



2026 town meeting: tires, forests, budgets, more

by **Raymonda Parchment**

AREA TOWNS – Town meeting day is traditionally held on the first Tuesday of March, but some towns have made other arrangements in an attempt to hold the meeting at a more convenient time for more voters to attend.

The following towns have warnings contained in their annual town reports:

HARDWICK – Hardwick residents will meet at the Town House for their town meeting, March 3, at 10 a.m. The polls for Australian ballot voting will be open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., to elect town officers and school district No. 26 directors.

The select board has recommended and warned a 1% local option tax on meals and alcoholic beverages as well as rooms.

CABOT – Voters in the town of Cabot will meet at the Willey Building, located at 3084 Main Street, on March 3, at 10 a.m., with Australian ballot polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m..

Article 13 is a non-binding article, i.e. recommendation, asking if voters will approve construction of a new volunteer fire department building at 2466 Main Street.

Binding articles include whether voters

shall grant the Cabot Conservation Committee a sum of up to \$10,000 from Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF), (available for town meeting grants in 2026), for the removal and proper disposal of an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 used tires that have been dumped along a stream and wetland in Lower Cabot

CALAIS – Calais residents will meet March 3, at 321 Lightning Ridge Road, at 9:30 a.m., with voting by Australian ballot for municipal offices from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m..

Child care will be available at no cost for parents attending Calais Town Meeting from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Registration is required; forms are available at CES or through Community Connections. For more information, contact CES Administrative Assistant Danielle Mackay at (802) 454-7777, via email at dmackay@u32.org; or Community Connections Coordinator Kim Bolduc at 223-7936, ext. 305, via email at kbolduc@u32.org.

CRAFTSBURY – Craftsbury residents will meet March 3 in the Craftsbury Academy Gymnasium, with polls open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. to elect town officers.

See MEETING, 5



Sixty people gather in the The Parker Ladd Community Room at the Jeudevine Memorial Library for a Hardwick select board candidate forum this past Saturday, Feb. 21, where they heard from eight candidates running for three seats. photo by Raymonda Parchment

Candidates share reasons to serve town

by **Raymonda Parchment**

HARDWICK – February 21 saw select board candidates meet for an open forum. Only standing room remained at the start of **See CANDIDATES, 6**

Voters weigh in on funds for tire disposal from private property

by **Paul Fixx**

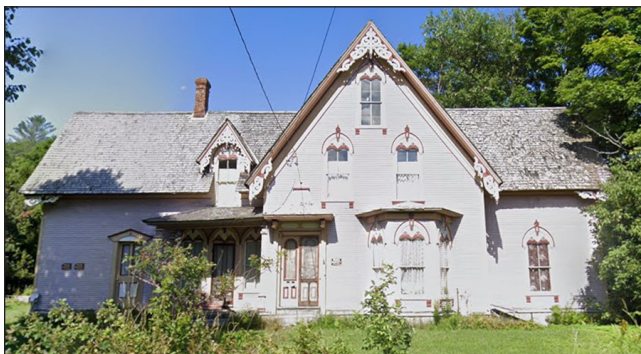
CABOT – Article 12 of the Cabot Town Meeting Day Warning is an Australian ballot vote asking if voters will approve a grant of up to \$10,000 “for the removal and proper disposal of an estimated 1,000 to 1,500 used tires that have been dumped into and along a stream and wetland in Lower Cabot.” Those funds would come from the Cabot Community Investment Fund balance for town meeting grants in 2026 with the grant made to the Cabot Conservation Commission (CCC).

The issue has created considerable and sometimes heated discussion on the Facebook group Cabot Connects Town Bulletin Board.

Discussion began with a post by Bryanne Russillo suggesting greater transparency was needed in creating the ballot request and suggesting town funds should not be used to benefit a private property owner who knew of the long-standing issue when they purchased the property.

