



## HED manager replaced with no public record

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – Hardwick Electric Department (HED) seems to have replaced its general manager without a public record or explanation. Minutes of the board of commissioners regular November 18 meeting indicate the general manager's report was given by Scott Johnstone, general manager of Morrisville Water & Light, who served as HED interim general manager in 2024.

In November 2024 it was announced that

Sarah Braese would take over as general manager in January 2025, which she did, replacing Johnstone.

Braese gave the general manager's report at the regular October 21 meeting, with no indication that anything was out of order at that time. She did not attend the November 18 meeting.

At that meeting, both Braese and Business and Finance Manager Beth Essary were removed as authorized signers on bank accounts and replaced by Johnstone. Minutes of that meeting indicate, "Beth Essary presented the financial

report, including new information about projected cash flow. Scott Johnstone and Beth Essary will continue to expand cash reporting."

The Hardwick Select Board's November 20 meeting minutes indicate Hardwick Town Manager David Upson referred to Johnstone as "the Interim General Manager for Hardwick Electric," indicating that at least some outside HED are aware of the change.

The HED web site no longer lists Braese as general manager, but instead shows that

**See REPLACED, 4**



An Act 73 forum was held at Craftsbury Common at the Sterling College dining hall on November 21. photo by Paul Fixx

## Forum identifies importance of small school experience

by Paul Fixx

CRAFTSBURY COMMON - A gathering to discuss work being done around state school redistricting was held the evening of November 21, following a well-attended community meal in the Sterling College dining hall.

In sharing plans for the open forum, Sterling college faculty member in Ecology, Gustavo Requena Santos said, "The state Committee of Education is planning to host 3 or 4 public engagement meetings across Vermont to receive public comments on their proposals of alternative maps for the new statewide school districts. However, meetings will be . . . overlooking families and schools in the NEK."

To fill that gap, the message continued, "Sterling College, in collaboration with other local educators and organizing initiatives, will host an extra-official public commentary meeting . . . where community members can engage broadly with each other and have some great food prepared in our kitchen from locally sourced produce."

Despite the recent Sterling College

**See FORUM, 5**

## HED, pedestrian bridge occupy select board

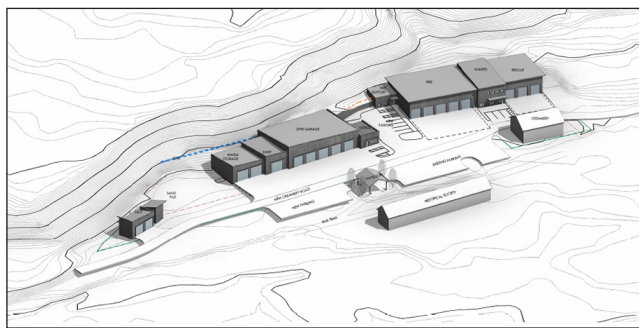
by Raymonda Parchment

HARDWICK – Updates and decisions on a wide range of Hardwick projects and issues were on the select board agenda at its November 20 meeting, including Hardwick Electric Department (HED), the pedestrian bridge, a proposed Essential Services Campus and associated bond vote, budgeting, plus changes to loosen development restrictions in designated downtown and village areas.

Town Manager David Upson revealed that Scott Johnstone is currently serving as interim manager for the Hardwick Electric Department (HED). Johnstone is now overseeing HED, in addition to his regular position at Morrisville Water and Light, as well as serving as interim general manager at Hyde Park Electric.

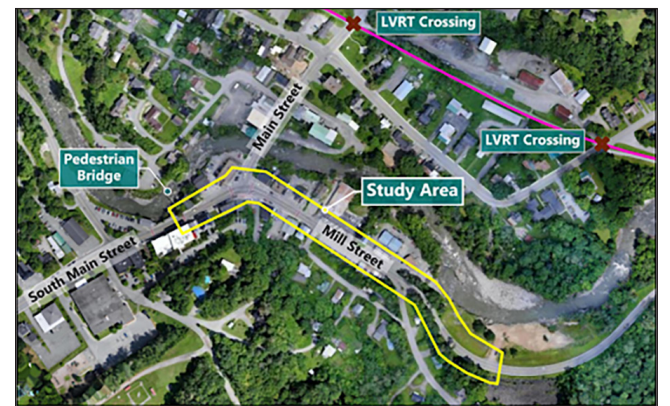
Upson says the pedestrian bridge is finally moving along, with pre-construction meetings taking place. A notice to proceed is expected soon. CCS Construction has ordered the bridge, and a temporary walking bridge may be installed in December, followed by demolition of the old bridge. A permit amendment will be submitted soon to hopefully allow work prior to

**See BRIDGE, 4**



A conceptual drawing of the proposed Hardwick Essential Services Campus on Creamery Road, where the town road crew and Hardwick Rescue are now located, combines the town's fire and highway departments with Hardwick Rescue.

drawing courtesy Town of Hardwick



The area of a Hardwick Downtown Study where pedestrian and vehicular traffic needs are being evaluated was the subject of a November 5 meeting for engineering firm VHB to recommend possible solutions. courtesy photo

## Downtown traffic, pedestrian improvements presented

by Paul Fixx and Kristen Leahy

HARDWICK – The Town of Hardwick hosted consultants from engineering firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) for a public presentation of alternatives developed as part of a downtown study of pedestrian, vehicular and recreational traffic. Twenty-nine participants joined in-person at the Memorial Building and online, November 5.

The primary study area runs from South Main Street, above the pedestrian Bridge, onto Mill Street, extending east past the driveway to the former Inn by the River.

Karen Sentoff, PE, Director of Transportation Systems with VHB, walked attendees through a presentation focusing on improving traffic flow, pedestrian safety and speed management in the downtown corridor.

VHB has been working with Hardwick town staff on the project that began in May this year with a review of existing pedestrian and vehicle traffic in the study area.

A public meeting was held in July to hear resident's concerns and issues in that area.

**See DOWNTOWN, 5**

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# POLICE REPORT

## Vermont State Police Stalking, car crash

**MARSHFIELD** – On November 25, at 5:46 p.m., troopers from the Berlin Barracks were advised of a report of a Violation of an Abuse Prevention Order that occurred on School St. Subsequent investigation revealed that Anthony Russell of Marshfield had violated a Temporary Order Against Stalking by making contact with the protected party. Russell was taken into custody for the above mentioned charges and transported to Berlin Barracks for processing. Russell was issued a citation to appear in Washington County Superior Court - Criminal Division at a later date and time and lodged at Northeast Correction Center.

**ST. JOHNSBURY** – On November 25 at approximately

11:15 a.m., troopers from the St. Johnsbury Barracks received a report of a two vehicle crash that occurred on U.S Route 2 East near the Exit 21 southbound off-ramp. Upon arrival, troopers identified the operators as Jessica Miller of Cabot and Phylis Sweeney of Danville. Investigation revealed Miller was operating her 2011 Honda CRV and failed to yield to traffic on U.S Route 2 as she was exiting I-91, which caused a collision with a Jeep Cherokee being operated by Sweeney. Both operators did not appear to be injured but were transported to Northern Vermont Regional Hospital as a precaution. Both vehicles were towed from the scene of the crash due to disabling damage.

## AWARE Report

**H A R D W I C K** – Four-teen people used AWARE services between November 16 and November 30. 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](http://awarevt.org).

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<b>Progresso Vegetable Classic Soup</b> 2/\$4 18-19 oz.	<b>Wesson Vegetable or Canola Oil</b> \$3.99 24 oz.	<b>Marshmallow Fluff</b> 2/\$5 16 oz.	
<b>Betty Crocker Cookie Mix</b> 2/\$5 17.5-17.9 oz.	<b>King Arthur G.F. Mixes</b> \$4.79 16-22 oz.	<b>Arm &amp; Hammer Dryer Sheets</b> 2/\$4 40 ct.	
<b>Clorox Disinfecting Wipes</b> \$5.49 75 ct.	<b>Simply Done 6=12 Paper Towels</b> \$5.99 302.4 s.f.	<b>Simply Done 6-role Mega Bathroom Tissue</b> \$5.99 142-145.6 s.f.	
<b>Califia Milk or Creamer Alternative</b> \$3.99 32-48 oz.	<b>Cravn Flav'n Frozen Pizza</b> \$4.99 27.15-30 oz.	<b>Outshine Fruit Bars</b> \$3.99 14.9-18 oz.	
<b>McKenzie Boneless Ham Steaks</b> \$3.49 8 oz.	<b>Simply Done Seasoned Diced Potatoes</b> \$3.49 20 oz.	<b>Belgioso Parmesan, Asiago or Romano Wedges</b> \$5.99 8 oz.	

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# POLICE REPORT

## Hardwick Police Department Media Log

HARDWICK – November 16: Assist - Agency, Tucker Brook Road.

November 17: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Assist - Public, Mill St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Alarm, Montgomery Road.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 14 S.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 14 S.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

November 18: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Assist - Public, Spruce Drive; Traffic Stop, S. Main; Traffic Stop, S. Main; Assist - Agency, Vt. Route 15.

November 19: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Theft, Vt. Route 14 S.; Threats/Harassment, Woodbury St.; Welfare Check, Vt. Route 16; Assist - Agency, Route 14; Assist - Agency, Vt. Route 15.

November 19: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Theft, Vt. Route 14 S.; Threats/Harassment, Woodbury St.; Welfare Check, Vt. Route 16; Assist - Agency, Vt. Route 14; Assist - Agency, Vt. Route 14.

November 20: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Medical, Spruce Drive; Medical, Maple St.; Found Property, Route 14; Fingerprints,

High St.; Assist - Public, High St.; Threats/Harassment, Elm St.; Assist - Public, W. Church St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.

November 21: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Animal Problem, Highland Ave.; Assist - Agency, High St.; Directed Patrol, Hazen Union Drive; Traffic Stop x15; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Mill St.

November 22: Juvenile Problem, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 15; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

November 23: Parking Problem, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, Mill St.; Traffic Stop, Mill St.

November 24: Motor Vehicle Complaint, Sumner St.; Fraud, Vt. Route 14 S.; Fingerprints, High St.; VIN verification, S. Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Abandoned Vehicle, High St.; Assist - Other, Wolcott; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Mill St.; Suspicious Event, Mill St.

November 25: Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

November 26: Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Alarm, Mill St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Threats/Harassment, Hardwick Farms Rd.; Medical, Hideaway St.; Assist - Agency, Central St.; Parking Problem, S. Main St.

November 27: Assist - Agency, Spruce Dr.; Motor Vehicle Complaint, Vt. Route 15; ATV Incident, Hideaway St.; Traffic Stop, Spring St.

November 28: Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.; Suspicious Event, Mill St.

November 29: Assist - Agency, Noyestar Rd; Fingerprints, High St.; Accident - Injury to Person(s), Renaud Road.; Medical, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

November 30: Citizen Dispute, Mill St.; Welfare Check, Maple St.; Transport, High St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.



The Greensboro Fire Department responded to a structure fire on December 1, at Hutchins Farm Road in Stannard. photo from social media

## Twelve departments respond to single fire

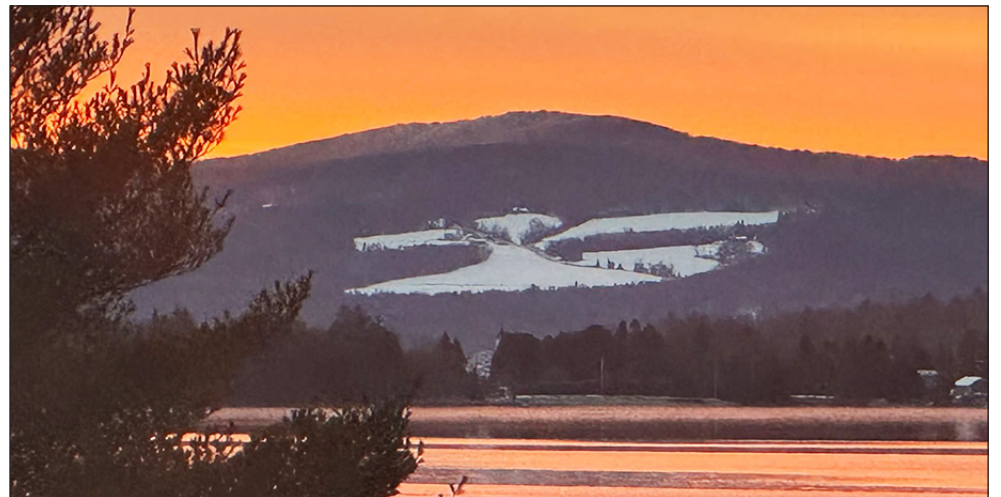
GREENSBORO – On December 1, at 5:07 p.m., Greensboro Fire Department responded to a reported structure fire at 117 Hutchins Farm Road in Stannard. First arriving crews found a fully involved building with multiple additions and fire showing from the roof. Due to the remote location, tankers from surrounding area were called to assist. The situation was further complicated by dropping temperatures leading to frozen hoses, equipment, gear, and difficulty getting water. Tankers were re-routed from frozen rural hydrants to the station to access water. Crews returned to the station at approximately 12:33 a.m.

Jen and Landon Thompson from Smith's Grocery donated pizza, coffee, and sandwiches to all the departments that assisted,

along with the Hardwick Fire Auxiliary. Kyle Hall and Tom Camarara sanded the roads for the trucks, and Shawn Messier provided his excavator to access hard-to-reach areas within the building.

Mutual Aid departments that came to help included Hardwick Fire Department; Hardwick Emergency Rescue Squad; Woodbury Volunteer Fire Department; Walden Fire Department; Wolcott Vermont Volunteer Fire Department; Elmore Fire Department; Craftsbury Fire Department; Danville Volunteer Fire Department; Sheffield-Wheelock Vol. Fire Department; Cabot, VT Volunteer Fire Dept.; Morrisville Fire Department; Hyde Park Town Fire Department station coverage; East Montpelier Fire Department station coverage

## WEATHER WATCH



Sunrise over Caspian Lake from Huckleberry Rocks in Greensboro with the Angel Field highlighted by a dusting of new snow, November 23.

by Janine Marks

## First winter storm of the season, cold comes creeping in

by Dave Mitchell

HARDWICK – Precipitation fell mostly as light snow during the past week. Heavy snow showers arrived Tuesday as the first major winter storm of the season blanketed much of New England. Temperatures hovered near seasonal norms with lows in the 20's and highs in the low 30's.

On the weather map, a dome of high pressure will push in later Tuesday bringing with it cold Arctic air, resulting in our first below-zero temperatures of winter on Thursday. The rest of the week looks seasonably cold with low temperatures in the single digits and highs in the teens and low twenties.

Here are the forecast details:

**Wednesday:** Partly sunny. High: 26. Low: 21. Light winds out of the northwest.

**Thursday:** Snow showers likely. High: 26. Low: -4. Light winds out of the south.

**Friday:** Partly cloudy. High: 14. Low: 8. Light winds.

**Saturday:** Mostly cloudy. Slight chance of snow showers tapering off through the morning with minimal accumulation. High: 26. Low: 18. Light winds out of the south.

**Sunday:** Partly sunny. High: 24. Low: 5. Light winds out of the northwest.

# POLICE REPORT

## Hardwick Police Report Car crash, suspended license

### by Hardwick Police Department

HARDWICK – On November 22, Hardwick Police conducted a traffic stop for a motor vehicle violation on Wolcott Street. After having the operator, Morrisville resident Kyle Kizer's information checked through Lamoille County Dispatch, Kizer was found to be criminally suspended and had an active arrest warrant. Kizer was taken into custody without incident and processed at the Hardwick Police Department. Kizer was lodged at the Northeast Correctional Complex on his warrant.

Kizer received a citation to appear in Caledonia Superior Court unit on December 22 at 8:30 a.m.

On November 29, at approximately 5:34 p.m. the Hardwick Police responded to the area of Renaud Rd. for a report of a vehicle rollover with multiple occupants. Upon arrival, the occupants were out of the vehicle. Alberto Gomes of Hardwick was traveling East on Renaud Road when he lost control of his 2009 Ford Explorer, going off the roadway and rolled the vehicle onto its passenger side due to icy conditions. Hardwick Fire and Rescue assisted at the scene.

That report indicated problems at Hyde Park and Burlington Electric have prompted the inquiries.

Hyde Park's customers are expected to see a 20% increase following the resignation of that utility's general manager. Johnstone, a former secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, has led the Morrisville municipal utility since 2022 and has now been appointed to help oversee the Hyde Park utility.

A November 10 report by the Caledonian Record indicated electric utilities in the region met Oct. 27 to explore ways to cut costs, improve system resilience and tackle capital projects together.

At that meeting, The Lyndon Electric Commission, Barton Village Board of Trustees and Orleans Village Board of Trustees discussed regional collaboration that "would likely also include the Hardwick Electric Department, which was unable to attend the Oct. 27 meeting," noted the Caledonian Record article, which said, "The discussion was prompted by a looming smart meter upgrade."

A November 26 News & Citizen report said, "Johnstone is also currently interim director at the Hardwick Electric Department, and he said, if only because managing a public utility is difficult, the town of Hardwick is considering a merger with Morrisville Water & Light."

Morrisville Water and Light and HED are members of the Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA), which supplies services to many small Vermont electric utilities, along with the Lyndon, Barton, Orleans and Burlington electric utilities.

Braese worked at VPPSA

## Bridge

Continued From Page One

July 1, and monthly construction meetings will occur on the third Thursday of each month.

Upson also delivered the road foreman's report saying, the highway crew has been busy preparing the trucks for winter. The town is keeping close track of salt usage. When time allows, the crew has been spot grading and performing road maintenance to keep the roads in good condition.

