keyboard of the piano. The final Allegro glocoso continued this fast momentum with another great melody having brilliant tonality, in which the three musicians demonstrated consummate coordination in their playing, earning them a well deserved standing ovation.

The next concert by the Craftsbury Chamber Players will be in Hardwick on Thursday, July 17 and Wednesday, July 16, in Burlington at the Elley-Long Music Center, and has pieces by Chausson, Kurtag, Bunch and d'Indy on the program. For more information call (802) 586-0616 or go online at info@ccpvt.ort.



A greeter behind Teresa Bellavance's West Church Street home wishes Lamoille Valley Rail Trail travelers "Happy trails," last weekend.

photo by Ross Connelly

Events

Thursday, July 17

DAVE KELLER and band perform original Soul and Blues-inspired songs, 6:30 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, Marshfield. Book, bake sale and food vendors. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary.org or (802) 426-3581.

MAKE SOCK MONSTERS, 11 a.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library, Hardwick. All ages welcome. Information: jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

WRITING WORKSHOP for those affected by flooding, 7 p.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library, 93 N. Main St., Hardwick. Writing prompts, no experience needed. Information: (802) 472-5948.

BOOKMAKING with Tule Fogg, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m., John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury. Information: jwsimpsonmemorial.org.

VERMONT COVERTS will present UVM Extension Forester Ali Kosiba online, noon to 1 p.m., to discuss key issues and questions around forest and woodlands facing Vermont landowners. Register at vtcoverts.us.

Saturday, July 19

GIRL SCOUT GATHERING, 2 - 4 p.m., John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury. Information: jwsimpsonmemorial.org.

WOODBURY FIRE DEPARTMENT Open house, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., Rte. 14, Woodbury.

Tuesday, July 22

JERRY SCHNEIDER presents slides of local butterflies, 11 a.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library, Hardwick. For ages 5 and up. Butterfly t-shirt craft. Information: jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

CABOT ARTS free concert, 6 p.m., Cabot Village Common, 148 Main St. Rain location at the Cabot Church. Music by Bloodroot Gap. Spicey Spoke food truck. Information: cabotarts.org/summer-music-series.

Ongoing Events

PLAINFIELD FARMERS MARKET, 4 to 7 p.m., Fridays, 13 Mill St. Food and craft vendors, baked goods, fruits and veggies and more.

HARDWICK PEACE (& Ceasefire) VIGIL, Thursdays, 4:30 - 5:30 p.m., Hardwick Peace Park, S. Main St., Hardwick. (beside the river).

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

FRIENDS OF THE JEUDEVINE LIBRARY, meets the third Tuesday of every month, 5:15 p.m., at the library, N. Main St., Hardwick.

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

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

See EVENTS, Next Page

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Events

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, Atkins Field, Granite St., Hardwick, 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 gin 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.
PILATES, at the Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common. Mondays (level 1), 9 a.m., Wednesdays (Mat Level 2), 9 a.m.; Fridays (level 3), 9 a.m.
MENDING MONDAYS, 3 p.m., Craftsbury Public Library.
DANCE, Mondays and Thursdays, 5:30 p.m., Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.
COMMFIT, 6 p.m., Craftsbury Outdoor Center.
QIGONG, Tuesdays, 8:30 a.m., at the Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.
CRAFTFIT, Tuesdays, 4:30 p.m., Thursdays, 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays, 2:30 p.m. Craftsbury Outdoor Center.
ALL LEVELS TAIJI, Tuesdays, 6 p.m. Fridays, Intermediate Taiji, 10:15 a.m., Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.
CHAIR YOGA, Wednesdays, 9 a.m., Traditional Yoga, 5 p.m., Craftsbury Outdoor Center.
CRAFTSBURY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, open 10 a.m. - noon.
FOOD SHARE, noon to 2 p.m., United Church of Craftsbury.
CRAFTSBURY FARMERS MARKET, Saturdays, 10 a.m. - 1 p.m, on the Common.
LEGOS & LISTENING, 3:30 p.m., Craftsbury Public Library.
TAMING KNOTWEED, Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. and Saturdays, 11 a.m., Town Highway 19 across from Little Hosmer Dam. Offered by the Craftsbury Conservation Commission. Bring water, bug spray, gloves and assorted clippers andshovels.