Commenters both agreed and disagreed, with one even suggesting the town create a tire

See DISPOSAL, 5



Leonard Spencer's former home at 1345 Vt. Rte. 215 is now owned by Louann and Chase Walker, who plan to remove the 1,000 to 1,500 tires littering the property, regardless of the results of a town meeting day vote for up to \$10,000 in funds from the Cabot Community Reinvestment Fund.

photo courtesy Google Maps

Welch visits Craftsbury Outdoor Center

CRAFTSBURY – On Wednesday, U.S. Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.) hosted a ‘Common Grounds with Senator Welch’ listening session at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center. He joined Vermonters in Craftsbury to discuss the cultural and economic importance of winter sports, outdoor recreation, tourism and rural economic development in Vermont.

The Senator's visit came as Vermont's

Olympic athletes were doing well at the Winter Olympics in Italy.

“We're all pretty proud of our Vermont Olympians. Many of them trained for the biathlon and ski events right here in Craftsbury,” said Senator Welch.

“In the half-century since its founding in 1976, Craftsbury Outdoor Center has become the gold standard in supporting lifelong

See WELCH, 4



Cassie French of Burlington releases the curling cheese toward its target Saturday, during Curds and Curling tournament play, February 20, at the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Croissants
HOUSE MADE BAKED GOODS SANDWICHES

FRONT SEAT COFFEE

COFFEE SHOP AND BAKERY
SUPPORTING LOCAL & SMALL SCALE FARMERS, PRODUCERS, AND ARTISTS.

7AM-3PM
SEVEN DAYS/WEEK
FREE WIFI

POLICE REPORT

Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor

HARDWICK – During the time between January 1 and February 20, Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor had 15 requests for assistance which included shoveling out and jumping cars, replacing car batteries, taking people to appointments, picking up prescriptions and moving firewood.

Neighbor, established in 2020, is a volunteer group of area residents who respond to requests for assistance, initiate neighborhood gatherings, help coordinate emergency response efforts and nurture community connections. To find out how to join the volunteer list or to ask for help call (802) 441-3301 or email hardwickneighbors@gmail.com.

Hardwick Neighbor to

Hardwick Police Department Car Crash

HARDWICK – On February 5, at 8:59 a.m., the Hardwick Police Department responded to the area of Wolcott Street at South Main Street for the report of a two-car motor vehicle crash. Investigation revealed the crash had occurred on Wolcott Street just west of the intersection with

South Main Street, though both cards were damaged no one was injured in the crash. The bright morning sun may have played a role in this crash. Motorists are urged to slow down, wear sunglasses or use the overhead visor. Avoid looking into intense light sources when driving.

Vermont State Police

Simple assault, aggravated domestic assault

PEACHAM – On February 5 at 2:26 p.m., the Vermont State Police - Berlin Barracks responded to a report of an assault at 1913 Peacham Pond Road. Further investigation revealed Patrick Gomez of Marshfield committed the offense of Simple Assault during an altercation with Matilda Adelaide of Peacham. On February 11, Gomez was issued a citation to appear in the Caledonia County Superior Court, Criminal Division at a later date and time.

7:02 a.m, the Vermont State Police - Berlin Barracks responded to a report of an assault on S. Walden Rd., in the town of Cabot. Investigation revealed Anna-Marie Welch committed the offense of First Degree Aggravated Domestic Assault by assaulting a household member. Welch was taken into custody without incident and transported to the Berlin Barracks for processing. At the concluding of processing, Welch was transported to the Washington County Superior Court - Criminal Division for arraignment.