The board discussed potentially changing the date and time of town meeting to improve public participation. The town charter states voting must take place on a Tuesday, regardless. Zoom participation must be further reviewed as a means of official voting.

Discussion then shifted to the Essential Services project on Creamery Road, sometimes referred to as the Essential Services Campus, a proposed shared campus for the highway, fire and rescue departments. The existing highway department building is at the end of its useful life and the fire department needs to be moved out of an area that's seen regular flooding. The town has a conceptual plan for a new building to incorporate fire, rescue and road services.

Rescue would be self-funding, while the fire department could receive FEMA and USDA funding. The highway portion would be funded by Hardwick taxpayers through a bond vote, which could be for up to \$6.5 million.

The goal is to hold public meetings in early January for public input, present information at Town Meeting, and then hold a special vote, said Upson. He added that a decision must be made to have it on the town meeting warning by January 15.

The board also discussed whether the proposed town forest should be placed on the warning. Reactions were mixed, with some board members expressing hesitation whereas others emphasized the need for public engagement. Upson asked what question the town would bring to

voters; whether it concerned accepting the land or approving financial contributions. Ultimately after some discussion, the board agreed to receive an update from Northern Rivers Land Trust on December 18, finalize the proposed question, and officially decide whether to warn a bond vote by January 8.

In other business, ten properties from the 2023 FEMA buyout program have now been demolished. The concrete cutting for the new vault door in the Memorial building has been completed. The new door is expected to be installed soon. Weekly Springfest planning meetings are underway, with Hardwick Kiwanis taking the lead.

The select board approved renewing the Cannabis Tier 3 Cultivation License for the Clean Cannabis Company.

The select board voted to adopt a resolution to request Tier 1B status for the purpose of Act 250 jurisdiction. Hardwick's Designated Downtown District and the proposed East Hardwick Village Center District would fall into that designation, which allows certain modest construction requiring limited or no Act 250 review. It will also place the town in a position to request Tier 1A status in the future.,

The board voted to approve a three-year contract with New England Municipal Consultants for assessing services, authorizing the town manager to sign the contract.

Town assessor Matt Krajewski said the Vermont Current Use Department recently submitted a revised current use plan for two abutting parcels with a single owner. The combination of the two parcels would increase the acreage for the property owner but would keep the grand list value the same for the Town.

The board approved the merger of the two parcels.

The board also reviewed drafts of the FY27 budget for revenues, admin and office, library, police department, line items, as well as trails and recreation.

At the next two December meetings the select board will work through the budget.

## Replaced

Continued From Page One

position is now held by Johnstone. No public record serve HED in any capacity.

An emergency meeting of HED Commissioners was held October 8 at which an executive session was held with Braese present, but minutes of that meeting do not specifically include or exclude her from the executive session. Minutes of that meeting indicate no action was taken during the executive session and the meeting adjourned immediately afterward.

Inquiries last week about the status of Sarah Braese or the appointment of Scott Johnstone to chair of the board of commissioners Michael Ambrosino, Vice-chair Myles Kamisher-Koch and another board member have not been rescinded to.

Johnstone responded last week, saying only "Hardwick Electric Department does not discuss personnel matters and is committed to sharing any public information at an open meeting as soon as it is available, regarding any and all of the business that HED conducts."

These questions about HED's management come as Vermont Department of Public Service Commissioner Kerrick Johnson has asked all of the state's small public electric utilities to submit data on their finances, grid reliability and staffing issues, according to a November 25 Vermont Public report.

"Johnson said the goal is to make sure the utilities are healthy as they contend with increasing costs and challenges from new technologies, cybersecurity, climate change-induced storms, and demand from electric vehicles and heat pumps."

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## Downtown

Continued From Page One

Between then and now VHB developed the alternatives Sentoff presented November 5.

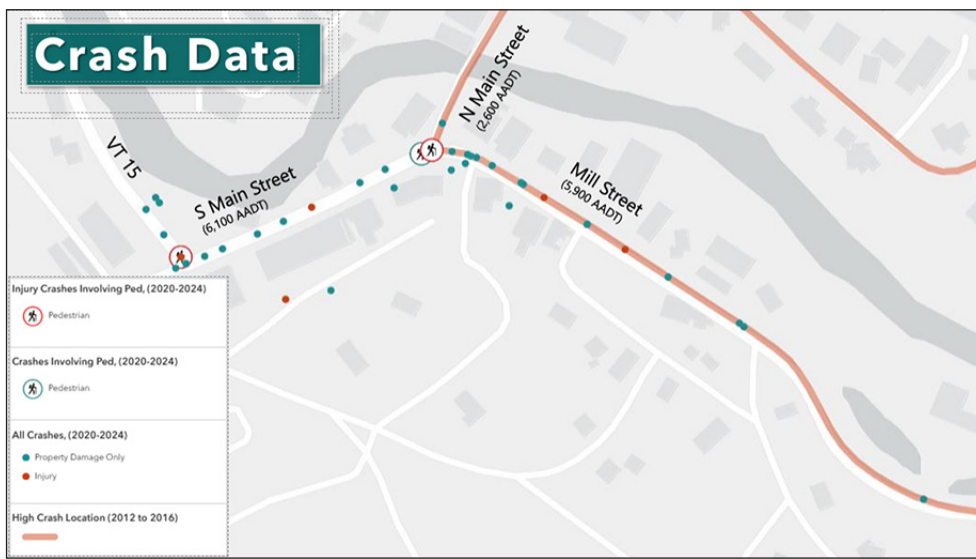
Sentoff said the purpose of the Hardwick Downtown Study is to create a safe, comfortable environment in the village core; establish a clear transition as one enters the downtown area; improve pedestrian access to community destinations, including businesses and recreational resources; and Improve the transportation connectivity and infrastructure.

“The study is helping clarify what’s possible; what can be done sooner, what will take more engineering and how to phase improvements responsibly,” said Kristen Leahy, Hardwick Zoning and Floodplain Administrator.

Sentoff identified vehicle speeds through the study area as an issue, with a “desire to better establish transition zones, especially exploring potential improvements for the eastern [Vt. Rte. 15] gateway.”

Other areas needing attention are the intersection of Glenside Avenue with Mill Street; issues at crosswalks, pedestrian safety because of a lack of sidewalks across wide driveways and where streets intersect.

Additionally, the intersection



The area has been identified as having a high number of crashes with data mapped from 2020 through 2024 showing those involving pedestrians circled, and those with injuries identified in red. The lighter red line shows a high crash route identified in 2012-16 data.

of Mill Street and Main Street presents issues with pedestrian and vehicle safety and traffic patterns.

And finally, Sentoff identified Post Office access and its driveway as a dangerous area, needing attention.

The following deficiencies highlight the needs of the study area, said Sentoff: The lack of an effective transition zone from a high-speed rural highway to the village center; the non-continuous pedestrian network, with sidewalks interrupted by wide driveways and streets; and the capacity to handle increased multimodal activity from the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail.

Additional infrastructure deficiencies include vehicle turning movement issues, missing or inadequate crosswalks and impaired stormwater drainage, she said.

Sentoff’s presentation of alternatives described a layered approach with three conceptual alternatives building upon each other. Each offered a menu of possible design elements such as sidewalk continuity and crosswalk enhancements, realignment of the Main Street intersection, traffic-calming measures, including bump-outs, gateway treatments, and improved pedestrian and bicycle connections.

She emphasized that the

preferred design will be implemented through a phased approach, allowing the town to pursue incremental construction as state transportation funding becomes available, following an approach that has been successfully used by other Vermont communities, she said.

The third and most comprehensive proposal involves changing the geometry of the Glenside intersection with Mill St. so it becomes more of a T intersection.

Dead ending Sumner Street was suggested as an option that came up at the local concerns meeting because it allows a connected sidewalk along most of Mill Street on the post office side of the street.

Attendees, many of whom were residents of the Sumner Street area, offered many suggestions for VHB to consider.

The presentation slides are available in the Planning section of the Town website, and the full meeting is available to be viewed at [hctv.us](http://hctv.us).

The project team will review feedback from the public presentation and identify a preferred alternative for refinement. That draft concept will be presented to the Select Board for review and approval in early 2026. A final Scoping Report is expected to be completed by February 2026. Leahy says she welcomes public input as the project moves toward design.

## Forum

Continued From Page One

announcement about degree programs ending after the spring semester, and the many conversations about it during the meal, those gathered in the Dining Hall, turned their full attention to Ranny Bledsoe’s presentation.

Bledsoe, who serves on both the Hazen Union School Board (HUSB) and the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union Board (OSSU), shared roughly the same overview she had shared at an earlier presentation in Hardwick.

Between then and the Sterling gathering, the state’s redistricting landscape had changed so she’d added a new slide titled, “Gotta love Vermont,” highlighting a vote by the state’s 11 person School Redistricting Task Force created under Act. 73.

Bledsoe noted, “On November 10, the Commission voted 8-3 not to propose a map to the legislature, but to a phased approach to school reform that emphasizes cooperative services and voluntary mergers instead of mandatory consolidation, with the long-term goal of establishing comprehensive regional high schools.

The slide quoted Governor Phil Scott, who had responded to

the task force recommendation, saying, “They didn’t redraw the lines, and they were supposed to put forward three maps for consideration, and they failed . . . it would appear that those who didn’t fulfill their obligation are OK with the ever-increasing property taxes, cost of education, and they don’t want to see change, or at least not immediately.”

Bledsoe’s slide said, “At their meeting on November 20, the Commission reiterated the course of action it had taken on November 10.

A number of local and state legislators were on-hand, including three Redistricting Task Force members, creating an effective alternative to the four other task force gatherings to solicit public input.

Local Rep. Leanne Harple, serves the Orleans-4 District that includes Craftsbury, Greensboro, Albany and her hometown of Glover, and joined the meeting.

A replacement for former Orleans County Sen. Samuel Douglas, who recently resigned, has yet to be appointed, but Senate Minority Leader Scott Beck, a task force member, was on-hand, representing the State Senate.

Also attending were Redistricting Task Force Co-chair Rep.

Edge Graning (Chittenden-3) and member Rep. Rebecca Holcombe (Windsor-Orange-2).

Four attendees raised their hands to indicate they were school board members.

In a different and effective approach from what has happened at other area gatherings to discuss the redistricting process, attendees were divided into small groups and asked to offer their thoughts about local schools and the redistricting process.

The groups then shared key takeaways, with former Rep. Katherine Sims saying that the goal, problems and challenges are different for different people and not clearly identified. An important issue is healthcare, which is not targeted by the state’s current process, she said. Other groups echoed their concerns about rising healthcare costs.

Bledsoe shared that school boards and the task force have been frustrated by a lack of adequate data to guide good decisions.

Another group said they saw the process as disruptive, without clearly defined positive outcomes.

The top-down nature of the current process was noted by several groups, as was the critical importance of small schools in

providing an effective place-based education.

Several groups suggested current funding of PreK-12 education through local property taxes needs reform, to include, or be replaced by, an income-based tax, perhaps taking guidance from recommendations of the Public Assets Institute.

Among the many things that organizers will be compiling from the meeting was a clear sense that many in attendance make decisions for their children to attend schools in very rural areas is specifically to take advantage of the small school experience, something that many fear redistricting could eliminate.

In a final comment, it was suggested that everyone involved in current decision making around education make an effort to, “Do no harm!” which was a guiding principle of the School Redistricting Task Force.

Supporting the meeting was Northeast Kingdom Organizing (NEKO) through its Operations Director Audrey Grant who provided the agenda and shared news that NEKO is organizing NEK day at the Vermont Statehouse, Thursday, January 2, and answered questions about NEKO’s other work in the NEK.

# Conservation Commission pilot project raises concerns

by Paul Fixx

GREENSBORO – The Greensboro Conservation Commission (GCC) voted at its September 20 meeting to contract for the application of herbicide to eradicate knotweed at two local pilot projects proposed for Highland Lodge and Smith’s Grocery.

The vote followed a presentation by commission member Chris Steel about the “basic benefits and drawbacks of mechanical versus chemical management of invasive species,” according to the minutes.

Those minutes report, “mechanical methods are viable and potentially preferable except for the fact that they require considerably more time, money and effort. For these reasons, many professional conservation organizations and contractors primarily rely on chemical treatment, as more invasive sites can be addressed in a shorter timeframe and for less money. This was why . . . he felt it was important that the GCC explore both options.”

Immediately following Steel’s presentation, the commission instead of exploring both options for the pilot projects, voted in favor of a motion saying, “that the Town of Greensboro (GCC) should work to contract professional services for the stem-injection application of herbicide to two sites of knotweed (at the Highland Lodge and Smith’s Grocery) as pilot projects. This was approved by members with all voting in favor, except Erika Karp, who cast the sole dissenting vote.”

In the commission’s only recommendation for the management of Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) in its brochure, titled, “The

## The Greensboro Landowner’s Guide to Invasive Plants

Identify & Manage 10 of Greensboro’s Most **Dangerous** Plants



Japanese Knotweed — *Fallopia japonica*

Greensboro Landowner’s Guide to Invasive Plants,” subtitled “Identify & Manage 10 of Greensboro’s Most Dangerous Plants,” is the statement “Smother for 5+ years with black plastic or tarping”

At Town Meeting Day in March 5, 2024, the GCC proposed a Pollinator Resolution which was passed by a significant majority. The resolution declares the Town of Greensboro to be a Pollinator-Friendly Community and recommends the adoption of a number of policies and practices that protect and support pollinator health by minimizing the use and sale of insecticides.

GCC members identified the

product proposed for use in the knotweed pilot projects as glyphosate, an herbicide, which, because it is not an insecticide, is not covered by the Greensboro Pollinator Resolution.

Earlier this month Zoryan Ivakhiv-Gray, a Pollinator-Friendly Greensboro organizer, sent a message to the GCC titled, “Herbicide Application Questions and Concerns”

“I am writing about the recent decision by the Conservation Commission to contract herbicide applicators at the Highland Lodge and Smith’s Store, which was evident from your most recent meeting’s minutes. I understand, having attended a GCC meeting and been to the site, that controlling that knotweed population is important to keep the species under control, and that doing so can be challenging by mechanical means, but I am concerned that the majority of herbicides used to control knotweed may be just as dangerous (or more so) as the knotweed itself . . .”

“RoundUp and certain other chemicals used as fall stem-injection herbicides on knotweed contain Glyphosate and PFAS (Per & Polyfluoroalkyl substances), which are systemic forever chemicals, that can stay in their environment and water cycle for many years, and are easily absorbed by plant life and dispersed by water, even small quantities.”

Listing a number of concerns about the location being close to Porter Brook and dangers of chemical herbicides used to control knotweed, Ivakhiv-Gray wrote, “I question whether the use of such herbicides is worth the risk.

“According to your own GCC/Greensboro resources, Porter Brook is a spawning site for rainbow trout, brown trout, brook trout and likely sucker and smelt. Brown trout spawn in the fall (when you are considering herbicide application), and PFAS found in these herbicides can cause reproductive and immune problems and cause closure of local fisheries due to toxicity for humans as well.

“Porter Brook is an important natural area and community resource used by many other species, and flows directly into Caspian Lake, so could contaminate the rest of the lake.

“Wouldn’t it be a shame if due to our Conservation Commission, Porter Brook and Caspian lake trout fishing was closed due to high PFAS quantities in our fish, as has happened in other towns.”

“Smith’s Store is just across the road from the Lamoille River, and backs onto a wetland, both of which would be vulnerable to chemicals, especially in the event of fall flooding.” said Ivakhiv-Gray.

In conclusion, he said, “Please let me know your thoughts and further details about which herbicide is being considered.”

Before seeing Ivakhiv-Gray’s message, GCC member Chris Steel said, “The GCC is now working with other town initiatives such as the Greensboro Community Trust and the Pollinator-Friendly Greensboro Group to establish additional Pollinator beds and pathways in our town.

How the GCC responds to Ivakhiv’s concerns remains to be seen.

# Real estate scams falling in Vermont

by Paul Fixx

VERMONT – A recent report compiling national data about the growing national epidemic of real estate fraud ranks Vermont 51st out of the 50 states and District of Columbia, with a falling rate of scams involving real estate.

Data from highlandcabinetry.com shows Vermont with just 17 reports of real estate fraud amounting to a total of \$870,350. That’s fallen from a high of 44 in 2020.

While Vermont’s fraud rate averaged from 2020 to 2024 is just under -19%, Rhode Island’s rate has grown by over 18%.

New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts rank in the top 10, with year over year growth rates near or over 10%

The Office of the Vermont

Attorney’s list of scams and warnings about them doesn’t even mention real estate scams, about which the Vermont Association of Realtors (VAR) issued a Scam Alert.

A note with the VAR Scam Alert at [vermontrealtors.com/newscam-targets-land/](http://vermontrealtors.com/newscam-targets-land/) says, “Recently, VAR has had conversations with the Attorney General’s Office regarding these type of scams. There are many out there, and the AG’s office does investigate them.”

In warning member realtors to be aware of these scams when accepting listings, VAR said, “The listed properties are by fraudulent sellers who try to sell properties that they do not own. These listings have typically been land listings with non-local owners. Please be thoughtful and use caution when signing a listing with an out-of-state seller.”



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THE HARDWICK GAZETTE

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# Hearing on proposed development bylaws scheduled Dec. 9

by Paul Fixx

**HARDWICK** – A Hardwick Planning Commission public hearing scheduled for December 9, at 6:30 p.m., is being held to hear comments about the introduction of a River Corridor Overlay District and a new Village Center Zoning District for East Hardwick.

Notice of the hearing indicates the River Corridor Overlay District is being introduced to protect floodplains and flood erosion areas.