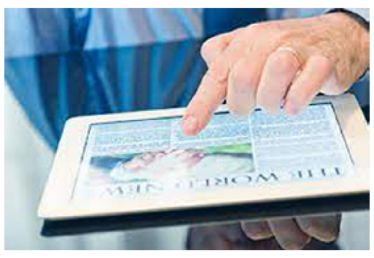
Exhibits

ART SHOW OPENING and poetry reading, Sunday, July 20, 2 to 4 p.m., Jaquith Public Library. Refreshments served. Information: jaquithpubliclibrary.org or (802) 426-3581.
LULU WOOTTON exhibits her art at the Hardwick Town House, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 2 to 6 p.m. through July 23 and during Thursday evening concerts.
BEN BARNES, NEK landscape artist, at the Hardwick Inn, 4 S. Main St. on the third floor, through September.
PERENNIAL INSPIRATION: Floral Art from a Mother and Daughter," artwork from Natalya Zahn and Anci Slovak, Woodbury Community Gallery. Exhibit up until the end of August.
ARTWORK BY CHRISTINE FOSTER and Marie LaPre Grabon, on exhibit at White Water Gallery, East Hardwick, through August 3. Features needle-felted paintings and hooked wall hangings. Opening reception: Sunday, July 20, 4 to 7 p.m. Gallery hours: Sundays 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. and by appointment. Information: (802) 563-2037.

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Hazen Hoops

The Hazen Union boys summer basketball team included (from left) Lucian Jurkiewicz, Ari Jurkiewicz, Lincoln Hill, Kobe Smith, Sully Laflam, Noah Foster, Ethan Gann, Jameson Lamarre and Jeter Demers

courtesy photo

Wildcats Run the Table at Profile Summer Showdown

by Ken Brown

BETHLEHEM, N.H. – The Hazen Union boys summer hoop team went a perfect 4-0 over the weekend as they took their talent across state lines in the fifth edition of the Profile Summer Showdown at Profile High School.

Head coach Aaron Hill and his young Wildcat squad defeated Vermont's Division II power Hartford, along with Derryfield, Concord Christian and Farmington from New Hampshire, to take top honors in the jam-packed two-day event. Hartford was the only other team from Vermont to participate in the annual 10 team summer tournament and hoop camp.

Expectations are high for the Hurricanes this coming winter after a 19-win season saw them come just three points shy of the Division II state title game. Coach Hill has led Hazen to four straight Dvision III state championship games, cutting down the nets in 2022 for his sixth state title at Hazen. The reining Capital League Coach of the Year lost just one senior starter in Brendan Moodie from a seventeen-win team that nearly won it all last March as a No. 5 seed. Moodie nearly became the latest Wildcat great to join the 1,000-point club after averaging over 19 points per game as a senior, pouring in 92 over their four-game run to the Barre Auditorium. Hill will undoubtedly miss the team's floor general this coming winter but returns a battle tested group that includes senior Sully Laflam, who earned Capital League honors after multiple 20-point performances throughout the season. Hazen also returns Jameson Lamarre who played his best basketball on the biggest stage, scoring 37 points as a sophomore in his first two games at the Aud.

"It was a great weekend for us! We had three different players lead us in scoring in our four games, our defense was outstanding all weekend, and we beat a very strong Hartford team on Saturday. This group's calling card is their defense and unselfish play. Many of them have put in a lot of hours on their games since the season ended and as a result, we have several players who have improved dramatically already. We know there are some very good teams in our division this coming year, so we have to continue to work hard this summer to keep getting better. There are no egos on this young team, and no one looks for the credit. It's just a great group of kids and a very fun team to be a part of," said Hill.

The Profile Summer Showdown featured three of the Division IV Final Four teams from the Granite State this past winter including Woodsville, who capped off a perfect 22-0 season with a 51-48 overtime thriller over Littleton in the state title game.

Coach Hill and his young squad will now turn their attention to the program's 24th Annual Hazen Hoop Camp this week at the Cat Den. The co-ed camp will run from Monday through Friday for grade levels 3 to 9 and will offer some of the state's best basketball tutelage from Hill his coaching staff and both former and current Wildcat players.