CABOT – On February 23 at

Contents

Police Report.....2, 3, 4

Weather Watch3

Sen. Welch meets with local health care leaders.....4

Faith Climate Action Day shortens distance between science, religion7

Meeting provides overview of town forest costs8

State Historic Preservation Office announces excellence awards8

Electric department seeks to understand demand, meet it9

District clarifies Pre-K configuration, respects voter wishes.....10

Editorial: A reporter opinion: community spirit shines 11

Letters from readers: Beattie, Hawk..... 11, 17

Yankee Notebook: In case we survive it..... 12

Woodsmoke (cartoon)..... 12

Another Opinion: Leahy, Hoffman..... 13

Legislative Report: Yacavone, Bailey..... 14

Heller's World (cartoon) 14, 18

Our Neighborhood: Radio nerd guides local station..... 15

Weeks Gone By: 100 years ago, February 25, 1926..... 16

The Outside Story: Golden-crowned Kinglets, Soil microbes..... 17, 18

In the Garden: Gourmet mushrooms at home, Houseplants 19, 20

Our Communities21

Education..... 21, 22, 23, 24

Obituaries24

Review: Woodard discusses films, farms and more25

Curds and Curling (photos).....26

Irish traditional band Dervish performs March 14.....26

Events27-31

Lamarre's career week helps Wildcats rebound32

Lady Cats earn inside track back to Barre.....32

Trojans hold on to top spot with two more wins.....33

Eric Hanson's Ski Report34

Ken Brown's Sport Nuggets34



February 25 - March 3

Think Spring Garden Seeds are in		Check out our Clothing Dept. and Footwear Sale Room	
Wide Awake Coffee \$4.79 10-12 oz. or 12 ct.	Food Club Salad Dressing 2/\$4 16 oz.	Heinz Ketchup \$2.99 20 oz.	
Kashi Cereal \$3.99 12.3-18 oz.	Barilla Gluten Free Pasta 2/\$4 12 oz.	Rice-A-Roni Side Dishes 2/\$3 6.5-7.2 oz.	
Green Mtn. Salsa \$4.49 16 oz.	Green Mtn. Tortilla Chips \$2.99 8 oz.	Nabisco Family Size Oreos or Chips Ahoy Cookies \$4.99 18.2-18.71 oz.	
Nabisco Family Size Snack Crackers \$4.79 12.5-20.5 oz.	Planters Roasted Peanuts 2/\$5 16 oz.	Planters Cashew Halves or Mix Nuts/Peanuts \$5.49 8-10 oz.	
Arm & Hammer Scoop Cat Litter \$7.99 14 lb.	Simply Done 2=5 Dou. Roll Paper Towels \$4.99 92.84 s.f.	Food Club Shredded Cheese \$1.99 8 oz.	
Stonyfield Smoothies \$1.79 10 oz.	Planet Oat Milk \$2.79 52 oz.	Food Club Butter \$2.99 16 oz.	
Pictsweet Frozen Vegetables 2/\$4 10-14 oz.	Crav'n Flavor Self Rising Pizza \$3.99 27.15-30.2 oz.	Pepperidge Farm Frozen Cakes \$5.49 19.6 oz.	
<h2>The Willey's Store</h2> <p>Since 1900 Greensboro</p> <p>Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat. & Sun. 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.</p> <p>802-533-2621 • toll-free 855-533-2621</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="font-weight: bold;">True Value</div> <div style="font-size: small;"> • Full-service Grocery & Hardware • Clothing • Footwear • Housewares • Hunting & Fishing • Coffee Bar • Beer & Wine • Toys • Gifts </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; font-size: x-small;"> "If we don't have it, then you probably don't need it." </div> </div>			

WEATHER WATCH

Ups, downs with temperatures; snow on Wednesday and Saturday

by Tyler Molleur

EAST HARDWICK – The observation station logged several no-precipitation days this forecast period, which included most of Saturday into Monday. Much of northern New England dodged a powerful Nor'easter that brought feet of snow to places like Connecticut, Rhode Island, eastern Massachusetts, coastal Maine and New Hampshire. Providence, R.I., had a 24-hour snow total of 35.5 inches Monday, which broke the all-time one-day record of 28.6 inches for the city. That record was set during the blizzard of '78.

Worcester, Mass., had 13.9 inches, Boston had 17.1 inches and Hartford, Conn., had 9.0 inches. All of these amounts broke the record for snowfall on February 23, but not the all-time record.