Property owners within the new district received a letter in November saying the “proposal follows guidance from the State of Vermont and the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources and seeks to reduce future flood and erosion risks, protect water quality and support the natural movement of rivers over time.”

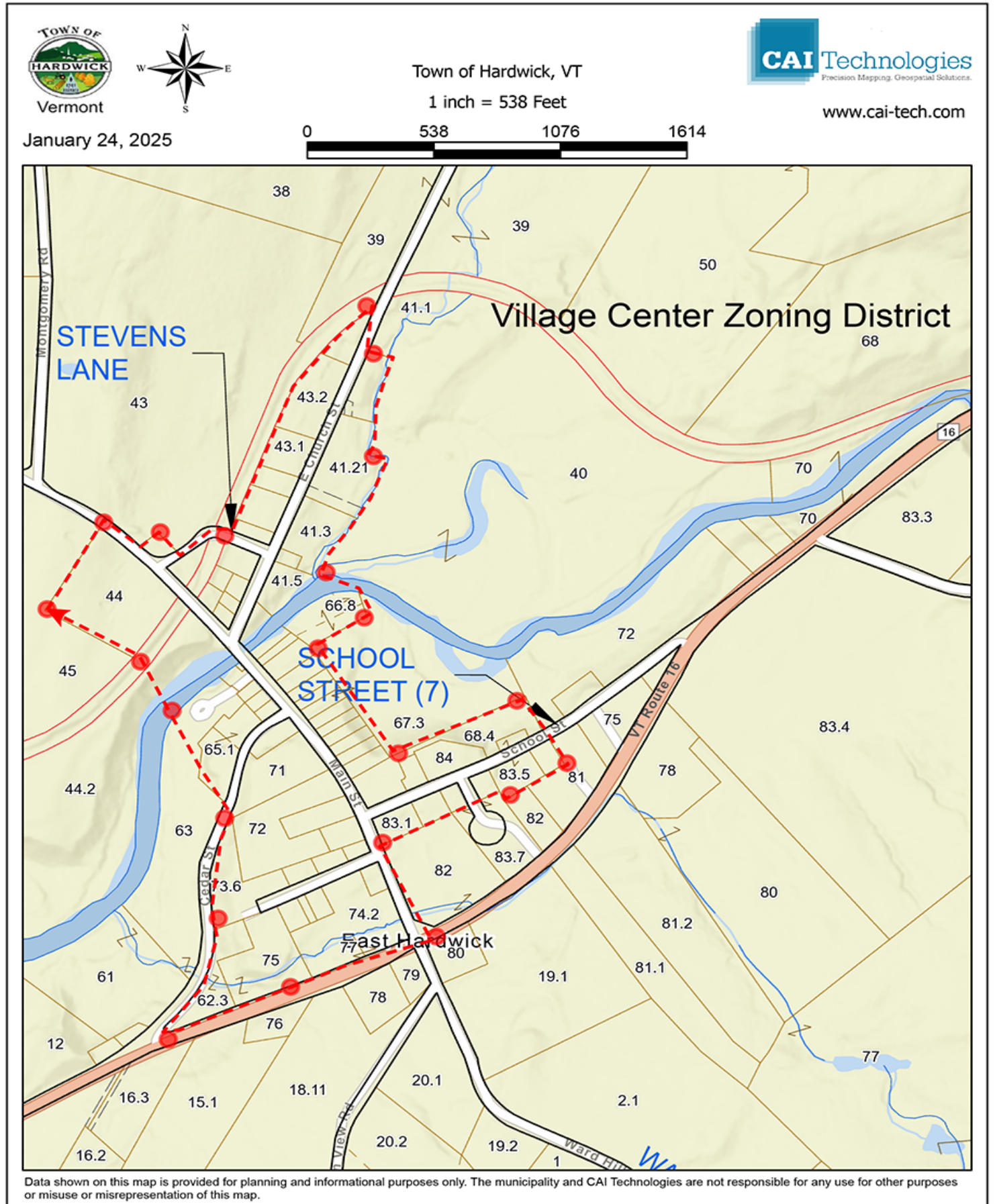
In those areas, state-recommended best practices are being implemented that will require the review of certain types of new development, expansions or significant land-disturbing activities to ensure they are designed safely and do not increase risk to nearby properties or infrastructure.

The letter from Hardwick Zoning and Floodplain Administrator Kristen Leahy says, “This effort is part of Hardwick’s ongoing work to strengthen long-term resilience.” She indicates the changes will allow the Town to receive a higher level of state reimbursement through the Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund (ERAF) following federally declared disasters in the future.

The new Village Center District covers portions of East Hardwick where it is said to support the historic village character, housing opportunities and pedestrian-oriented development. The district will “encourage small-scale residential growth and modest commercial activity, and preserve the traditional walkable pattern of buildings and uses.” The district language has been designed to reflect the scale, form, and community values expressed during public input, notes a letter to district residents from Leahy.

The irregularly shaped area is centered on Main Street, where it begins at Vermont Route 16, then across the Lamoille River and up Brickhouse Road to the Brick House, with extensions taking in the village along Cedar Street, School Street and Church Street.

Various standards for lot size, road frontage, setback and height limits apply to new construction



A proposed new Village Center Zoning District in Hardwick would cover East Hardwick, adding new development rules and restrictions as part of revisions to the Hardwick Unified Development Bylaws as proposed by the Planning Commission. A hearing has been scheduled for Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 6:30 p.m. on the third floor of the Memorial Building and virtually to hear comments from the public.

within the Village Center designated area.

Some technical changes to the bylaws are also being made to align them with state requirements and remove references to local Act 250 review as required by Act 181.

Before the new bylaws are implemented, the select board will hold another public hearing and a vote.

The full text of the proposed changes can be found online at [hardwickvt.gov](http://hardwickvt.gov), or be viewed in-person at the Hardwick Town Office. Comments may be sent by mail to the Hardwick Planning Commission, or by email to [zoning.administrator@hardwickvt.gov](mailto:zoning.administrator@hardwickvt.gov).

A link to the virtual meeting can be found with the event information on the town office calendar for December 9 at [hardwickvt.gov/government/town-office-calendar](http://hardwickvt.gov/government/town-office-calendar).



The Hardwick tax map with FEMA digitized flood hazard areas in red having a 1% annual chance of flooding. courtesy Town of Hardwick

## Area disaster recovery projects recommended for funding

by Paul Fixx

MONTPELIER – The Community Development (CD) Board met last Thursday with the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP) staff to review applications for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Disaster Recovery funds.

The recommendations will go to the Secretary of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), who will then make the final award decisions on behalf of the Governor.

Before voting on staff recommendation, Devon Hanna, Grants Management Analyst with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development introduced each program category and gave a general overview of the requirements of each. Hanna discussed program area requests in comparison to program area allocations. He gave a description of the staff analysis process and presented all of the funding requests.

ExecuSuite was recommended for a housing grant covering \$2,000,000 of its \$2,380,000 request to cover a portion of the \$4,580,000 cost of the Plainfield Inn Historic Restoration Project

Before receiving that approval, board member Maura Collins had asked what due diligence or underwriting was done by Disaster Recovery staff to confirm

their construction experience. Devon Hanna, Grants Management Analyst with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development explained that ExecuSuite has completed projects in New Hampshire and White River Junction and had community members advocate in support of their work.

Hanna said the Department of Environmental Conservation was involved to help determine what types of mitigation activities would be the most impactful.

A Cabot project for flood mitigation on the North Tributary was recommended for a Public Infrastructure Grant to cover \$1,250,000 of the requested \$1,455,506 project cost.

Hardwick was recommended for a Mitigation Project Grant of \$1,200,000, less than of its requested \$1,500,000, for a project titled Confluence Floodplain Restoration.

Hardwick was also recommended for a Planning Grant to cover the full requested amount of \$250,000 to cover a project for Downtown Hardwick Flood Mitigation Scoping Study.

Plainfield's request for \$9,719,257 to fund a portion of the East Village Expansion project was not recommended for funding.

The board learned that a second round of funding is available only in the housing category.

## Health officials recommend Hepatitis B Vaccine

WATERBURY – Vermont health officials are recommending health care providers continue to protect children from hepatitis B, a highly contagious virus that infects the liver, through the current, evidence-based vaccination schedule.

"In partnership with Vermont's health care community, pediatric care providers and our counterparts across the region, we want to make clear for parents and practitioners that our current vaccine recommendations offer the best protection for newborns and infants against serious diseases like hepatitis B," said Health Commissioner Rick Hildebrant, MD.

The hepatitis B vaccine is widely considered one of the safest and most effective vaccines ever made. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended the vaccine for all infants since 1991, and rates of the disease which can cause lifelong

liver damage when contracted by newborns and infants, have fallen sharply in the U.S. following widespread adoption of the current schedule.

The childhood vaccine schedule currently recommended by state and federal health officials, and supported by expert organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics, calls for a hepatitis B vaccine dose within 24 hours of birth and recommends that all children complete the full vaccination series within 18 months.

"I know many people have questions about vaccines, especially for their children. This vaccine is not only safe, it is lifesaving," said Dr. Hildebrant. "The CDC has long been a trusted source of evidence-based information for the public, and it is my hope that ACIP will join me in continuing to recommend this proven practice to our partners at the CDC."



Tonda Bryant, AWARE's Youth Advocate, teaches a class at Woodbury Elementary School. courtesy photo

## AWARE receives Northeast Kingdom Fund Grant

by Miranda Elkins

HARDWICK – AWARE recently received a \$5,000 grant from the Northeast Kingdom Fund at the Vermont Community Foundation. The funding will support the Healthy Relationships Project, advancing AWARE's mission to prevent and heal the trauma of domestic and sexual violence in the greater Hardwick area by promoting safety, respect, empathy and personal responsibility.

The Healthy Relationships Project is a comprehensive, evidence-based program for children in Pre-K through eighth grade. Bryant identified the need through her work with youth and schools, noting a gap in age-appropriate, research-based education on healthy relationships and body safety. After researching effective programs and consulting with community partners, AWARE selected the Healthy Relationships Project as a developmentally appropriate model that aligns with its mission.

The curricula have been shown to increase children's knowledge of personal body safety,

help them identify trusted adults and reduce vulnerability to sexual abuse. Evaluations demonstrate growth in children's understanding of boundaries, communication skills and confidence in seeking help. Caregiver and educator training further reinforce these lessons, creating safer environments at home and at school. This multi-level approach is especially effective in rural areas where access to ongoing support services may be limited.

According to Prevent Child Abuse Vermont, these programs have been used in Vermont schools since the early 1990s. Data from the Department for Children and Families shows a steady decrease in substantiated cases of child sexual abuse and a reduction in child-to-child sexual harm, evidence of the program's long-term impact.

For more information on the project email [awareyouth@vtlink.net](mailto:awareyouth@vtlink.net). If assistance is needed, contact AWARE at (802) 472-6463 or [aware@vtlink.net](mailto:aware@vtlink.net) and visit the website at [awarevt.org](http://awarevt.org).

Miranda Elkins is the executive director at AWARE Inc.



A solar array under construction on the roof of the Center for an Agricultural Economy's Hardwick Food Hub earlier this year. *courtesy photo*



The Center for an Agricultural Economy's solar array on the Hardwick Food Hub rooftop was completed in October. *courtesy photo*

## Solar array continues CAE commitment to renewable energy

by Center for an Agricultural Economy

HARDWICK – In late October, a 400-panel solar installation was completed on the roof of the Food Hub in Hardwick. Part of the Hardwick Yellow Barn and Business Accelerator project, the Food Hub is operated by the Center for Agriculture Economy (CAE) and opened in March when CAE moved its Farm Connex program into the facility.

CAE designed the Food Hub with energy efficiency and the environment in mind. The facility supports the needs of farms, food businesses and the community with climate-forward infrastructure.

The solar panels are the final piece of a four-part efficient

heating, cooling and power system for the facility.

The Food Hub's refrigeration system uses CO2 instead of freon, which does not contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. CAE invested in that refrigeration technology to cool 5,000 square feet of cooler and freezer space. The space allows for the future expansion of Farm Connex and allows CAE to offer cold and frozen storage to farmers.

The scale of refrigeration at the Food Hub allows for heat recapture to occur, taking what would otherwise be waste heat from the refrigeration compressors and turning it into the primary heat source for the facility.

The other two climate-conscious investments include heat pump hot water heaters and high

efficiency wood pellet boilers.

The nonprofit Northeast Kingdom Development Corporation (NEKDC) manages the full Yellow Barn project. NEKDC member and chair of the Hardwick Select Board, Eric Remick, said "CAE has done an amazing job in building out the Food Hub within the new Yellow Barn Accelerator space."

He continued, "From the inception of the Yellow Barn project, the goals have included fostering growth of new and existing agricultural and food businesses. By bringing solar power generation to the project, CAE emphasizes the important role of sustainability in fostering growth."

The Food Hub increases access to markets and infrastructure for farms and food producers

during a time when federal funding cuts for local food purchasing begins to impact the region. CAE followed through on their commitment to complete the renewable energy project at the Food Hub despite the loss of \$250,000 in previously secured federal grant funding for the solar array.

"The solar array will provide long-term environmental benefits and play a crucial role in the sustainability of this critical new piece of local food system infrastructure," CAE's Executive Director Jon Ramsay said.

"It will also help keep costs down for the farms using the facility, which is a direct benefit to their operations. It marks an important milestone in CAE's commitment to being a good steward of the land."

## Medicare Advantage plans leaving Vermont. Now what?

By Olivia Gieger, VTDigger

VERMONT – Bouncing from plan to plan for Medicare coverage has become an inadvertent, annual tradition for Becky Beerwald.

When she moved to Essex Junction from the Connecticut coast in 2023, she selected a Medicare Advantage plan before it was discontinued for the following year. Then she enrolled in a Vermont Blue Advantage plan, only for the insurer to announce in October that it would not offer the plans in 2026. This fall, she went back to the drawing board but in an insurance landscape almost entirely stripped of the Medicare Advantage plans that nearly 51,000 people in the state had relied on.

Beerwald is just one of the thousands of Vermonters trying to make sense of the coverage that remains available now that Medicare Advantage has essentially left the state.

This year's open enrollment period for Medicare, which runs through Dec. 7, has been a

"challenging one," said Sam Carleton, who directs the State Health Insurance Program, a state entity that provides guidance for Medicare beneficiaries. The small office has been flooded with inquiries since the start of October, when BlueCross Blue Shield and United Healthcare's departures from the Advantage market became public. Agewell, the elderly support agency Carleton leads in Northwestern Vermont has also seen a surge in interest for the webinars they offer to explain how Medicare works and how people can get the coverage they need under it.

Medicare is the federal health insurance program for people 65 and older and those with certain disabilities.

Medicare has four parts: Part A covers inpatient care while Part B broadly covers outpatient care, medical devices and preventative care, among other things. Together, these two are regarded as original Medicare. It generally covers 80% of the cost of services, meaning many people who opt

for traditional Medicare coverage also opt for something known as a Medigap plan, or supplemental insurance, sold by a private insurer that can help cover the remaining 20% of costs.

Medicare Part D offers prescription drug coverage, which is also provided by a private insurer.

Part C plans bundle all of that and often include additional benefits like dental, or vision. These plans, known as Medicare Advantage plans, are offered by private insurers.

While many people like their Advantage plans, others can feel trapped in them because they require approval before covering some drugs and services and often require people to see in-network providers. When the insurers providing Medicare Advantage plans in Vermont announced the end to their coverage, it gave some people a welcomed exit ramp from plans that are otherwise difficult to leave, explained Kaj Samsom, the commissioner of the Department of Financial Regulation, the state

office that regulates insurers.

"This event, as really truly unfortunate as it is for folks who are no longer in Medicare Advantage and no longer have other options, there are some people who are probably happy," Samsom said.

When an insurer withdraws a plan, it triggers something called a special enrollment period, which comes with different privileges than the regular open enrollment period.

In particular, it means people searching for new plans get something called "Guaranteed Issue Rights." These rights mean that insurance companies cannot charge someone more for their insurance based on pre-existing health conditions, things like diabetes or cancer, that would make care more expensive for the insurer to pay out.

When someone is new to Medicare and enrolling for the first time, they are also protected from this type of underwriting. But after that initial enrollment, Medigap plans can reject or charge

**See LEAVING, next page**

# Leaving

Continued From Previous Page

sicker patients more based on their health history. Samsom referred to this as the “one way street” of Medicare Advantage, where individuals can’t switch to traditional Medicare without the massive cost of a Medigap supplement plan looming over them.

Now, nearly all Vermonters who bought Medicare Advantage plans will need to opt into original Medicare, with the option to buy the supplemental Medigap plans protected from underwriting during this special enrollment.

The issue of underwriting became particularly concerning to Beerwald. As she scoured the best Medigap plan, she said some insurers asked for her health history, despite her guaranteed issue rights.

When open enrollment began, Beerwald said she started calling the insurers offering the least expensive Medigap plans for 2026: Medco, State Farm and Aflac.

Each insurer offers a selection of Medigap plans: A, B, C, D, F, G. These letter plans are standardized, so that plans with the same letter include the same benefits, no matter which insurer sells them. Price should be the only difference.

Beerwald said she wants a G plan because it offers the best coverage with the most diverse beneficiary pool. Because of a 2015 law, people who became eligible for Medicare after 2020 can’t buy Medigap plans C or F. That restriction effectively leaves plans’ pool older. Plans D and G now offer similar coverage, without the age restriction.

“My mother lived until almost 102 my dad was 87, so I’ve got a long life ahead of me,”

Beerwald said. “I don’t want to be in the older pool, I want to be in the younger pool.”