Twinfield-Cabot Summer Hoop Team Scrimmages, Tests Talented Squad

by Ken Brown

BURLINGTON – The Twinfield-Cabot summer hoop team made the trip up 89 two weeks ago to scrimmage Division I champion Burlington earlier this month, before turning their attention to Division II Lyndon Institute last week, as head coach Kris Bador continued his quest to test his talented squad out of division this summer.

Third-year head coach and former Seahorse star B.J. Robertson returned his alma mater to championship glory this past March, beating arch-rival Rice Memorial 64-60 at a packed Patrick Gymnasium, earning him Division I Coach of the Year honors. Robertson took over a three-win Burlington team just over two years ago and after a Final Four appearance in 2024, added a state leading 22nd Division I state championship banner to the program's rich history. Twinfield-Cabot head coach Kris Bador is looking for the same kind of fortune in his third season on the sidelines this coming winter after leading the Trojans back to the Barre Auditorium for the first time in nearly a decade this past March. A floater in the final seconds by Danville's Kohl Guinard was the only difference in a heartbreaking one-point loss in the semifinals for Twinfield-Cabot as they were forced to watch the Pride go on to upset top ranked West Rutland to claim the Division IV state title. Bador will return his entire roster this winter that includes three-time Vermont Outstanding Underclassmen selection Tej Stewart, along with last year's leading scorer Eli Russell, and soon to be super sophomore Omar Miksic-Knibb. The reining Division IV and Mountain League Coach of the Year has developed a relationship with Robertson and took the opportunity to test his talented club against some of the Queen City's best in a pair of scrimmages.

"The boys played a great style of game up in Burlington against some great players and coaches before battling against a physical Lyndon team that had really good size. B.J. has done an excellent job and has rebuilt a very determined team and program. The speed, how they were coached and prepared, and the way their players communicated in unison on the floor was the biggest difference we saw in competing against a Division I team like that. It was a great opportunity and experience for both us as coaches and players," said Bador.

Bador and assistant coach and former Trojan standout Connor Spencer also had the opportunity to make the trip to Vegas to experience NBA Summer League recently. They met scouts from all over the world at many different levels and interaccted with top notch professionals in the industry on how players and coaches watch film, handle practice, approach the weight room and manage their diet to perform their best.

"The experience to witness their preparation and process was even better than we expected. We were just blessed to experience this opportunity to learn from some of the best in the business. We have some great challenges coming up against Lyndon, Spaulding, and a championship Woodsville team from New Hampshire. We're continuing to grow as a team, the kids are getting healthier this summer, and remain hungry and humble," said Bador.



Hazen Union Girls Summer Hoops

The Hazen Union girls summer hoop team includes (from left) Isabelle Gouin, Taylor Thompson, Ari Nichols, Autumn Dailey, Julia des Groseilliers, Kelsie Rivard, Mya Lumsden and Chloe Moodie.

courtesy photo

Lady Cats Storming Through Summer League

by Ken Brown

LAMOILLE – The Hazen Union girls summer hoop team notched another win on Monday night as their varsity and junior varsity programs continue to enjoy success in the Lamoille Summer League.

Hazen downed Lamoille on Monday night for their latest win this summer, as head coach Randy Lumsden and his Lady Cat program look to build off their third straight twenty-win season under the former Wildcat champion. Lumsden has his squad in the highly competitive Lamoille Summer League for a second straight season as they rumble with the likes of St. Johnsbury Academy (SJA), North Country, BFA St. Albans and Enosburg. Both SJA and North Country represented Division I and II in their respective championship games this past March. Lumsden has led Hazen to three straight trips to the Barre Auditorium that included capturing the 2024 Division III state title. His quest to continue testing his talented young team with stiffer competition will get turned up a notch this winter, as the Lady Cats tackle their inaugural season in the rugged Capital League. His star-studded coaching staff made up of record setting 1,000-point scorers Sue Rivard (North Country) and Dorothy Hill (Cabot) will take a hit this coming season as Hill steps away from the program. Rivard remains an assistant and Alison Blaney will continue to run the JV program. Hill's impact on developing Hazen's swath of young talent isn't lost on Rivard.