Meanwhile, we had some snow of our own Friday night and Saturday with a storm system cutting through the Ohio Valley transferring its energy to the New England Coast. A widespread four to eight inches of snow fell, with 4.6 inches recorded in East Hardwick. Greensboro reported 5.8 inches, Cabot 6.5 inches and Woodbury 7.1 inches.

An occluding clipper system over the Saint Lawrence Valley will bring a steady band of light snow to Vermont with the passage

of a warm front Wednesday morning, followed by a brief break in the activity until the evening commute, when snow showers and possibly snow squalls may briefly reduce visibility and make travel difficult. Overall accumulations will be in the one- to three-inch range. The evening snow coincides with the passage of a cold front, which will bring slightly cooler conditions that last through Friday. Some gradual clearing occurs as high pressure builds over Hudson Bay. It appears a southern stream storm system stays well to our south during this time, with little chance for precipitation.

It becomes quite mild Saturday with highs reaching the low 40s on a gentle southwesterly wind. Our next system arrives as another clipper later Saturday with some additional light snow that clears out by midday Sunday. A second, stronger restoration of cold air looks likely to wrap up the weekend, with partly cloudy conditions. We are watching the weekend wrap up with southern stream energy approaching the Ohio River Valley, so a moderate wet snow/messy mix event may be in the cards as we head into the work week again. Here are the forecast details:

Wednesday: Mostly cloudy. Light snow in the morning, then snow showers and possible snow



A barred owl visits Dick and Chris Foster's Stannard backyard bird feeding station overnight, January 21. They regularly put out treats for area wildlife and often a fox stops by, but that evening the owl swooped in for a Wednesday night meal.

squalls by evening. Snow accumulation of one to three inches. High: 32. Low: 15. Calm wind, becoming southwest 5-10 mph in the afternoon.

Thursday: Partly cloudy. High: 29. Low: 7. West wind around 5 mph.

Friday: Mostly sunny. High:

32. Low: 13. Calm wind.

Saturday: Mostly cloudy. Snow showers developing by evening. High: 43. Low: 18. Southwest wind 5-10 mph.

Sunday: A few snow showers in the morning, becoming partly cloudy. High: 23. Low: -7. Northwest wind 5-10 mph.

POLICE REPORT



The Greensboro Fire Department responded to a two-car accident on Route 16 on Saturday, Feb. 21. social media photo

Two car accident, no injuries

GREENSBORO – On February 21, at 1:19 p.m., the Greensboro Fire Department responded to a two car motor vehicle accident at the intersection of Route 16 and The Bend Road. All operators were okay and sustained minor injuries. Crews provided traffic control while Caledonia Wrecker Service

and Ray's Towing and Recovery removed the vehicles. Glover Ambulance Squad responded to evaluate patients while Hardwick Police Department and Orleans County Sheriff's Department assessed the scene.

Crews cleared the scene after approximately two hours.

Hardwick Police Department Media Log

HARDWICK – February 15: Patrol, S. Main St.; Juvenile Snowmobile, LVRT; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 14; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 15; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.; Assist - Agency, Hazen Union Drive; Assist - Public, Hardwick Farms Road; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 15 E.; Theft, Vt. Route 14 S.

February 16: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Welfare Check, Vt. Route 16; VIN verification, Craftsbury Road; Welfare Check, Wakefield St.; Fingerprints, High St.; VIN verification, Dutton Road; Parking Problem, S. Main St.

February 17: Alarm, S. Main St.; Alarm, Vt. Route 14 S.; Suspicious Event, Center Road; Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Suspicious Event, S. Main St.; Assist - Public, High St.

February 18: Directed

Patrol, S. Main St.; Juvenile Problem, Hazen Union Dr.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 16; Traffic Stop, N. Main St.; Welfare Check, N. Main St.

February 19: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Fingerprints, High St.; Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 15 W; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 15 W.; Traffic Stop, Vt. Route 15 W.; Assault, Vt. Route 16; Traffic Stop, Wolcott St.