She said she worries that as the pools under plans C and F grow older and smaller over time, their premiums will soar or the plans could disappear altogether.

“I don’t want to be in the lurch again. I want to be in the popular plan with the popular kids,” she said.

Insurers she found that honored the guaranteed issue rights for plan G charged higher premiums. She did notice, however, that insurers would honor these rights for C and F plans.

Eventually, she bought a TVHP Medigap Blue Plan G from BlueCross BlueShield of Vermont, for about \$258 per month, she said.

Still, the fact that she encountered some insurers who would not honor the guaranteed issue for every letter plan conflicted with her understanding of how the law should protect that right.

Beerwald’s quest to understand and rectify this issue offers a window onto the maelstrom that can arise when private insurers are tasked with delivering a government service. She said she reached out to the state office tasked with regulating insurers, their consumer protection line, U.S. Rep. Becca Balint’s office, SHIP and Carleton, in an attempt to make sense of it all.

“I certainly feel that frustration. I mean, you’re in a circumstance where you’ve lost your insurance, you received notice from the federal government that you are getting a special enrollment period, and you’re able to get another plan. You’ve done the legwork. . . . You’ve made a choice, and you then call this insurance company, those insurance companies say sure we’ll sell you a



Tax Commissioner Kaj Samsom. File photo by Mike Dougherty, VTDigger

policy, but only if you send us all your medical records. That stinks,” Carleton said.

However, Carleton and the Department of Regulation told Beerwald, and confirmed to VTDigger, that it is legal for insurers to not apply guaranteed issue rights to every letter plan.

It comes down to one small matter of wording in the regulation that applies to Medigap plans: “It’s a ‘must’ for (plans) A, B, C, F,” Department of Regulation Deputy Commissioner Mary Block said. “It’s a ‘may’ for G, for people before that 2020 date.”

“So some insurance companies will offer it, some will not,” she added.

There’s nothing the state can do to rectify this frustration, according to Block, since federal law dictates Medigap plan regulations.

“In Vermont, we don’t have the discretion to say Plan G is always going to be available to everybody,” she said.

Block added that other consumers have run into confusion when dealing with insurance brokers, who may not be aware of which customers are receiving guaranteed issue rights and may mix up forms.

The best way to combat that, Samsom said, is for people to advocate for themselves and make it very clear when they are on the phone that they need the guaranteed issue rights.

Beerwald remains unsatisfied with their explanation.

Now, the only remaining Medicare Advantage plans in the state are Humana plans in six counties — including Orange, Windham and Windsor, where

many of the available care comes from providers in the Dartmouth Health network. However, Dartmouth Health has long been out of network for Humana. During a Nov. 19 town hall with the Vermont congressional delegation, Balint raised particular concern over this and cautioned beneficiaries in those counties to choose new plans.

Carleton assured that even in the counties where Humana remains, if people have lost their other Advantage plan, they should still receive guaranteed issue rights for Medigap plans if they chose to buy one and opt into original Medicare.

“What prompts the special enrollment period is your plan leaving, not necessarily the loss of all Medicare Advantage plans,” he said.

Carleton said he worries about the overall sticker shock that comes with Medigap plans, and fears some people will opt into original Medicare and forgo supplemental plans, leaving them vulnerable to the 20% of costs that original Medicare doesn’t cover.

Beerwald said she’s going to end up paying more than \$7,500 for insurance this year. After her Medigap plan, she said she’s buying a drug plan, vision and hearing plans, as well as a dental plan, to cover the cost of extensive dental work she needs.

She said she worries not just for herself but for other older adults who are not as savvy as navigating all the pitfalls of the insurance system. But for now, she is locked in to her BlueCross BlueShield’s plan for at least a year and whatever 2026 may have in store.

## Medicare Supplemental Plans

	A	B	C	D	F*	G*	K	L	M	N
Medicare Part A Coinsurance – 20%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Medicare Part B Coinsurance – 20%	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	50%	75%	✓	***
Three Pints of Blood	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	50%	75%	✓	✓
Hospice (Part A)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	50%	75%	✓	✓
Skilled Nursing Facility Care Coinsurance - \$209.50 per day for days 21-100			✓	✓	✓	✓	50%	75%	✓	✓
Medicare Part A Deductible - \$1676 per benefit period			✓	✓	✓	✓	50%	75%	50%	✓
Medicare Part B Deductible - \$257			✓		✓					
Medicare Part B Excess Charges					✓	✓				
Foreign Travel Emergency Care			80%	80%	80%	80%			80%	80%
							Out-of-Pocket Limit **			
							\$7,220	\$3,610		

Plans C & F are no longer available to people new to Medicare on or after 1/1/2020  
 \*Plans F and G offer high deductible options  
 \*\*Plans K and L have out of pocket limits  
 \*\*\*Plan N: must pay a copayment of up to \$20 for some office visits & up to a \$50 copayment for emergency room visits that do not result in an inpatient admission.



A slide from a webinar titled “Age Well Medigap” organized by the State Health Insurance Assistance Program on Tuesday, Nov. 25.

screenshot via YouTube

# EDITORIAL

## You've brought us back from the brink

Today, as I write this on Giving Tuesday, I spent the morning listening to Vermont Public's fund drive as they interrupted the daily news and information. While we place ads in the paper, we can't come to you hourly until you make a donation. We do, however, have your attention while you digest what's on our pages. We hope you find it valuable and make a donation to support our efforts.

As staff and the board work to keep The Hardwick Gazette coming to you every week, as it has for 139 years without interruption, almost every week I read of a newspaper somewhere in the U.S that's failed.

Recent news of the Brandon Reporter being shuttered after its final issue on October 1, and a small group of residents in the area working to bring it back, hit closer to home.

We know the difficulty of working to bring a newspaper back from the brink, even a digital one, after it has jettisoned parts of its operation.

We regularly struggle with being located in Greensboro, while our name places us in Hardwick. Greensboro has been quite welcoming and offers us a generously low rent, which makes it virtually impossible to consider any options that present themselves for moving back to Hardwick.

I mistakenly printed eight extra copies of The Gazette back in October, so I asked the Buffalo Mountain Market if they'd be willing to sell them. They answered yes, and a print copy of the Gazette became available. Just 18 copies were sold that week at \$5 each. Adding that to the 16 copies that have been going to libraries and other places our readers might find them, made it enough to have a printer in Newport do the work that once took me several hours after each issue was finished. That brings our cost down a little, making it possible to cover printing and leave something for the outlet selling them.

Last week we took ten copies to Willey's in Greensboro.

You'll now see a \$5 print price below our name at the top of page one and a bar code to the right.

That accident fortuitously returned The Gazette to print. Selling 20 or 30 copies a week is a long way from the thousands of copies of the Gazette that were once distributed each week, but it has us headed in the opposite direction of many small local newspapers.

Even at \$5, we're only covering the cost of printing and distribution, but not the writing and production of either the digital or print edition.

While we're still a long way from the several thousand copies that could allow us to move to newsprint paper and cut our costs considerably, those who prefer a print edition can now buy one on the newsstand.

The Vermont Journalism award of \$5,000, announced at the start of our end-of-year fund drive, for which local and national donors and organizations have given over \$40,000 to match your gifts, has us more grateful than I can easily express.

Just yesterday, a gift of \$500 came in soon after we announced that one of our staffers has created crocheted comfort chickens, which we've offered for a \$500 donation.

As I write this at noon on Giving Tuesday, we've received over \$10,000 toward the \$40,000 in matching funds. We'll be well on our way toward sustainability when we reach our goal of another \$30,000.

As you go about your day, in the back of your mind please hear us reminding you to join your friends and neighbors in supporting The Hardwick Gazette with your donation of any amount.

We have a donor who's promised us an additional \$1,000 if 50 new people make donations of any amount, so almost everyone can contribute to our success in some way.

Thank you for being a reader, a donor and for trusting us to bring your community's news and information into your home.

We'll appreciate your help reaching our goal and thank you for doing so.

**Paul Fixx, editor**



Community singers, including (from left) front, Judy Carpenter, Cilla Smith, Marqa Schimann, Patti Sunday-Winters, Andrew King, Jan Terweisch and Emma Lalumbo; back, Josh Karp, BJ Gray and Ereika Karp; sing in front of the kiosk at the Christmas tree lighting on the green across from Willey's Store in Greensboro Village, November 30. photo by Hal Gray

## LETTERS FROM READERS

### Congratulations

To the editor:

Congratulations Paul, and the Gazette Team on your award!

**David Upson**  
Hardwick Town Manager

Editor's note: Upson is

referring to last week's story, "Gazette receives Vermont Civic Journalism Award," announcing The Gazette has received a Local Civic Journalism Award of \$5,000 to further its existing mission.

# THE Hardwick Gazette

Since 1889

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EDITOR - Paul Fixx

REPORTER - Raymonda Parchment

PRODUCTION - Sandy Atkins,  
Dawn Gustafson, David Mitchell

SPORTS - Ken Brown, Eric Hanson

PHOTOGRAPHER - Vanessa Fournier

CARTOONIST - Julie Atwood

WEATHER - Tyler Mollur

CIRCULATION - Dawn Gustafson

ADVERTISING

Sandy Atkins, Paul Fixx, Raymonda Parchment  
ads@hardwickgazette.org, sales@hardwickgazette.org

CONTRIBUTORS

Trish Alley, Brendan Buckley  
Ken Brown, Elizabeth Dow, Hal Gray,  
Abrah Griggs, Henry Homeyer, Willem Lange,  
Cheryl Luther Michaels, David Rodgers,  
Kay Spaulding, Liz Steel, John Walters;  
Will Helms, intern.

BOARD MEMBERS

Paul Fixx, John Walters, Stefanie Cravedi,  
Anita Engel, Betty Jones

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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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# YANKEE NOTEBOOK

## When the wheels fall off

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – On an early spring day in 1958 I was tooling north in Constance Green, my trusty old Plymouth, on Route 9N in New York State, with Lake Champlain off to my right. The frost heaves were fierce, but in those days I treated them more like ski jumps than speed bumps. I did notice that on some of them, I was getting a groaning, rumbling sound from the area of my left rear wheel. Hmm, I thought. I'll have to take a look at that when I get home, and sped onward.

A little south of Port Henry, I hit a major bump. The sound in the nether regions grew very loud; Connie seemed to stagger; and I was treated to the very unusual sight of my rear wheel passing me on my left. I pulled over very carefully, prayed that the wheel wouldn't roll out of sight or down the bank into the lake, and began the long process of putting it back on with lug nuts borrowed from the others.

*The Secretary of State, probably the glibbest of the Cabinet, speaks with such staunch adherence to whatever is the current party line that I'm constantly looking for buds in his ears. At the moment he's flacking a "peace agreement" that essentially gives one of the parties everything it wants, in language apparently translated from Russian.*

Ever since that incident, which could have ended far differently and unhappily, I've been alert for a repeat of the unique sounds that preceded it, and can report happily that I've never heard them since.

Till recently, that is. Lately I fancy I've been hearing them from the area of our nation's capital, where Mack Sennett's Keystone Kops seem to be infesting the great paddy wagon of State. (If you're not familiar with the Keystone Kops, your education is incomplete. Luckily, these days you can google them.)

I learned years ago, in my contracting days, that in order to get a job done right, you had to have the best people available working with you, and then assign them to the jobs for which they were best suited. Every task had to be done right, from waterproofing a concrete foundation with tar to getting the crown moulding just right. To this day, whenever I go into a house I've never been to

before, I unconsciously scope out the joints of the window and door trim. If I find one poorly done, I try to sit where I can't see it, and certainly never mention it. The operations of the current administration betray little thoughtfulness or proper attention to detail.

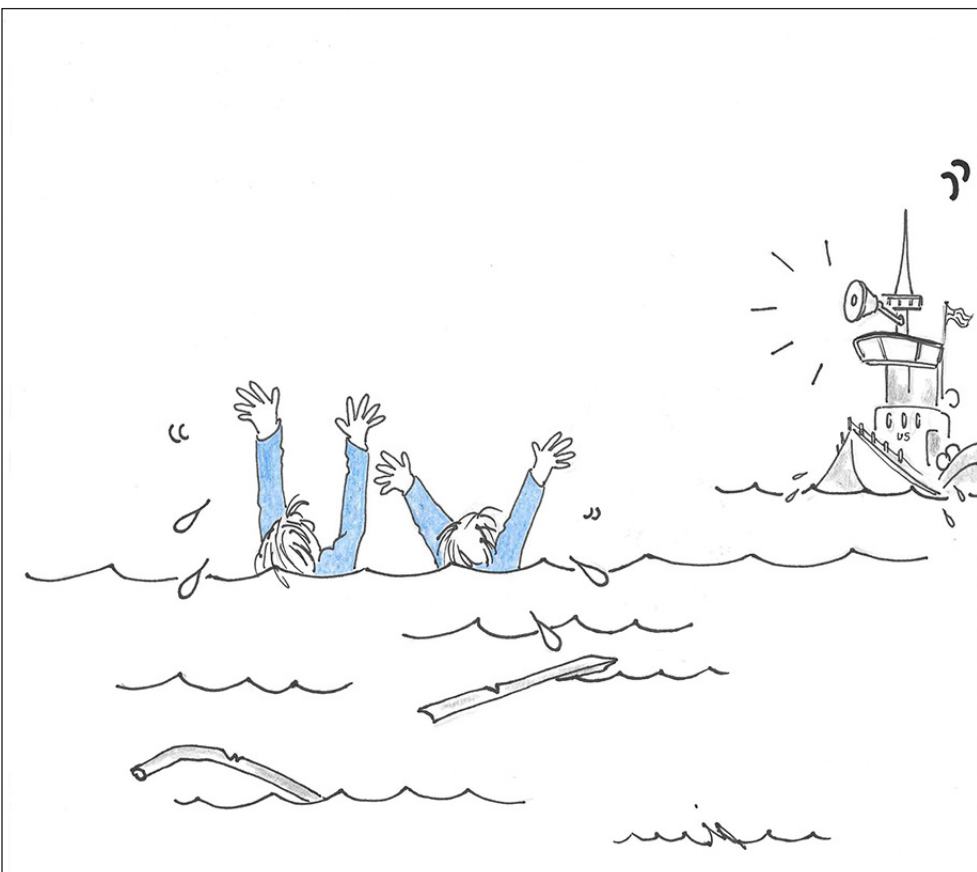
First off, the people. If ever there was a place for the pick of the litter, it's in the choice of cabinet heads. The person in charge of the biggest budget, the military's, should be someone respected by the hundreds of officers under his command. In these days of slapstick governance, however, we have instead a man whose qualifications, though not militarily insignificant, are shadowed by a tilt toward toxic masculinity, disdain for homosexuals and women, and a conspicuously tin ear when speaking with the brass. Apparently unpopular within his department, he's unswervingly loyal to the president. This may cause him serious problems (a common malady of Trump associates) if the international court finds him guilty of extrajudicial murders of crews of small boats in the Caribbean. It will avail him little (the defense died with the Nuremberg trials) to plead he was just following orders.

The list of relative incompetents goes on. There's little to be gained by reciting all the misappointments. The Secretary of Health and Human Services (it's pretty easy to get under his skin at committee meetings by asking pointed questions) has fired his entire staff of scientific advisers and replaced them with loyalists who believe, among other things, that life-saving vaccines cause autism. The Attorney General has managed to botch the appointments of prosecutors assigned to try to convict the president's most-hated adversaries. It's hard to see a rosy sunset in her future.

The Secretary of State, probably the glibbest of the Cabinet, speaks with such staunch adherence to whatever is the current party line that I'm constantly looking for buds in his ears. At the moment he's flacking a "peace agreement" that essentially gives one of the parties everything it wants, in language apparently translated from Russian. And Homeland Security, the young lady who poses in military gear (but with hair and eyebrows just so). When she wrote about killing her puppy because "he wouldn't behave," and appeared with her masked goons rooting out people and children who don't look like us, that was it for me. It was sub-human.

My friend Bea and I, when we manage to be together, often talk about where the country is headed and whether it'll get there during this awful administration. She's often distraught about it, which bothers me. I'm slightly more optimistic. I've heard the sound a vehicle makes before the wheels begin to fall off, and I'm hearing it now.

## Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



**"KILL THEM ALL! WE DON'T WANT ANY SURVIVORS TELLING ANYONE WE'RE MURDERING FISHERMEN!"**

## MEETING MEMO

- Wednesday, December 3**  
Stannard Town School Board, second Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m., Commons Room, Craftsbury Academy.  
Stannard Town Hall.  
Wolcott Select Board, first second Wednesday of month, 6:30 p.m.  
Wednesdays of month, 6 p.m.
  - Thursday, December 4**  
Hardwick Select Board, first Thursday of month, 6 p.m.
  - Monday, December 8**  
Calais Select Board, second Monday of month, 7 p.m.
  - Tuesday, December 9**  
Hardwick Energy Committee meeting, 6 p.m., Hardwick Memorial Building, 20 Church St., 1st floor. Information: Bill at (802) 249-6004 or Energy.Coordinator-HardwickVT.org.
  - Wednesday, December 10**  
Craftsbury Town School Board, second Wednesday, 6 to 8 p.m., Commons Room, Craftsbury Academy.  
Greensboro Select Board, second Wednesday of month, 6:30 p.m.
- Town Clerks**  
Cabot: [cabotvt.us](http://cabotvt.us)  
Calais: [calaisvermont.gov](http://calaisvermont.gov)  
Craftsbury: [townofcraftsbury.com](http://townofcraftsbury.com)  
Greensboro: [greensborovt.gov](http://greensborovt.gov)  
Hardwick: [hardwickvt.org](http://hardwickvt.org)  
Marshfield: [town.marshfield.vt.us](http://town.marshfield.vt.us)  
Plainfield: [plainfieldvt.us](http://plainfieldvt.us)  
Stannard: Stannard town clerk: (802) 533-2577, open Wed., 8-noon, townofstannard@myfairpoint.net  
Walden: [waldenvt.gov](http://waldenvt.gov)  
Wolcott: [wolcottvt.org](http://wolcottvt.org)  
Woodbury: [woodburyvt.org](http://woodburyvt.org)

# ANOTHER OPINION

## Beyond headlines: How recovery is getting done

by **Kristen Leahy**

HARDWICK – Flood recovery in Hardwick isn't one project or one timeline. Clearing debris, reopening roads and stabilizing buildings was only the opening phase. The work now looks different, less visible, more procedural and essential to getting projects funded and built correctly.