"Dorothy's impact on the team and program was instrumental and will be greatly missed. As she steps away to focus on watching her son compete in his final two years of varsity basketball, she promises to stay involved with us from the sidelines," said Rivard.

Lumsden is also involved at the youth level, offering skill sessions at the Cat Den every Tuesday for grades 6-8, as well as additional sessions for high schoolers.

"The girls are determined to put in the work three nights a week in the gym and bring it every Monday night in summer league to be ready for the Capital next season," said Rivard.

The Lady Cats added Lamoille to their latest list of impressive wins this summer after toppling SJA and Enosburg earlier this month. Hazen is scheduled to square off against division I BFA-St. Albans next Monday and will attend the VTSU-Lyndon basketball camp throughout this week.

LaForest Runs Away with Biggest Career Win

BARRE – After rains once again wreaked havoc on Thunder Road with the planned Thursday showcase moved to Friday evening, Vermont Construction Night brought a frenzy of stellar performances.

With the inaugural Fisher Auto Parts 100 on tap Saturday at White Mountain Motorsports Park, the Flying Tigers took center stage and were the first to run their feature event on Friday evening. The second round in the Triple Crown Series saw a green-to-checkered affair with Chris LaForest and Cam Gadue putting on a clinic at the head of the train. LaForest never wavered, all the way to his first win of the season and the biggest of his career with Gadue holding on for second and Robert Gordon battling hard with the likes of Mike Martin, Shawn Fleury and Sam Caron to take third overall.

Curtis Franks brought the Street Stocks to green for their 25 lap trophy dash. A lap-11 scuffle was the only blip of the night for the four cylinder division with Landyn O'Donnell, Paige Whittemore and Patrick Tibbetts piling into a heap in turn three. Back under green, it was all Tommy Smith out front with a rear view mirror full of defending champion Dean Switser Jr. The two duked it out to the very end with Smith getting the edge for career win number thirty-eight over Switser and Franks.



Hand out the window, Barre's Chris LaForest passes under the twin checkered flags for the biggest Flying Tiger win of his career at Thunder Road last Friday night.

photo by Alan Ward

The Road Warriors had but one blip on an otherwise hard-nosed night with Nick Copping quickly taking the lead under the green flag. The one foul came on lap seven with last week's the restart to take his second win of the season followed across the stripe by a hard-charging Mike Slingerland and Copping holding on for third.

The Late Models wrapped up the night, moved to the end of the program as track management battled an infield lighting issue. Off and running, Scott Dragon got the early lead over Jesse Laquerre before it all went up in smoke on lap 26. Direct contact with the spinning

See LAFOREST, next page



n Late Model Victory Lane following the Trophy Dash were (from left) Brandon Gray (3rd), winner Brandon Lanphear and Justin Prescott (2nd).

photo by Alan Ward

Craftsbury Common's Martin Steals $2,000 Fisher Auto 100

By White Mountain Motorsports Park



Craftsbury Common's Mike Martin (#01VT) fighting hard on the outside of youngster Luke Peters (#26VT) of Groton in search of the $2,000 Fisher Auto Parts prize at White Mountain Motorsports Park Saturday night.

photo by Johnny Racer

N. WOODSTOCK, N.H. – Although gray skies greeted the crowds at White Mountain Motorsports Park on Thursday, a warm and rain-free day ensured stellar side-by-side action. Headlined by the inaugural Fisher Auto 100 for the Flying Tigers, Saturday's showcase was yet another example of what makes the thunder in the mountains.

The Fisher Auto 100 saw nineteen Flying Tigers from across the twin states converge on White Mountain Motorsports Park for the $2,000-to-win purse. A pair of Thunder Road track champions in Jason Woodard and Mike Martin brought the field to green. Longtime Riverside Speedway campaigner Makita Giroux hauled down from North Hatley, Quebec, to join the festivities but went around on lap 12 from a fourth-place starting spot to bring out the early caution.

Back under green, you could have thrown a blanket over the top five runners, two-by-two lead by Mike Martin in a door-to-door battle with Luke Peters at the front of the field.