February 20: Directed Patrol, S. Main St.; Abandoned Vehicle, Cottage St.

February 21: Snowmobile, High St.; Animal Problem, Route 15 W.; Dead Body, Craftsbury Road; Assist - Agency, Spruce Dr.; Assist - Agency, The Bend Road.

February 22: Snowmobile, High St.; Traffic Stop, S. Main St.

POLICE REPORT

Former victim's advocate charged with sexually exploiting crime victim

by Brendan Rose, VTDigger

CALEDONIA COUNTY – The Vermont State Police arrested a former Caledonia County victim's advocate on charges he used his position to sexually exploit a crime victim and then tried to cover it up.

State police say that last May, Anthony Jackson-Miller, 39, allegedly entered into a sexual relationship with a victim he was assigned to represent and then took steps to cover up that relationship. At the time, he was employed by the Caledonia County State's Attorney's Office as well as the Swanton Village Police Department and the Caledonia County Sheriff's Department.

The victim's case was being prosecuted by the Caledonia County State's Attorney's Office, according to state police.

State police charged Jackson-Miller, from Stanstead, Quebec, with exploitation of a crime victim by a law enforcement officer and attempting to obstruct justice.

According to a court affidavit, Jackson-Miller allegedly coerced a victim of domestic abuse that he had been assigned to advocate for into a sexual relationship. When the victim said she was uncomfortable with the relationship, Jackson-Miller threatened to get the case against her alleged abuser dropped if she did not delete text messages to hide the relationship, court records stated. A friend of the victim reported the relationship to the Vermont State Police.

Jackson-Miller was arraigned in Vermont Superior Court in St. Johnsbury, pleaded not guilty, and was released without needing to

post bail. Judge Heather Gray restricted his communications with people involved in the case and members of Caledonia County State's Attorney's office.

Jackson-Miller had been working with the Swanton Village Police Department and the Caledonia County Sheriff's Department, as well as the Caledonia County State's Attorney's office. His full-time position was with the Office of Racial Equity, according to Tim Lueders-Dumont, executive director of the Vermont Department of State's Attorneys and Sheriffs.

Once informed of the alleged misconduct, the Caledonia County Sheriff's Office and the state's attorney fired Jackson-Miller, according to Lueders-Dumont and a statement from Caledonia County Sheriff Brandon Thraillkill.

AWARE Report

HARDWICK – Five people used AWARE services between February 15 and February 22. 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.

Sen. Welch meets with local health care leaders

ST. JOHNSBURY – On Wednesday, Feb. 18, Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.) joined Northeast Kingdom health care providers and community leaders at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) for a roundtable discussion on the importance of rural and independent pharmacies, and a celebration of federal funding to help build new pharmacies in Caledonia County.

Attending the meeting with Welch were NVRH CEO Shawn Tester; retiring executive director of the NEK Council of Aging Meg Burmeister, along with new Executive Director Darryl Washington; Northern Counties Health Care CEO Chris Towne; and Barb Byrne, clinical care coordinator at NVRH Corner Medical.

Senator Welch recently secured \$1.4 million funding through the Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) process for NVRH to construct new pharmacies in Caledonia County to address the recent loss of pharmacies



Health care providers met with Sen. Peter Welch Feb. 18. They included (from left) Barb Byrne, Shawn Tester, Sen. Peter Welch, Chris Towne, Meg Burmeister and Darryl Washington. courtesy photo

throughout the Northeast Kingdom. The shuttering of the downtown Walgreen's store in St. Johnsbury left the town with only one remaining pharmacy and the more recent closure of Walgreen's in Hardwick has created a pharmacy desert.

"The Hardwick community has been without a pharmacy for quite some time," said Northern Counties Health Care CEO Chris Towne. "The closest pharmacy is Morrisville, which is 25 or so minutes away. We have staff who are driving to the pharmacy on a regular basis to pick up prescriptions for patients. If they don't, it means that they go without the prescriptions."