Most of the current progress is happening through engineering, documentation and coordination with state and federal agencies. Environmental reviews, cost estimates, procurement requirements and regulatory checks are not dramatic, but they determine whether mitigation moves forward and whether work on the ground is effective and compliant.

Mitigation planning, especially along Wolcott Street or in the Granite Street Neighborhood, follows a set sequence: surveying, hydraulic analysis, design alternatives, public input and multiple layers of permitting.

In a river town, accuracy matters. A rushed step can shift floodwater elsewhere or create future problems the community cannot afford.

Hardwick is preparing for the reality of a changing climate. Resilience planning is underway to align land use, emergency operations and capital investments with conditions that are no longer predictable from past experience. The goal is not simply to respond to the next storm, but to reduce exposure

before it arrives.

A Jackson Dam feasibility study to look at a range of options for the dam's future is part of this broader approach. Engineers are evaluating its structural condition, hydrology, safety, environmental impacts and long-term costs. The study does not assume an outcome. Its purpose is to give the Town a technically sound basis for whatever decisions come next; whether that is reinforcement, modification, or removal.

All of this is happening while regular municipal operations continue: road maintenance, zoning reviews, public works, budgeting and other town responsibilities. Recovery does not replace daily work; it runs parallel to it.

Progress is steady even when

it's not obvious: engineering is underway at priority sites, updated emergency procedures are being developed, clearer response roles are being defined and mitigation projects are advancing through their required steps.

Long-term recovery rarely looks urgent. It looks procedural, methodical and sometimes uneventful. This phase is where the town can reduce future damage, avoid repeating past mistakes and make investments that hold up when the river rises again. That work may not make headlines, but it's the part that changes outcomes.

*Kristen Leahy is Hardwick's Zoning and Floodplain Administrator and Resilience and Adaptation Coordinator.*

## Senate, House Republicans respond to tax letter

by **Sen. Scott Beck and Rep. Pattie McCoy**

MONTPELIER – Today, December 1, the Vermont Tax Department released its annual forecast on the 2026 property tax implications of Vermont's PreK-12 education system, projecting a sharp rise in Education Property Taxes.

According to the report, the statewide average property tax increase is projected to be 11.9%. School districts are expected to increase education spending by \$115 million, with per-pupil spending increasing by nearly \$1,000, a 6.8% jump. These increases are more than double inflation, economic growth, wage growth and the growth of Vermont's General and Transportation Funds, both of which are dealing with higher health insurance premiums. Even

more troubling is the long-term trend: education property taxes have risen 41% over the past five years. This is not acceptable.

It's important to emphasize that this projection is not a foregone conclusion. School districts still have the opportunity to revise and reduce their budgets. Additionally, the Legislature could allocate General Fund dollars to help offset property tax increases. However, those same dollars are also needed to support critical services Vermonters depend on, including public safety, food insecurity, healthcare, housing and homeless assistance, and other necessary social programs.

Republicans are deeply concerned that despite nearly the highest per-pupil education spending in the nation, Vermonters are seeing diminishing returns: declining reading and math scores, deteriorating school

infrastructure, low post-secondary enrollment, a rising dropout rate and the highest staffing ratio in the country, 3.4:1.

Senate and House Republicans are committed to controlling education costs and reforming Vermont's education system into one that delivers real value and outcomes we can be proud of. The Foundation Formula in Act 73 was a step in the right direction. We are ready to work with the Administration and Democrats who

recognize the serious nature of the challenge and are committed to meaningful reform.

What we cannot support are proposals that ask for even more taxes from already overburdened taxpayers. Vermont doesn't have a revenue problem; we have a spending problem.

*Sen. Scott Beck is the Vermont Senate Republican Leader and Rep. Pattie McCoy is the Vermont House Republican Leader.*

### Greensboro Development Review Board Warning

The Greensboro Development Review Board will conduct a hybrid hearing on Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 7 p.m., at the Greensboro Town Office and via ZOOM. The Board will consider an appeal of zoning enforcement regarding the Highland Lodge's Conditional Use permit, decision dated October 2, 2025. This appeal shall be considered under 5.7 Appeals in the Greensboro Zoning Bylaw. The hearing is open to the public.

The meeting number is 824 558 6005. There is no password. You may phone into the ZOOM meeting at: 1-646-931-3860.

A packet of materials is available for review at the Greensboro Town Hall or at the Greensboro Town website, [www.greensborovt.gov](http://www.greensborovt.gov). Participation in the proceeding, either in person or in writing, is a prerequisite to the right to make any subsequent appeal. Interested persons may join the ZOOM hearing or send a letter or email ([zoning@greensborovt.gov](mailto:zoning@greensborovt.gov)) to the Development Review Board at the Greensboro Town Clerk's office to comment on the proposed plan.

The Greensboro Development Review Board

## Heller's World by Joe Heller



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[news@hardwickgazette.org](mailto:news@hardwickgazette.org)

# WEEKS GONE BY

## 65 years ago in The Hardwick Gazette, December 1, 1960 SCUDDER PARKER TO BE ORDAINED SUNDAY

A Service for Ordination for Scudder M. Parker, who has been serving as pastor of the United Church of Hardwick since September, 1958, will be held at the local church this Sunday evening, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m. A cordial invitation from the church is extended to all who might wish to attend this service, which will be followed by a reception in the church parlors.

At 4 p.m., in the afternoon preceding the Service, an Ecclesiastical Council called by the Lamoille Association of Congregational Churches will examine Mr. Parker on his qualifications for Ordination. Moderator of this Association is the Rev. Charles W. Parker of Johnson, and Scribe of the Association is the Rev.

Douglas P. Brayton of Stowe.

In addition to Mr. Brayton and Mr. Parker, other ministers who will participate in the Service of Ordination include the Rev. John E. Nutting of Hyde Park, the Rev. Estella Dickinson of Hardwick, the Rev. Richard H. Beyer of St. Albans, who will preach the Ordination Sermon; the Rev. Walker T. Hawley of Middlebury, the Rev. C. Arthur Hazen of Waterbury, the Rev. Max H. Webster of Burlington, and the candidates father, the Rev. Fletcher D. Parker of Peacham, who will offer the Ordaining Prayer.

The candidate for Ordination is a graduate of Williams College, a former newspaperman and author. He has been studying under the Committee on the Ministry of the Vermont Congregational Conference, by which he was licensed to preach in 1958, during the past three years in preparation for Ordination. He and his wife have five children. Since the Fall of 1958, except for a five month leave of absence for study, they have made their home in the United Church parsonage on West Church Street.

## 100 years ago in The Hardwick Gazette, December 1, 1925

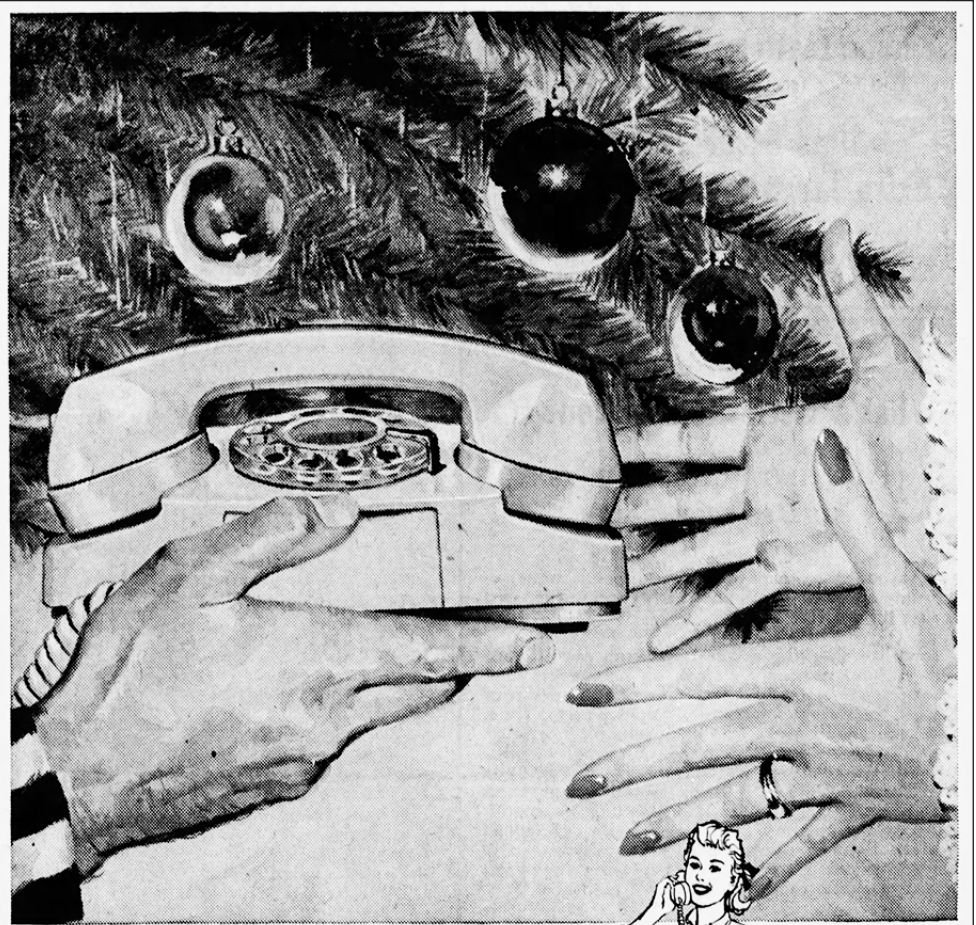
### Death of Robert C. Wallace

The funeral of Robert C. Wallace, head of the Union Granite Co., of Morrisville, held at that place Monday afternoon, was attended by a number of Hardwick citizens. His death occurred at Deland, Fla., Thursday, where he went with his family a month ago. Mr. Wallace had been in poor health for some time and he went to Florida for the benefit of his condition.

Mr. Wallace was a former resident of Hardwick, moving to Morrisville with three brothers a dozen years ago, and in the intervening time all four brothers have passed away.

The deceased was 55 years of age; a native of Canada.

The Wallace boys organized the Union Granite Company here about twenty five years ago, and were eminently successful from the beginning, growing to be one of the largest and most reliable granite manufacturing firms in this section. Mr. Wallace married Anna



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NEW ENGLAND TELEPHONE

65 years ago in The Hardwick Gazette, December 1, 1960

Maude Whalen here, January 23, 1909, and a son and daughter, with the widow survive him, with a brother in St. Johnsbury.

## 100 years ago in The Hardwick Gazette, December 1, 1925

### Breaks Leg While Sliding

The boys and girls of this village should take heed of the almost serious accident which befell Raymond Benway, oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Benway, last night, while coasting on Kimball Hill, one of the most dangerous hills in this village to slide on. The accident occurred at about 9 o'clock. Raymond was steering on Joe Write, Sr.'s traverse. The traverse was heavily laden and came down that steep incline with lightening speed. In trying to make the turn onto Sumner Street, the traverse

went into the bank and guard rail post at that point with terrific force, breaking two bones below the knee, the first break being of a canting nature, while the other break was apparently straight across, both bones being broken twice and badly shattered. Drs. Ferris and Kinney were called to the Benway home on Sumner Street to set the leg, and while the lad is suffering considerable pain, he is getting along as well as could be expected. Raymond is about 14 or 15 years of age.

In the accident of last night, it was a wonder that not more were injured. Some had bloody noses and all were more or less considerably shaken up. Scout first-aid in assisting the injured was resorted to in getting Raymond home.

The front sled of the traverse was party demolished.

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## Merrill A. Darling

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65 years ago in The Hardwick Gazette, December 1, 1960

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THE Hardwick Gazette  
INDEPENDENT LOCAL NEWS SINCE 1889

# VOICES OF SPIRIT

## The value of expressing gratitude in all things

by Virginia Lapierre

MORRISVILLE – At work recently, we had training on conflict resolution. After learning about the harm that unresolved conflict can have on a place of business, and going through ways of dealing with conflict rather than ignoring it, we ended with a gratitude exercise. Each person had a paper with the words, “I’m grateful for \_\_\_\_\_” that was filled in with their name. We passed the papers around and took turns writing a note of gratitude or appreciation for each of our fellow co-workers. The thought behind the exercise was that it is extremely hard to complain about or be in conflict with someone while you are being grateful for them.

Expressing gratitude is not a new idea and isn’t something for just a particular time of year. It is actually something that the Bible instructs us to do. The Apostle Paul wrote about this in his letter to the church in Thessalonica. He said, “Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for

you in Christ Jesus.” I Thessalonians 5:16-18. There are not many other times in the Bible where we get such a clear to-do list so when I read a passage like this, I pay attention and try to incorporate these practices into my life.

Giving thanks in all circumstances does not mean that you are happy about every difficult thing that is in your life, rather it is a practice of looking for the good, no matter what happens. Science has discovered that practicing thankfulness can have a profound, positive impact on your mental, emotional and physical health with potential benefits like reduced inflammation and lowered blood pressure. Like any practice, the more you do it, the easier it gets, and the more you will see the benefits in your life.

As a mother, I have noticed that when I practice giving thanks, it makes it easier for me to be more patient with my kids. Rather than be annoyed by their noise or laundry or messy rooms,

I can be grateful that I am allowed the privilege of

motherhood.

I can give thanks for all the clothing they have that needs to be washed, and for the toys and books that mess up their rooms because it means we live in a place of abundance.

I can also be grateful for the time I get to spend together with my kids as I remember that all too soon, they will be grown and likely gone from my home.

Not only can this practice of being grateful help you have more peace in your job and family, but it can help in all the other areas of your life as well. When someone cuts you off on the road, you can be thankful that you have a car to drive and have time to drive safely to where you need to go. When someone at the store is rude to you, you can give thanks for all the people who do treat you with kindness and respect. When your head or your throat hurts, you can be thankful for all the days of health you normally enjoy each year.

We are in the crazy time of year where a season of gratitude

collides with a season of discontent. Kids (and grown ups) make lists of all the things they want. The schedules are packed with more activities than we can possibly do. We are encouraged to think about all the things in our lives that we should resolve to change or improve in the new year. However, before we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season, let’s be intentional about entering this time of year from a position of thankfulness.

To help with Paul’s to-do list above, I encourage you to take the time to write out at least three things that you are thankful for every day from now until the new year. You can use a journal, a scrap of paper, a social media post or a gratitude app, it doesn’t matter.

What is important is that we all make a practice of expressing gratitude in all things.

What are you thankful for today?

*Virginia Lapierre is a deaconess at the Lamoille Valley Grace Brethren Church, Morrisville.*

## IN THE GARDEN

### Considerations when giving holiday plants

by Deborah J. Benoit

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. – During the holidays, an eye-catching display of plants may seem like the perfect gift solution, particularly at the last minute.

Is the intended recipient a plant lover? Will they welcome the gift, or will it be something they’ll feel obligated to water (when they remember) and feel guilty when it dies? Maybe the best choice is a “disposable” plant, one that’s part of the holiday décor then gone. Millions of poinsettias (*Euphorbia pulcherrima*) are sold during the holidays. Most don’t survive through January, but they’re enjoyed while they last.

Many people would likely welcome a plant as a gift, but before adding one to your cart, ask yourself some questions.

Would they know how to care for it? Someone with a busy schedule may not have time to deal with a plant requiring frequent attention but might appreciate one that’s easy to care for. Whatever their level of experience with plants, including a card with information about the plant and its care will not only be helpful but also appreciated.

Consider whether there’ll be adequate light and space to accom-

modate a gift. How big and how fast will it grow? While an African violet (*Saintpaulia*) won’t require much space and can do fine in the bright, indirect light of a northern window, a jade plant (*Crassula ovata*) can eventually grow to over three feet high and requires at least four hours of direct sunlight daily. Bigger and more expensive is not always better: a smaller plant that fits the available space is often a better choice than a large plant that demands a place of its own.

Does the recipient have other plants? Perhaps they’ve avoided owning plants due to concerns about nibbling pets or curious children. It’s wise to know if a plant is toxic. Even plants not considered poisonous can cause stomach upset, so a hanging plant that will be out of reach or an enclosed terrarium may be a good choice.

When in doubt, consider asking the recipient what plant they’d like. While your gift won’t be a surprise, there’s no doubt it’ll be welcomed.

One last consideration: How will you care for the plant between its purchase and when you gift it? To deliver it in as good condition as when it left the store, be sure it’s adequately protected from cold during transport from the store to your home and then from your



*Houseplants may make thoughtful holiday gifts when matched to the recipient’s space and lifestyle.*  
photo by Debra Heleba

home to its recipient. Icy drafts can damage foliage or shock a plant into dropping leaves or buds. Be sure to package it with care. An open gift bag may not offer enough protection against cold temperatures, particularly if the plant you’re giving has its roots in a tropical climate. Be sure it’s completely covered, and don’t leave even a covered plant in your vehicle for an extended period. You’ll want your gift not only to arrive in pristine condition, but to stay that way without the aftereffects of a brush with freezing temperatures.