Several mid-pack cautions slowed the field, the worst between Chris Laforest and Nathan Hamblett against the front-stretch wall on lap 48 that resulted in Hamblett's wrist needing further medical evaluation and Laforest's departure for his assistance with the wreck. The battle continued at the front again and again as Logan Powers came back from a flat left front to the top five with Martin, Woodard, Peters, Brendan Moodie and Sam Caron all fighting hard with the paycheck waiting in victory lane. In the end, Mike Martin took the $2,000 check back to Craftsbury Common, Vt., with Jason Woodard and Brendan Moodie filling out the podium.

The Late Models kicked off Saturday's feature racing action with Colin Cornell and Richie Brown setting the pace. After Cornell took off with the lead, a three-car battle for third saw Brian Whalley, Mike Bailey and Kasey Beattie fight hard around the White Mountain quarter mile. All eyes were on Tyler Cahoon as a rough bout with the turn one rumble strips took out his sway bar, he still ran for several laps in the ill-handling machine before pitting out. In the end, Cornell never slowed in the green-to-checkered 50-lap main with Jaden Perry coming home second and Beattie taking third.

The Strictly Minis saw a lap one squabble for first as Jason Ball's poor-handling Cavalier slid out of the pole position leaving Donnie Baumgardner to pick up the pieces. Baumgardner drove away with the lead until the lap 18 caution for the spinning Logan Farnsworth in turn four. The restart set up a duel between Baumgardner, soon-to-be son in law Tyler Thompson and McKenna Merchant with Baumgardner besting the youngsters and Thompson just barely edging Merchant across the line to complete the victory lane podium.

It was twin 20-lap competition for the Mini Late Models and the White Mountain Dwarf Cars Saturday night. For the second consecutive week, defending champion Nick Miller made it a perfect sweep of both segments to claim the overall win with double duty teammate Cody LeBlanc in second and Brett Jackson claiming third. The Dwarf Cars were like lightning in a bottle with Jason Wyman and Jeff Ainsworth swapping positions from segment one to segment two, earning Wyman the overall and Dave Gyger taking home third.

White Mountain Motorsports Park is back in action tomorrow, Sunday, July 13, for the Pro All Stars Series invasion featuring the rain-delayed start to the Platinum Late Model Series with the Spring Board 100. Post time is set for 2 p.m., Sunday.

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS

(local competitors)

Flying Tigers – Fisher Auto 100 (100 Laps)

1. 01VT, Michael Martin, Craftsbury, Common, Vt.

3. 15NH, Brendan Moodie, Wolcott, Vt.,

10. 23VT, Matt Potter, Marshfield, Vt.

Late Models – (50 Laps)

2. 92VT, Jaden Perry, Hardwick, Vt.



Flying Tiger Victory Lane included (from left) Robert Gordon (3rd), winner Chris LaForest and Cam Gadue (2nd). *photo by Alan Ward*



In Flying Tiger Victory Lane were (from left) Brendan Moodie (3rd), winner Mike Martin, Jason Woodard (2nd). *photo by Johnny Racer*

LaForest

Continued from previous page

Mike Rubalcaba ended Dragon's command of the lead in yet another unfriendly twist in his already difficult season. Back under green, Brandon Lanphear lit off at the front while behind him Justin Prescott sliced through the top ten. Time running out, Lanphear came back from a devastating wreck just last Thursday to take the Vermont Construction win over Prescott and rookie leader Brandon Gray.

Thunder Road International Speedbowl returns to racing action on Thursday, July 17, for the 46th running of the Vermont Governor's Cup. The Late Models will go for 150 laps in Round No. 2 of the Squier Cup Triple Crown along with the Flying Tigers and Street Stocks with a special 6:30 p.m. post time.

UNOFFICIAL RESULTS

(local competitors)

Flying Tigers – Triple Crown No. 2 (75 Laps)

4. 01VT, Michael Martin, Craftsbury, Common

9. 15NH, Brendan Moodie, Wolcott

25. 22VT, Travis Patnoe, Wolcott

Late Models – (50 Laps)

4. 86VT, Marcel J. Gravel, Wolcott

12. 01VT, Stephen Martin, Craftsbury Common

Street Stocks – (25 Laps)

18. 18x, Walker Fitch, Marshfield

20. 34, Patrick Tibbetts, Plainfield

Road Warriors – (20 Laps)

5. 18, Cayden Green, Marshfield