Burmeister and Byrne both spoke to the real struggles that

their patients face accessing and paying for medications. For people living in Hardwick or St. Johnsbury who may already have transportation and financial challenges, said Burmeister, the pharmacy closures impact existing struggles to get the medications and support that they need. "It quadruples what people are struggling with."

"The pharmacy closures in St. Johnsbury sent a shockwave through our community," Tester said. "People were struggling to get their scripts filled on time, which meant they were canceling their surgeries. When the Hardwick pharmacy closed as well, we said, 'OK this isn't just the St. Johnsbury problem—this is a Northeast Kingdom problem. How do we leverage the relationship and the support we

have through our Senator to meet these needs?' These funds are going to help solve this problem for our communities and I'm so excited and grateful about that."

Pharmacies and pharmacists are critical components of in-person delivery of care and advice to people at a moment when they're very vulnerable, Welch explained.

"You have to have access to pharmacies in your community, not just the prescriptions, but the medical advice that you need. That's why this congressionally directed spending, in response to the leadership of Shawn and Chris, is so important."

Both Towne and Tester expressed eagerness to work together to tackle the challenge of ensuring that residents have access to pharmacies convenient to their home and work.

"We're appreciative and excited to work with you to utilize these funds to address the pharmacy desert situation in the Hardwick community," said Towne.

NVRH has not yet determined specific sites for the pharmacies and will share details as planning moves forward. But despite the challenges, optimism prevailed.

"We're not going to give up on the people here," said Welch. "We're not going to give up on doing all we can to make certain that access to a pharmacy is right here in the Kingdom, so that folks here who are working hard and need some medical care can get the care they need."

Welch

Continued From Page One

sport, including through innovative programs like the *Green Racing Project*.

"I'll keep working to deliver federal funding that supports Vermont's vital outdoor recreation economy to ensure Vermont athletes can achieve greatness for generations to come."

Disposal

Continued From Page One

amnesty day where anyone in town could bring tires to be disposed of with the funds.

It appears the grant request is primarily for trucking the tires to a disposal site in Maine, while work would be done locally by volunteers in a project coordinated by the CCC.

A post by Louann Walker said she and her husband Chase “are the property owners for the location of the proposed ‘Tire Removal Project.’”

“... We purchased the property as-is. We knew it needed work. What we did not do was create the tire issue. The tires, and the broader neglect, had been there for many many years. Leonard Spencer is to blame for that ... concerns were raised about the property long before we purchased it.”

Further, she said, “When we chose to buy the land, we understood we were taking on a long-standing problem. We did so intentionally. We saw the opportunity to restore something that had been overlooked for years. We also took and continue to take full responsibility for any and all work necessary to restore years of neglect.

“Since purchasing it, we have already spent thousands removing tires, beginning cleanup efforts and restoring derelict structures on the property that were unsafe and a hazard of their own, and we will continue to do so. The tires are not staying. The old rusted, but fully-dry, paint cans in the barn are not staying. It will all be addressed but it takes time.”

She said, “we were not lobbying for funds and never have. A neighbor had been raising concerns and seeking support through various avenues, well before CCIF was ever brought into the discussion and well before we took ownership. We did not draft the article.”

“At the same time, the environmental concern in the wetland does exist now. The wetlands and stream are impacted now. Part of the CCIF discussion around potential community support was simply about whether there was a responsible way to come together and accelerate cleanup in sensitive areas that affect more than just one property ... Clean wetlands and clean water affect all of us.”

While Louann Walker said they did not initiate the CCIF grant request, “If the community decides that CCIF funds are not appropriate, we respect that and we understand it. We work hard.

We care about where our tax dollars go and we all have a right to vote for a reason. Our commitment to restoring the property does not hinge on your vote. It may take us a little longer to get the job done but ... it will get done.

“If you do choose to vote yes, we absolutely agree that any work must be done correctly, with appropriate timing for wetlands and care for wildlife. Contact has already been made with Vermont Natural Resources and the Wetlands Engineer regardless of if this was done personally or with community help. No machinery is proposed to be in direct contact with any of the wetlands. Responsible environmental stewardship and community is the entire point here. It’s not about the money.”