While at your home, if there’s foil covering the pot, remove it at

least temporarily to allow excess water to drain. Water as needed and provide adequate light until it’s time for the plant to move to its new home.

Giving the right plant to the right person can be a great gift option for the holidays and will be a reminder of the gift giver that the recipient can enjoy for years to come.

*Deborah Benoit is a UVM Extension Master Gardener from North Adams, Mass., who volunteers as a garden columnist and participates in Bennington County Extension Master Gardener Chapter activities.*

# THE OUTSIDE STORY

## Winter visitor: Rough-legged Hawk

by Loren Merrill

MILLBROOK, N.Y. – In late autumn, cold air masses come barreling down from the Canadian Arctic like an atmospheric avalanche, bringing with them a visitor from the North: the rough-legged hawk (*Buteo lagopus*). Its arrival is not as heralded as that of another arctic invader, the snowy owl, but the rough-legged hawk's southern sojourns are generally more regular than the snowy owl's irruptive ventures. Rough-legged hawks (known as "roughies" by birders) breed on the arctic and subarctic tundra, feeding on the seasonal bonanza of small mammals. Because they cannot hunt in the dark, they need to leave their northerly locations in the winter as they chase the light. When they head south, they seek out habitats similar to the tundra like open marshes (both salt and freshwater), grasslands, and fallow agricultural fields, where they can hunt for their favorite winter prey, voles.

Rough-legged hawks like to forage in windy areas where they use the rapidly moving air to generate lift and help keep them aloft as they hover. In this regard, they resemble the much smaller American kestrel, floating at a fixed point in the air as they scan the ground for prey. When not hovering over a field, soaring high overhead, or catching a windy updraft along a ridge, these hawks will settle on exposed perches like telephone poles and dead snags. Vantage points that afford a good view of the open habitat where their prey is likely to occur are greatly preferred.

Researchers think that rough-legged hawks (and kestrels) have a special ability that helps them find prey: they can see the urine trails left behind by small mammals. This unusual superpower is



Rough-legged Hawk

a product of two factors: the hawks (like most birds) have a fourth color-related cone in their eyes that allows them to see UV light (in addition to the red-blue-green cones we have), and small-mammal urine reflects UV light. When rough-legged hawks survey a field, the vole urine creates little UV arrows pointing to the grass tunnels that the small mammals frequent.

Rough-legged hawks get their name from feathers that extend down their tarsi to their toes, providing a rough-looking layer of insulation for their legs. They are similar to, but slightly smaller than, our more familiar red-tailed hawks. Rough-legged hawks can be distinguished by their longer and narrower wings, which have a dark trailing edge, dark tips, and a dark wrist patch. In addition, the tail has a white base and a dark outer band. The caveat is that these hawks exhibit a high degree of plumage variation: there are "light morphs" and "dark morphs" as well as age-related differences. This variability can lead

to difficulty in identifying rough-legged hawks, but at least some of the attributes highlighted above are present in all individuals.

When these northern hawks arrive at wintering grounds, some individuals remain in the same area for the duration of the season, while others display more nomadic movements. Prey availability and the number of competitors influence the duration of time a given bird will remain in one place. Snowpack may also impact a rough-legged hawk's decision, with birds opting to seek out areas with reduced snow cover to more easily locate their prey. In

the winter, rough-legged hawks supplement their vole-heavy diet with other small mammals, birds, and carrion.

When they head back to their breeding grounds in the spring, their diet is dominated by lemmings and voles, which they bring back to their cliff nests to feed their young. Studies of their diets suggest that it takes about 26 pounds of prey to raise two chicks from hatching to fledging, a mass equal to approximately 100 lemmings for each chick over the span of 30 to 40 days. When the small mammal populations on their breeding grounds crash (which they do every few years), rough-legged hawks will hunt other prey, including ground squirrels, ptarmigan, waterfowl, hares, and even fish, frogs and insects.

To find these cold-hardy visitors you need to be a bit cold-hardy (or perhaps fool-hardy) yourself. Most of my encounters with these raptors have occurred in open, windswept areas where the cold is driven into you by the wind, sapping the warmth from your body like a heat-hungry parasite. Personally, I find it a toll I am willing to pay to watch these visiting winter hawks.

*Loren Merrill is a science writer and photographer with a PhD in ecology from Millbrook, N.Y. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol.*

### Greensboro Development Review Board Warning

The Greensboro Development Review Board will conduct a hybrid hearing on Thursday, December 18, 2025, at 7 p.m., at the Greensboro Town Office and via ZOOM. The Board will consider an appeal of zoning enforcement regarding the Highland Lodge's Conditional Use permit, decision dated October 2, 2025. This appeal shall be considered under 5.7 Appeals in the Greensboro Zoning Bylaw. The hearing is open to the public.

The meeting number is 824 558 6005. There is no password. You may phone into the ZOOM meeting at: 1-646-931-3860.

A packet of materials is available for review at the Greensboro Town Hall or at the Greensboro Town website, [www.greensborovt.gov](http://www.greensborovt.gov). Participation in the proceeding, either in person or in writing, is a prerequisite to the right to make any subsequent appeal. Interested persons may join the ZOOM hearing or send a letter or email ([zoning@greensborovt.gov](mailto:zoning@greensborovt.gov)) to the Development Review Board at the Greensboro Town Clerk's office to comment on the proposed plan.

The Greensboro Development Review Board

### PETITIONS AVAILABLE FOR ORLEANS BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The State Natural Resources Conservation Council Chair, Rick Hopkins of East Montpelier, today announced the availability of nominating petitions for the statewide elections of district supervisors in each of the fourteen Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

Natural Resources Conservation Districts are local subdivisions of state government established under the state's 1939 Soil Conservation Act to connect people, organizations, and resources to steward our land and water for the future. Orleans County NRCD was established in 1946 and offers a unique and powerful vehicle for citizens to become involved with local conservation work and establish local, state and federal programs that protect local natural resources. Please visit [orleanscountynrcd.org](http://orleanscountynrcd.org) for more information and to learn about our work.

To have your name placed on the January 2026 election ballot for the office of district supervisor, a person must obtain a minimum of twenty-five (25) signatures on nominating petitions. Anyone residing within the Orleans County NRCD may run for office of Conservation District Supervisor. Anyone owning land and residing within the Orleans County NRCD may sign a nominating petition.

Supervisors for each Conservation District board are elected for a term of five (5) years. The deadline for submitting nominating petitions to Orleans County NRCD office is December 26, 2025.

Nominating petitions and additional information may be obtained by contacting Orleans County NRCD Executive Director, Sarah Damsell at [sarah.damsell@orleanscountynrcd.org](mailto:sarah.damsell@orleanscountynrcd.org)

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# OUR COMMUNITIES

## Civil war novel discussion, Dec. 4

ST. JOHNSBURY – On Thursday, Dec. 4, at 7 p.m., the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum will host Vermont author and educator Tyler Alexander. Alexander will be discussing his newly published book, “If I Can Get Home This Fall: A Story of Love, Loss, and a Cause in the Civil War.”

The book includes a collection of written letters by a Vermont soldier, who served in the 6th Vermont Infantry and later became

an officer in a Black regiment—the 19th US Colored Troops, writing to his wife in Glover throughout the course of the war. The Pulitzer-Prize winning historian James McPherson said, “These are some of the best and most moving of the thousands of Civil War letters I have encountered.” Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing at the event. The event is free, ADA accessible, and open to the public.

## Holiday songs and stories, Dec. 6

by Woodbury Community Library staff

WOODBURY – Join the Woodbury Community Library on Saturday, Dec. 6 at the town hall for songs and stories of the holidays. This year the library is

hosting Santa Fin. Santa will start meeting with children at 2:30 p.m., and will start the storytelling with “When Santa Lost His HO HO HO” by Laura Rader. More stories and music with the participation of volunteers readers and musicians will follow.

## Memorial Tree lighting, Dec. 7

HARDWICK – Hardwick Rescue’s memorial tree lighting will be on Sunday, December 7 at 7 p.m., in the memorial park located at 20 Church St. Donations in memory of a loved one are being accepted

at this time at \$5/name. They will be represented by the bulbs on the tree as it remains illuminated at night through the holiday season. Join for light refreshments and a visit from Santa.

## Free community screening of “The S Word”, Dec. 9

by WCMHS staff

MONTPELIER – Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) will host a free public screening of “The S Word”, a documentary about hope, connection, and the importance of talking about suicide on Tuesday, Dec. 9 at 6 p.m., at the Savoy Theater in Montpelier. Following the screening, attendees are encouraged to stay for a panel discussion featuring local voices

in suicide prevention, offering perspective, resources and dialogue.

“This film opens the door for conversations that can save lives,” said Karen Kurrle, Chief Clinical and Programs Officer. “We hope this event encourages understanding and compassion for those affected by suicide and mental health challenges.”

Admission is free, advance reservations encouraged at [savoytheater.com/purchase/307681/](https://savoytheater.com/purchase/307681/)

## Headwaters Community trust annual meeting, Dec. 9

by Paul Fixx

CRAFTSBURY – Headwaters Community Trust’s first annual membership meeting is being held Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 5:30 p.m., at East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church. A social hour with food and refreshments will be followed

by the formal meeting starting at 6:30 p.m. Members of the trust will elect Headwaters’ first board of directors at the meeting. The social hour and meeting are open to all, but only members of the trust may vote. To enroll as a member visit [headwatersnek.org/get-involved#membership](https://headwatersnek.org/get-involved#membership).

## Voting rights lecture, Dec. 10

MONTPELIER – The League of Women Voters of Vermont, in partnership with Kellogg-Hubbard Library presents the second in its 2025-26 Lecture Series. The second program, on Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m., presents Prof. Alec Ewald, who teaches constitutional law and U.S. politics and constitutional law, in the Department of Political

Science at University of Vermont. This season will look at “Voting Rights and Access to the Ballot.” Ewald will present a history and impact of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, including recent decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court that have limited its reach. This will be a virtual presentation. To register for this talk go to [bit.ly/VotingRightsLecture](https://bit.ly/VotingRightsLecture).

## Grand opening of the Civic Standard, Dec. 10

by Civic Standard Staff

HARDWICK – The grand opening of the new Civic Standard’s 39 S. Main St. location will take

place Wednesday, Dec. 10, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m.. The evening will feature dinner, live music, a silent auction, and a live pie auction to benefit the New Home fund. All are welcome.

## Seasonal music and poetry, Dec. 10

ST. JOHNSBURY – Frost and Glover poet Burt Porter. The Friends of the Athenaeum will provide refreshments. This event is free, ADA accessible and open to the public.

Wednesday, December 10, 1:00 p.m., join the St. Johnsbury Athenaeum for music and poetry for the holiday season. The Kingdom Mountain Dulcimers will play seasonal music including sing-along carols, and Reeve Lindbergh and Dakota Butterfield will read poetry by Susan Cooper, Robert

Frost and Glover poet Burt Porter. The Friends of the Athenaeum will provide refreshments. This event is free, ADA accessible and open to the public.

<https://www.stjathenaeum.org/adult-events-1/2025/12/10/tis-the-seasonmusic-and-poetry-with-kingdom-mountain-dulcimers>

## Estate planning seminar, Dec. 11

GREENSBORO – Thursday, Dec. 11, a free estate planning seminar will take place at 4 p.m., upstairs at the Greensboro Free Library.

Attorney Sarah Bouvier Haselton and Senior Paralegal Katie Reen from Maple Haven Law LLC will explain estate planning in a way that is simple and clear. The program will last for about

an hour with about half an hour available for questions. Topics include: Common misconceptions; Medicaid planning strategies; how to avoid probate and keep beneficiaries out of court; why advance planning is the key to managing financial and healthcare decisions while protecting loved ones; how to distribute assets according to specific wishes and more.

## Free clean water webinar series, Dec. 11

ONLINE – Thursday, Dec. 11, from noon to 1 p.m., a free webinar about clean water project implementation will take place. The Federation of Vermont Lakes and Ponds (FOVLAP) hosts a series of free webinars to inform lake residents and lake associations in Vermont about these plans. In this sixth webinar of the series, expert speakers will explain the implementation phase of Clean Water Projects. Once the project final design is completed, the next steps are to hire a contractor, schedule the work with property owners, deal with construction surprises, and certify completion. This webinar features speakers who will use examples to illustrate the issues that can arise during this implementation phase of a clean water project. There will be

time included for an interactive question and answer period.

The free webinar series on Clean Water Projects for Vermont lakes and ponds is a virtual event open to the public but you must register to receive the link.

Speakers include Ted Sedell, Riparian Lands Program Manager, Orleans County Natural Resources Conservation District; Brett Towle, Ecological Landscape Designer, Dicot Land Studio LLC; David Johnson, Board member of the Lake Dunmore Fern Lake Association and FOVLAP Treasurer

The full agenda and registration information can be found on the FOVLAP website, [vermontlakes.org/event/webinar-6-clean-water-project-implementation-successes-and-challenges/](https://vermontlakes.org/event/webinar-6-clean-water-project-implementation-successes-and-challenges/)

## 25th Festival of Lights, Dec. 13

MORRSVILLE – December 13 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Morristown’s 25th Festival of Lights will be held, celebrating this year’s theme “Hometown for the Holidays”. Take photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, cookie decorating, hot chocolate,

wagon rides, a holiday movie, puppet show, campfire s’mores, handbell and choir performances, plus a “Nutcracker” preview at 1 p.m. After dark, drive through town to view and vote on homes and businesses in the holiday lights contest.



Customers shop for unique gifts offered at the Whistle Emporium in Hardwick on Small Business Saturday. The business is owned by Shari Cornish and Daryl Abraham. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Holiday shoppers support the local independent Galaxy Bookshop in Hardwick owned by Sandy Scott and Andrea Jones on Small Business Saturday, Nov. 29. photo by Vanessa Fournier

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Wedding Policy

The Hardwick Gazette provides space for engagements and wedding news as a free service. Wedding announcements and photos should be received by our office within two months of the ceremony. Photographs supplied will be returned when accompanied by a SASE. Use of engagement and wedding information, as well as accompanying photographs, is at the discretion of the editors.

For information about advertising in the Wedding & Party Planner call The Hardwick Gazette at 472-6521!

### Card of Thanks

It is with much gratitude that the Craftsbury Select Board would like to acknowledge the 39 years of service that Steve Marckres has selflessly served on the town road crew. Steve started working on the road crew in 1986 and after 10 years was promoted to road foreman in 1996.

Over all those years, Steve has heeded the call 24 hours a day and seven days a week during any kind of weather (while most of us are safe in our warm homes). During the winter he was out manning the snowplow early each morning to make sure the roads were safe and passable for early morning commuters. For over two generations he has made sure our children and grandchildren had a safe trip to and from school on their school bus. Many winter days Steve had to plow his route more than once.

Following the major flood of 2023, Steve rallied his crew and worked tirelessly to make sure that within 24 hours at least one lane of every gravel road in town was passable. He wanted to make sure that no one was stranded at the end of a washed out road.

It has been an honor to work with Steve as the select board made major decisions about road equipment upgrades. He always knew which of the town's 42-plus miles of gravel road needed the most attention in the year ahead and which section of the town's 18 miles of paved road needed to be resurfaced. Steve always gave us great input each year when we were creating our annual budget. During his tenure working for the town, Steve has worked with and advised nine different select board members.

On behalf of the entire community of Craftsbury, we would like to thank Steve for so many years of dedicated service and the responsibilities that he has carried on his shoulders to keep the 60-plus miles of Craftsbury roads in such amazing shape.

**Craftsbury Select Board**

# THE BOOKSHELF

**ALBANY PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 530 Main St., Albany, (802) 755-6107, albanypubliclibraryvt.org. Mon. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Wed. 2 to 6 p.m.; Sat. 1 to 5 p.m. Storytime for all ages: Mon. 10 a.m. and Sat. 4 p.m.

**BROWN LIBRARY**, Sterling College, Craftsbury Common (802) 586-7711, sterlingcollege.edu/academics/brown-library, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Open to the public.

**CABOT PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 3084 Main St, (802) 563-2721, cabotlibrary.com, Mon., 3 to 6 p.m.; Tues., noon to 6 p.m., Wed., 2 to 6 p.m.; Thurs., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m. to noon.

**CRAFTSBURY PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 149 Common Loop, Craftsbury Common (802) 586-9683, craftsburypubliclibrary.org, Mon. and Thurs. 2 to 6 p.m., Tues., Wed. and Fri. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., Storytime: Fri. 10 a.m.

**CUTLER MEMORIAL PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 151 High St, Plainfield (802) 454-8504, cutlerlibrary.org, Tues., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Wed. 3 to 6 p.m., Thurs., 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

**GLEE MERRITT KELLEY COMMUNITY LIBRARY**, 320 School Hill Drive, Wolcott, (802) 472-6551, Mon. to Thurs., 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Fri. closed; Sat., 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.

**GREENSBORO FREE LIBRARY**, 53 Wilson St., Greensboro, (802) 533-2531, greensborofreeibrary.org, Mon. and Wed. closed; Tues., 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.; Thur. and Fri., 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Sun. noon to 2 p.m.

**HAZEN UNION SCHOOL LIBRARY**, 126 Hazen Union Drive, Hardwick, (802) 472-6511, hazenlibrary@ossu.org, 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Mon. to Fri. while school is in session. Open to the public.

**JAQUITH PUBLIC LIBRARY**, Old Schoolhouse Common, 122 School St., Marshfield, (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary.org, Tues. to Fri., 9 a.m. to noon and 3 to 6 p.m., Sat. and Mon. 9 a.m. to noon, closed Sundays. Winter Storytime and Playgroup, Friday 10:30 a.m., outdoors, dress for the weather.

**JEUDEVINE MEMORIAL LIBRARY**, 93 N Main St., Hardwick, (802) 472-5948, jeudevinememoriallibrary.org, Mon. and Wed. 1 to 6 p.m., Tues., Thurs. and Fri. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**JOHN W. SIMPSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY**, 1972 E. Craftsbury Road, East Craftsbury, (802) 586-9692, jwsimpsonmemorial.org. Wed. and Sat., 9 a.m. to noon; Thurs. 9 a.m. to noon and 2 to 6 p.m.; Sun., noon to 1 p.m.

**MORRISTOWN CENTENNIAL LIBRARY**, 7 Richmond St., Morrisville, (802) 888-3853, centenniallibrary.org, Tues. and Wed., 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.; Thurs. and Fri., 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

**WALDEN COMMUNITY LIBRARY**, Walden Elementary School, 135 Cahoon Farm Road, (802) 563-2195, walden.mimas.opalsinfo.net/bin/home, Tues., 6 to 8 p.m.

**WOODBURY COMMUNITY LIBRARY**, Woodbury School, 69 Valley Lake Road, (802) 472-5710, woodburyvermontlibrary@gmail.com, Wed. 1 to 5 p.m.; Thurs., 2 to 6 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.



Director: Nathaniel Beyer  
 Advising Director: Heather Mandigo - Producer: Augie Stevens  
 Author Ken Jones - Produced by special arrangement with Heuer Publishing LLC of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

**Dec. 5-7 and 12-14**

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## Current 2025 Schedule

as of June 2025

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	
12 AM	Moist Fluids	Deep Threes	Dancehall/Reggae	Indigenous Music	Full Moon Hacksaw	Metal Radio DJ Eben Flow	And You Don't Stop	12 AM
1 AM		BantuNauts RAYdio		Latin Explosion	Baroque and Beyond		Timeless Oldies Radio Hour	1 AM
2 AM	Cafe Chill		Oldies Time Machine			Adagio		2 AM
3 AM	WGDR New Music Mix Music Directors							3 AM
4 AM	WGDR New Music Mix Music Directors							4 AM
5 AM	Counterspin Grassroots	Thom Hartmann Program					What's the Frequency, Kenneth?	5 AM
6 AM	Big Picture Science Show	Background Briefing w/ Ian Masters	Background Briefing w/ Ian Masters	Project Censored	Background Briefing w/ Ian Masters	Background Briefing w/ Ian Masters	Prison Pipeline Food Sleuth	6 AM
7 AM	Curse of the Golden Turnip Alan LePage & Steven Farnham	Magpie in the Morning Delia Gillen	Eastern Dawn Luke Lampugnale	First Voices Radio	Writer's Voice	Economic Update Rumble Strip	The Children's Hour	7 AM
8 AM	Democracy Now!						Bike Talk	8 AM
9 AM	Trance-Formational Listening Dennis Darrah	Eggs on Toast Kelly	ROTATING SLOT #6 (see below)	The Quilting Hour Maura Quinn or Sasha Thayer	Relocalizing Vermont Carl Etnier	The Magical Mystery Tour Tonio Epstein	ROTATING SLOT #9 (see below)	9 AM
10 AM	ROTATING SLOT #1 (see below)	Peace Talk Radio Sprouts	New Dimensions	Wings	This Way Out	TUC Radio	ROTATING SLOT #10 (see below)	10 AM
11 AM		ROTATING SLOT #4 (see below)	Rising Up w/ Sonali	Spawning Stones Ben Bashore	Night Train Cocktail	¿Where Do We Go From Here? Caleb		11 AM
12 PM	Thought Pasture Maura Quinn	Personal and Political Stephanie Fraser	That Driving Beat	The Rubber Room Dan Towner	Unshelved J Kramer	Techtonic	The Metal Edge Willis Pratt	12 PM
1 PM								1 PM
2 PM	Spanning the Chasm Peter Goreau	The Monday Drive at 2 Corey Flynn	Straight Up Soul	Adiagio	UpFront Soul	Modern Jet Set	Boxful of Blues John Foster	2 PM
3 PM								3 PM
4 PM	ROTATING SLOT #2 (see below)	Trailing Edge David Ferland	Listen Up! Bill Nowlan	Country & Western Sounds in Modern Music Barry Matthews	Law and Disorder	Hittin' the Note Bill Hahn		4 PM
5 PM	Bon Mot Rick Agran	Letters and Politics				Geezer Rock Jeff Lindholm	Acoustic Harmony Mark Michaelis	5 PM
6 PM	Good Ways Reggae Kind	Democracy Now! (rerun)		Stranger & Deininger	ROTATING SLOT #8 (see below)			6 PM
7 PM	The Revel Level DJ EhMmAh	ROTATING SLOT #5 (see below)	ROTATING SLOT #7 (see below)	Woodwarbler's JazzGrass Brian Aust	Xav Wax Xav Jimenez	Spiral Galaxy Tom McMurdo	Jagler Katz Worm Hole Jason Hagler	7 PM
8 PM								8 PM
9 PM	ROTATING SLOT #3 (see below)	Deep Blues Les Mawson	Swivel Radio DJ Effery	Music as Art Uku Meri	DJ Eben Flow Eclectic DJ Eben Flow	The Meltdown KingTone	First Wave	9 PM
10 PM		Blues Edge Les Mawson					The Beatdown Z-Point	10 PM
11 PM	Deep Threes	Train to Skaville	Indigenous Music	Full Moon Hacksaw	Metal Radio DJ Eben Flow	And You Don't Stop		11 PM

- Rotating Slots**
- #1: Sun 10 am-12 pm**  
 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun: Audio Ergo Sum  
 Darien & Ruby McElwain  
 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sun:  
 The Immanent Grove  
 Conni Mags
  - #2: Sun 4-5 pm**  
 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun: Afrosonic Taxi  
 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sun: Discoverances  
 DJ Savannah
  - #3: Sun 9-11 pm**  
 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun: Walkin' Will: Show  
 of Live  
 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sun: All Mixed Up
  - #4: Mon 11 am-12 pm**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Mon: Blluminations  
 Stefanie Lingenfelter  
 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mon: Cuneiform Radio  
 Kyle Schlesinger  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon: Project Censored
  - #5: Mon 7-9 pm**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Mon: Future Reflections  
 DJ Syd  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Mon: In Common Sounds  
 Brother B  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon: Gilded Splinters  
 Kevin Titterton  
 4<sup>th</sup> Mon: Borderlands  
 DJ Tenderman
  - #6: Tue 9-10 am**  
 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tue: Alternative Radio  
 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tue:  
 Structurally Unsound  
 Yardain Amron
  - #7: Tue 7-9 pm**  
 Biweekly rotation:  
 Still Life with Club Soda  
 Serena Matt  
 Still Life with Orange Peel  
 Ada Bowman
  - #8: Thu 6-7 pm**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Thu: The Broken Bois  
 Collective Presents...  
 Steve Pappas  
 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Thu: Into the Issues  
 Steve Pappas  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Thu: Radio RoundUp  
 CVCR hosts
  - #9: Sat 9-10 am**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sat: Gathering Peace  
 Joseph Gainza  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat: Civic Radio Project  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat: Pollinator Report  
 Emily Lanxner  
 4<sup>th</sup> Sat: Kitchen Permaculture  
 Rebecca Beidler
  - #10: Sat 10-11 am**  
 1<sup>st</sup> Sat: Sex Fly Bengé  
 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat: Pitter Patter Radio  
 Pat Kantner  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Sat: Under the Covers  
 DJ Rhizosphere  
 4<sup>th</sup> Sat: Indigenous Music

# EVENTS

## Wednesday, Dec. 3

**TOWN OF HARDWICK** hosts two public information sessions on hydraulic modeling and flood mitigation alternatives analysis, 1 to 2:30 p.m. (in person and Zoom) and 5 to 6:30 p.m. (in person, recorded by HCTV, third floor of the Hardwick Memorial Building.

## Thursday, Dec. 4

**CYCLING TOUR** through Albania presentation with Andrea Brightenback and Bruce Fortmann, 6:30 p.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library Parker Ladd Community Room, 93 N. Main St., Hardwick. Information: jeudevinememoriallibrary.org.

## Friday, Dec. 5

**AN EVENING OF POETRY**, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Woodbury Community Room. Hosted by the Woodbury Community Library. Bring three writings to share. Begins with a meal followed by the reading. Confirm your attendance at (802) 472-5710 or library@woodburyvt.org.

**BLOOD DRIVE**, noon to 4:30 p.m., Neighbors in Action, 3339 Main St., Cabot. All blood types needed. Reserve an appointment to give blood or platelets at RedCrossBlood.org or call (800) RED CROSS.

**NORTH COUNTRY CHORUS** sings Handel's "Messiah," 7:30 p.m., Wells River Congregational Church.

## Saturday, Dec. 6

**CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., East Hardwick First Con-

gregational Church. Trees and wreaths, auction table, hand-made crafts, donuts, pies and other baked goods. Tag sale of Christmas decorations and items.

**BALLET WOLCOTT** presents "The Land of Sweets," 6 p.m., People's Academy High School, Copley Ave., Morrisville. Tickets at balletwolcott.com or at the door. Information: balletwolcott.com/performances

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

**HYBRID ART AND WRITING Workshop**, for adults and high school students, with visiting artist Gnaomi Siemens, 9 a.m. to noon, Catamount Arts, 560 Railroad St., St. Johnsbury. Information and registration: catamountarts.org.

**NORTH COUNTRY CHORUS** sings Handel's "Messiah," 3 p.m., United Community Church, St. Johnsbury.

**MOVIE AND POPCORN**, 6 p.m., Touch of Grace, 104 Vt. Rte. 16, East Hardwick. Faith Family Feature film, animated - "The Star."

**SONGS AND STORIES** for the Holidays, with Santa meeting children starting at 2:30 p.m., Woodbury Community Library.

## Sunday, Dec. 7

**HARDWICK RESCUE MEMORIAL TREE** lighting, 7 p.m., memorial park, 20 Church St., Hardwick. Light refreshments and visit

from Santa.

**WILLEM LANGE'S** "A Christmas Carol: a ghost story" by Charles Dickens, 2 p.m., Lost Nation Theater, Montpelier City Hall Arts Center, 39 Main St. Information and tickets: lostnationtheater.org

**NORTH COUNTRY CHORUS** sings Handel's "Messiah," 3 p.m., Peacham Congregational Church.

**VETERANS QUILTING GROUP** meets, 1 to 3 p.m., Hardwick American Legion, 15 N. Main St. Support area Veterans by crafting quilts to be given to area veterans. Information: (802) 881-9779 or (802) 274-8333.

## Monday, Dec. 8

**JEUDEVINE PLAYERS MEET**, 3 p.m. For ages 6 and up. Information: jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

## Tuesday, Dec. 9

**KIDS' CHORUS**, 3 p.m., for ages 9 and up. Information: jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

**TUESDAY MORNING HONK & WAVE**, noon, Hardwick Peace Park, 34 Main St., Hardwick. Information: IndivisibleHardwick@pm.me

**HEADWATERS COMMUNITY TRUST**, first annual membership meeting, 5:30 p.m., East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church. Social hour with food and refreshments followed by meeting starting at 6:30 p.m.

## Wednesday, Dec. 10

**DEATH CAFE**, 6 p.m., Albany Public Library, 830 Main St. Refreshments provided. Information: (802) 755-6107, albanypubliclibraryvt.org.

**"THE NUTCRACKER,"** performed by the Grand Kyiv Ballet, 7 p.m., Lyndon Institute. Information and tickets: catamountarts.org or kcp-presents.org or (802) 748-2600 or go to Catamount Arts box office at 115 Eastern Ave., St. Johnsbury.

**GRAND OPENING** of the new Civic Standard's location, 39 S. Main St., Hardwick, 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. Dinner, live music, silent auction, live pie auction. All welcome.

## Thursday, Dec. 11

**"THE NUTCRACKER,"** performed by the Grand Kyiv Ballet, 7 p.m., Lyndon Institute. Information and tickets: catamountarts.org or kcp-presents.org or (802) 748-2600 or go to Catamount Arts box office at 115 Eastern Ave., St. Johnsbury.

**ESTATE PLANNING SEMINAR**, 4 p.m., upstairs at the Greensboro Free Library.

## Saturday, Dec. 13

**25TH FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS**, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Morrisville. Photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus, cookie decorating, wagon rides, puppet show and more. "Nutcracker" preview at 1 p.m.

See **EVENTS**, Next Page

# BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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# EVENTS

**DUAL LANGUAGE STORY TIME**, 10:30 to 11 a.m., Woodbury Community Library.

## Ongoing Events

**ARTHRITIS RELIEF EXERCISE CLASS**, Thursdays, 10 a.m., Community Center, Hardwick. Sponsored by the NEK Council on Aging. Information: Sara at Shbeharsing@gmail.com.

**PICKLEBALL**, Sundays, Hardwick Elementary School gym. Beginners group starts at 11 a.m. Intermediate and above, noon to 2 p.m. Information: Sara at Shbeharsing@gmail.com.

**CHESS CLUB MEETS**, on select Mondays, 2:45 to 4 p.m., Craftsbury School, Minden Art Room. Join advisor Andras Hadik-Barkoczy in preparing for the Vermont State Chess Tournament on March 28.

**KIDS' CHORUS**, Tuesdays, 3 p.m., Jeudevine Library, Hardwick. For ages 8 and up. Vocal warm-ups, musical games and group singing. Information: jeudevine.youthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

**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 (& Cease-fire) VIGIL**, Thursdays, 2 - 3 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](mailto:cdu.tim@gmail.com)

**AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE** practice group, every Thursday, 2 p.m., John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury. Information: (802) 586-9692, [jwsimpsonmemorial.org](http://jwsimpsonmemorial.org).

**FRIENDS OF THE JEDEVINE 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 Denise Carr at (802) 472-3134 to reserve a meal. Take-Out or Eat-In. Donations appreciated.

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

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

**TAI CHI CLASSES**, Tuesdays, Jeudevine Memorial Library Parker Ladd Community Room,

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](mailto: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](mailto:nspauld@gmail.com) and Paul Fixx (802) 441-4599, [pfixx@pfixx.net](mailto:pfixx@pfixx.net).

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

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

**COMMUNITY SUPPER**, Wednesdays, 5:30 p.m., The Civic Standard, S. Main St., Hardwick.

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

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

**HARDWICK HAIKU CLUB**, every first Thursday, 5:30 - 7 p.m., The Civic Standard, 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.

**ALL HANDS TOGETHER**, Community Crafting Group, Tuesdays, 4:30 to 6 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Information: [jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com), call (802) 426-3581, or [jaquithpubliclibrary.org](http://jaquithpubliclibrary.org).

**SPANISH CLUB**, meets the second Saturday of each month, 11:30 a.m., Woodbury Community Library.

**FIBER ARTS**, meets the third Saturday of the month, 10 to 11 a.m., Woodbury Community Library.

**MEDITATION** at Craftsbury Com-

munity 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.

**CABOT COMMUNITY CONTRA DANCE**, second Fridays, through June, 7 to 9:30 p.m., Cabot Town Hall, 3084 Main St. All dances taught, no partner needed. All welcome. Information: [cabotdance@aroundvt.org](mailto:cabotdance@aroundvt.org).

**HANG OUT ON THURSDAYS**, at the Civic Standard, 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](mailto: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 Wednesday and Saturday, 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 and shovels.

**STORY TIME**, Thursdays, 10:30 a.m. Books, songs, art activities and more for ages 5 and under, Jeudevine Memorial Library, 93 N. Main St. Information: [jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov](mailto:jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov), (802) 472-5948.

**CHAPTERS IN HISTORY BOOK GROUP**, second Saturday of the month, 2 p.m., Sept. 13 through Dec. 13, Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Information: [jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com](mailto:jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com), call (802) 426-3581 or visit [jaquithpubliclibrary.org](http://jaquithpubliclibrary.org).

**ADAPTIVE BIKING MONDAYS** on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, 2 to 3 p.m. and 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., beginning at the trailhead parking lot on Creamery Rd. in Hardwick. Sponsored by Adaptive Sports Partners. Reservations or information: [kerry@adaptivesportspartners.org](mailto:kerry@adaptivesportspartners.org) or call (802) 427-4116.

## Exhibits

**BRENT MCCOY**, solo exhibit, "Tricks of the Light", Highland Center for the Arts, Greensboro. Saturday, through January 11.

**VICTORIA MATIESEN**: Always Looking. New landscape paintings, through January 20, Parker Pie Gallery, 161 County Road, West Glover.

**To have your event listed free in our weekly events calendar, please e-mail: [news@hardwickgazette.com](mailto:news@hardwickgazette.com).**

## PETITIONS AVAILABLE FOR ORLEANS BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The State Natural Resources Conservation Council Chair, Rick Hopkins of East Montpelier, today announced the availability of nominating petitions for the statewide elections of district supervisors in each of the fourteen Natural Resources Conservation Districts.

Natural Resources Conservation Districts are local subdivisions of state government established under the state's 1939 Soil Conservation Act to connect people, organizations, and resources to steward our land and water for the future. Orleans County NRCD was established in 1946 and offers a unique and powerful vehicle for citizens to become involved with local conservation work and establish local, state and federal programs that protect local natural resources. Please visit [orleanscountynrcd.org](http://orleanscountynrcd.org) for more information and to learn about our work.

To have your name placed on the January 2026 election ballot for the office of district supervisor, a person must obtain a minimum of twenty-five (25) signatures on nominating petitions. Anyone residing within the Orleans County NRCD may run for office of Conservation District Supervisor. Anyone owning land and residing within the Orleans County NRCD may sign a nominating petition.

Supervisors for each Conservation District board are elected for a term of five (5) years. The deadline for submitting nominating petitions to Orleans County NRCD office is December 26, 2025.

Nominating petitions and additional information may be obtained by contacting Orleans County NRCD Executive Director, Sarah Damsell at [sarah.damsell@orleanscountynrcd.org](mailto:sarah.damsell@orleanscountynrcd.org)

# School community celebrates with Turkey Trot 5k

by OSSU staff

CRAFTSBURY—On November 21, the entire Craftsbury Schools community came together for a celebration of wellness, movement and togetherness. Students, staff and community members ran, walked, and cheered each other on in the school's second annual all-school 5k, with many decked out in festive turkey costumes.

Winners of this year's costume contest were Finley Pallionis (grades K-2 category), Anna Johnson and Olivia Johnson (grades 3-5 category), Abby Williams (grades 6-8 category), Stig Linck (grades 9-12 category) and Alayne Tetor, art teacher (staff category).

The event was supported by the Craftsbury PTO, parents and staff who provided post-race baked goods.



Decked out in turkey feathers Craftsbury Schools student Finley Pallionis, grade 1 leads student Hunter Wood, grade 9 (on right in black hoodie); student Benjamin Blanchard, grade 7 (in white hoodie) and student Edie Wells, grade 6 (in rainbow stripe jacket) at the November 21 Turkey Trot.

photo by Lisa Stinson



Craftsbury Schools kindergarten teacher Anne Hanson walks with kindergarten students (from left) Camden MacNeal, Amadou Wild, Jasper Wild and Henry Robillard in the Craftsbury Schools 2nd Annual Turkey Trot where the entire Craftsbury Schools community came together for a celebration of wellness, movement and togetherness, November 21.

photo by Lisa Stinson



Students (from left) Luna Sinnema, grade 5; Audrey Patch, grade 5 and Brody Adams, grade 7 join the Craftsbury Schools 2nd Annual Turkey Trot, November 21

photo by Lisa Stinson



Joining the Craftsbury Schools 2nd Annual Turkey Trot, November 21 are (from left) Craftsbury Schools special educator (K-5) Francinne Valcour and Craftsbury Schools grade 3 teacher Julie Higgins. The event celebrates community connection and the pure joy of being active together.

photo by Lisa Stinson



Students, staff and community members ran, walked, and cheered each other on at the Turkey Trot, November 21, with many decked out in festive turkey costumes, including Stig Linck, grade 10 (front in turkey costume), followed close behind by Craftsbury Schools art teacher Alayne Tetor in a hand-crafted turkey costume.

photo by Lisa Stinson



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# Lady Cats move up to the Capital League

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – After dominating Mountain League opponents for the past three seasons, the Hazen Union girls basketball team will compete in the Division II rich Capital League this coming winter.

Head coach Randy Lumsden and his talented Lady Cat team will align with Aaron Hill's boys team this season, in joining the teams in the highly competitive Capital. Lumsden was crowned Mountain League Coach of the Year after leading his program to their third consecutive 20-win season this past March.

The former Wildcat standout had an outstanding playing career for Hazen, finishing just shy of 1,000 career points, winning a Division III state championship under Coach Hill along the way. He has had a meteoric start to his



Hazen Union girls' basketball Head Coach Randy Lumsden.

*courtesy photo* coaching career, posting a 61-5 record in his first three seasons on the sidelines, including the program's first state title in over

three decades in 2024.

Since the Central Vermont League was dissolved in 2020, the Mountain League has welcomed many of those Division IV teams in, and Lumsden's talented squad has struggled to consistently put competitive games on the schedule that get his team tournament ready.

Hill moved his boys program to the Capital in 2021 and the dividends of stiffer competition across the board paid off immediately with his sixth Division III state title. Hill was named Capital League Coach of the Year this past March for the second time in four years. He led a rebuilding upstart team to the program's fourth consecutive Division III state title appearance at the Barre Auditorium this past season. Hazen's boys soccer and baseball teams have also joined the rugged Capital League. Hill, now the Hazen athletic director as well,

is excited for the move by Lumsden's program, and feels that the alignment of schedules makes it easier for everyone, as well as the opportunity to create new rivalries.

"Randy has done a phenomenal job with the girls program and we're all excited for their move this season to the Capital League. It's a great league for basketball in the state of Vermont and we feel the move will create continuity as far as schedule and gives them the opportunity to play tougher competition out of division. We're all really excited for the move!" said Hill.

Division II heavyweights that include the likes of North Country, Lamoille, Spaulding and Harwood, along with division rival Peoples Academy will now consistently stand in the way of Lumsden and his team as they look to get back to Barre for the fourth consecutive season.

## KEN BROWN'S SOCCER ROUNDUP

### Cal United receives sportsmanship recognition

TWINFIELD-CABOT-DANVILLE – The Vermont Soccer Officials Association (VSOA) announced their 2025 Sportsmanship Awards last week, with the Cal United girls soccer program and community receiving high honors for their fair play on the pitch.

The Fair Haven and U-32 girls soccer programs received top honors as Vermont's premier 2025 Sportsmanship teams by the VSOA. Cal United, South Burlington, Richford, MSJ, Stratton and Randolph were all mentioned as highly rated finalist teams. Cal United head coach Spencer Morse led his program to their second home playoff berth in three seasons since taking over the three-school cooperative made up of Twinfield, Cabot and Danville.

On the boys side, Enosburg and Sharon Academy were named as Vermont's premier 2025 Sportsmanship teams by the VSOA. The Finalists included Otter Valley, Brattleboro, West Rutland, Richford, Essex and BFA-Fairfax. Enosburg, U-32, Sharon Academy and Fair Haven are organizing events to honor their teams and VSOA officials will attend to present the teams with a banner and certificates.

Former Hazen Union teacher and coach Marvin Pritchard,



Chloe North of Caledonia United photo by Vanessa Fournier

who was recently inducted into the Vermont Hall of Fame as a longtime official, released the following statement as the current VSOA President, "Congratulations to the teams selected for the 2025 VSOA inaugural Sportsmanship Award. The school, community and soccer official relationship that you have developed is a model for others to emulate in the future. You have been chosen by soccer officials who respect your passion for the game while always exhibiting the highest level of sportsmanship,"

### Local stars selected to VSCA All-Tourney team

NORTHEAST KINGDOM – The Vermont Soccer Coaches Association (VSCA) wrapped up a sensational high-school soccer season with the unveiling of the 2025 boys and girls All-Tournament teams.

Several local soccer players were selected after their outstanding play in the postseason this past fall. Cal United's Samson Kitonga, Ben Monaco and Kaiden Rogers were honored after leading their team to the Division IV state title match. Cal United (16-1) set a program record with an undefeated regular season with their only loss coming to a 17-0 Twin Valley team that capped off a storybook season with a 2-0 win in the state title match in Rutland.

Peoples Academy (PA) made a Cinderella run all the way to the Division III state title match as a No. 8 seed before falling to Vergennes

in the Final. Ava Stratman, Sophie Beck and Ella Bless were selected to the All-Tourney team for their outstanding play. Stratman, the daughter of Cal United boys head coach Peter Stratman, scored a pair of goals in the Lady Wolves 2-1 upset of fourth seeded Fair Haven in the Final Four.

Other locals making the VSCA All-Tourney team included: PA's Ian Nolan, Charles Mathys-Valario, Miles Laine and Jack Cleary, Stowe's Tanner Gregory and Mena Spaulding, Lamoille's Nina Rossi and Harper Fisher, along with St. Johnsbury Academy's Eleanor Reed and Avery Gelwicks.



Caledonia United varsity senior boys in 2025 are (front) Danville student Josh Peterson. Back row (from left) Twinfield students Jola Otten, Eli Russell, Sean Lehoe, Sam McLane, Cabot student Ben Monaco and Danville students Alijah Andrews and Samson Kitonga. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Russ Hirschler and Randy Richardson of UVTA meet with South Hero Land Trust Executive Director Guy Maguire and UVM Intern Lilian Mae Olson to decide what can be done to improve the Rec Park trail in South Hero.

courtesy photo



A person using an adaptive mountain bike hits a challenging spot where the trail feature is too narrow for their bike.

courtesy photo

## Clearing paths for more accessible outdoor spaces

by Vermont Trail Accessibility Hub

VERMONT – Before Edie Perkins heads out to explore a new trail, she runs through a mental checklist. Is there accessible parking? How far is it from her car to the trail? Is the surface hard-packed or uneven? For most people, those questions barely register. For Perkins, who uses a wheelchair, they determine whether she can venture out at all.

“Exploring new places is always exciting. It can also be a little frightening...there are so many things that able-bodied people don’t understand about accessing the outdoors,” she said.

Perkins, a lifelong cyclist who lives in South Burlington, was paralyzed from the chest down in 2017 after a car hit her while she was biking. Now she uses a wheelchair or a hand-cycle on trails. Recently, she visited the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) in Quechee, a forested campus known for its treetop boardwalk and network of accessible trails.

VINS’s trail system was improved with support from the Upper Valley Trail Alliance (UVTA), a member of the Vermont Trail Accessibility Hub (TAH). The Hub is a statewide initiative led by the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC), and a partnership of six organizations working to expand access to trails for people of all abilities.

“We believe forest immersion is not just for the young, fit, and able-bodied. With the help of partners like UVTA, we’ve sought to make our woods accessible to all,” said Alden Smith, executive director of VINS.

When barriers are removed, Perkins says, everything changes. “Everything at VINS felt thoughtfully designed for accessibility without losing that wild, natural feel. The paths are subtle, the views are incredible, and the experience left me grinning ear to ear...the sense of peace was exactly what I’d hoped for,” Perkins wrote in a post she recently wrote about VINS for Trail Finder.

More and more trail managers are hearing from their commu-



Derek Flint, who is blind, uses a new accessible boat launch at Green River Reservoir in Hyde Park.

courtesy photo

nities that they want more nature-based places where they can bring family members of all abilities. That rising demand is shaping the work ahead.

While Vermont is rich in trails, mountains, and scenic landscapes, when the Hub launched in 2024, there was limited, incomplete information online about accessible trails.

Trail Finder, managed by UVTA and maintained by Hub partner Community Geographics, is one of the few map-based trail databases in Vermont focused on accessibility. The free-to-use website helps trail-seekers to discover diverse, four-season trails across Vermont.

With recent grant funding, the team has added or improved descriptions and maps for over 60 trails covering 125 miles, and continues to add routes of all types, from rail trails to adaptive mountain biking. Website users can click the “Access(ible) Expe-

rience” search filter to find trails that offer greater levels of access.

“Trail managers regularly contact the Hub and UVTA for help understanding how to update their trails,” Russell Hirschler of UVTA said, “The steady flow of inquiries shows that communities want to make improvements; they just need guidance to do it well.”

It’s critical work, as Vermont Department of Health data shows one in four residents has a disability, and nearly 28 percent are over age 60, making Vermont the fourth-oldest state in the country.

Hub partner Vermont Adaptive has seen a 350% increase in demand for its inclusive sports and recreational programming over the past decade.

Expanding accessible trails isn’t just about recreation; it’s about community health, inclusion, and quality of life for everyone, from parents with strollers to older

**See ACCESS, Next Page**



Edie Perkins takes in the view from the end of the accessible trail at the Raven Ridge Natural Area, Monkton, Vermont.

# KEN BROWN'S COLLEGE ROUNDUP

## Area athletes competing at the next level this winter

NORTHEAST KINGDOM – Several area former high school stars are making it at the next level this winter on the hard-court for their respective college basketball programs.

Danville's all-time leading scorer and state champion Andrew Joncas is on the roster this winter for the VTSU-Lyndon men's basketball team. Joncas denied Twinfield-Cabot a trip to the Division IV Final last March in a thriller before leading Danville to a state title over top seeded West Rutland. The 5'10" shooting guard scored his first career college points last month against SUNY-Canton. The Hornets are 1-3 on the season and will be back in action SUNY-Cobleskill on Friday and SUNY-Delhi on Saturday.

Former Winooski standout Tre Bradley is a key component this season for his VTSU-Johnson men's basketball team. The 5'7"



Andrew Joncas (No. 4) of Danville, during D3 semi-final action.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

sophomore guard was a thorn in the side of Hazen Union for four years, including a win in the 2023 division III state title game. Bradley has played all five games for the Badgers this season, including one start. He scored a career-high 15 points against VTSU-Lyndon in an early November match-up.

Richford's multi-sport sensation Kyrielle Deuso has transitioned seamlessly at the next level for the VTSU-Castleton women's basketball team in her freshman season. Deuso graduated from Richford last spring with several all-time records in multiple sports, winning championships in both soccer and softball. She terrorized Twinfield-Cabot, Hazen Union and Cal United in all three sports since her eighth grade season. The 5'3" point guard has started four of five games for the Lady Spartans, scoring double-digits against Norwich and Hartwick last month. Joining Deuso on the roster is former Proctor star

Maggie McKearin and West Rutland's Arianna Coombs and Bella Coombs. Former Lyndon Institute multi-sport standout Ethan Lussier made the roster as a freshman for the Spartan men's team and is teammates with senior Connor McKearin of Proctor.

St. Johnsbury (SJA) Academy's Cassidy Kittredge is averaging nearly 10 points per game for the Norwich women's basketball team as a freshman and Spaulding's Riley Severy is averaging seven points per game for the Cadet men's team in his junior year. Playing alongside Kittredge is former Oxbow star Maggie Ellsworth. The 5'7" freshman guard is averaging nearly 10 points and five rebounds a game, including a season-high 18 points against Gordon last month.

Former SJA sharpshooter Jasmine Mooney is averaging 14 points per game in her senior season with VTSU-Randolph. Mooney has started all six games for the Lady Knights this season.

## Access

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adults and people recovering from injury.

"When we talk about trails, we're really talking about people," says Sharon Plumb, program manager for VTGC. "Who gets to be here? Who feels welcome? What can we do to say yes to more people?"

As awareness of accessibility needs has grown, funders are increasingly taking notice.

In 2024, the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation's Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) introduced an "Equity" track to its Community Grant Program, awarding grants to nine municipalities and organizations focused specifically on improving trail accessibility. Program staff say they've also seen an uptick in applications seeking funding to build or upgrade accessible trails.

A VOREC Community Grant supported the Hub from June 2024 through December 2025. The \$644,000 award, the largest grant VOREC has ever issued, helped expand accessibility work statewide. VOREC administers Vermont's federal Recreation Trails Program (RTP), aligning national funding with local priorities.

Since 2024, the Hub has completed 55 trail accessibility assessments with more than 30

organizations to evaluate pedestrian, aquatic, and adaptive mountain biking routes. These assessments identify the specific improvements needed to enhance access or meet established accessibility standards.

The appetite for this technical support continues to grow. When the Vermont Land Trust hosted an accessible trail-building training at Pratt Refuge in Duxbury in fall 2025, 15 trail managers attended, some traveling more than an hour, to learn directly from Hub partners about design, maintenance, and assessment. Interest in trainings like this routinely exceeds capacity, underscoring the level of guidance communities are seeking.

"The enthusiasm and support we've received from TAH has helped keep accessibility as a priority for our organization," said Jenna O'Donnell, executive director of the South Hero Land Trust. With recommendations from an assessment funded by TAH, the group recently updated its Recreation Park with a new boardwalk and plans to upgrade additional trails for accessibility by 2026.

Across Vermont, this work is reshaping familiar places, many funded by VOREC's Community Grant Program. Accessible routes now exist or are in progress at several Vermont Land Trust-owned properties, including Brewster Uplands in Cambridge and Pratt Refuge in Duxbury.

Projects with Vermont Huts & Trails at Chittenden Brook in the Green Mountain Forest near Rochester and the newly acquired Historic Goodell House at Little River State Park in Waterbury will add accessible overnight and day-use options.

Towns like Lunenburg and Randolph, along with groups such as Northwoods Stewardship Center and Tucker Mountain Forest, are advancing new pedestrian trail designs. With support from Hub partners, including The Vermont Mountain Bike Association and The Northern Forest Canoe Trail, upgrades are being made to dozens of mountain biking trails and aquatic access points.

The Hub's success stems from collaboration and the idea of "building accessibility with, not for."

People with disabilities are more than test users; they're leaders, assessors, and storytellers. The Hub has paid adaptive athletes to help review trails and share firsthand experiences through case studies, audio stories, and webinars.

New Hub resource pages provide detailed information on how to build accessible pedestrian trails, mountain biking trails, and aquatic entry points, along with their benefits.

At the recent Vermont Conference on Parks, Trails, and Recreation, 15 accessibility work-

shops featured partners including the Vermont Center for Independent Living, adaptive athletes, and a deaf trail and conservation crew.

Trail managers across the state say that without the Hub's assessments, trainings, and technical support, they wouldn't have the confidence or the capacity to move accessibility projects forward.

"The TAH provides important resources to groups who are eager to take the next step," said Jeff Nugent of the Windham Regional Commission. "It informs them as to what's possible when it comes to improving their trails, and how it can be done."

Momentum is growing. Trail managers and disability advocates are collaborating more closely than ever before, and interest in accessibility assessments continues to exceed capacity.

Many communities now have accessibility upgrades in their long-term trail plans specifically because they've worked with the Hub or attended a TAH-led training.

For Vermonters like Derek Flint, who is blind, progress means more places are opening up to him and his family.

"It feels like a sense of freedom being on a trail that is safe and not having to worry about falling off some steep inclines," Derek said of the trails upgraded through the Hub partners. "Thank you for all you have done and will do in the future."

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