In conclusion she said, “This isn’t about outsiders versus locals. We will be in town often and will be the first to help a neighbor that needs a hand. I believe this proposal all started with a good neighbor’s goal of addressing a long-standing environmental problem responsibly, as a community, and in good faith. Let’s all be kind to one another.”

Later Russillo-wrote, “... after speaking with the property owner, it appears that Gary Katz went and spearheaded this because he

it seems he wants this project done immediately, which lead to misinformation and entire details being left out.

“I am disappointed that an article was able to even be drafted to go to vote for funds to go to a private property when the owner didn’t even ask for it and wasn’t spoken to by board members.

“Gary Gulka [with CCIF] said he only first talked to the owner a week ago, after the vote was pushed. False information has been going to our community before the town vote. The owner has been working on the property. They’ve been spending their own money on it. They’ve been in touch with the proper wetland authorities. They have every intention of finishing the project. They never lobbied for the funds that the town is now set to vote on. Shame on the select board and committee chairs for letting any of this go so far without the property owners involvement.”

She added, “while I don’t support the Cabot funds going to this project when there is trash and debris in the water behind the rec field, farmers who also have tires to dispose of, etc., I do support the project and would be open to volunteering on the labor side.”

Meeting

Continued From Page One

GREENSBORO – Town meeting will be held Tuesday, March 3 at the Highland Center for the Arts, with polls for Australian ballot voting for town officers and school budgets open from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Town officers were previously elected with a floor vote. At the 2025 town meeting, voters approved town officers being elected by Australian ballot.

Select board candidate Peter Romans has withdrawn his petition for a select board position, but was unavailable for comment.

MARSHFIELD – The residents of Marshfield will meet on Sunday, March 1, at 1 p.m., at Twinfield Union School, located at 106 Nasmith Brook Road.

Voters will be asked to elect town officers and approve the town budget as well as other appropriations via floor voting.

Voting for the Twinfield and Central Vermont Career Center budgets will take place via Australian ballot on Tuesday, March 3, from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the Old Schoolhouse Common.

PLAINFIELD – Election day is March 3, with polls opening at 9 a.m. and closing at 7 p.m.. In-person voting will take place exclusively at the Plainfield Town Hall Opera House, located at 18 High Street on Route 2. Early voting at the town clerk’s office will take place until February 27 at 4 p.m. If voting by mail, it must be received by the town clerk’s office prior to March 3.

STANNARD - Town meeting

begins at 9 a.m., March 3, at the Stannard Town Hall.

WOLCOTT – Voters will gather at Wolcott Elementary School on March 3, at 9 a.m., with Australian ballot votes to elect town officers taking place between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m..

WALDEN – Town meeting will be held at Walden Elementary School on March 3, at 10 a.m.,

with polls open to elect town officers from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

WOODBURY– Town meeting day will take place on Saturday, February 28, at the elementary school for Woodbury residents. Voting on Mountain View Union and Hazen Union budgets will occur March 3, beginning at 10 a.m., until 7 p.m., also in the Woodbury Elementary School Gymnasium.



At the Hazen Union School Winter Wellness Fair, Senior Chloe Dyer (left) and Ashley Gravel, owner of Wild Magnolia, and “A Window Between Worlds” facilitator, create a “Focus Stone” while promoting an alternative to traditional therapy using art. photo by Abrah Griggs



ATTENTION
Aspiring New England Journalists!

Up to \$2,000 scholarships available to high school seniors and college students pursuing a career in journalism.



More Info:
nenpa.com
students@nenpa.com
Deadline:
March 27, 2026

Candidates

Continued From Page One

of the proceedings, moderated by community organizer Audrey Grant, with all eight candidates in attendance. For the full recording, visit hctv.us.

Running unopposed for a three-year seat, current select board member Ceilidh Galloway Kane was present. Vying for two available one-year terms are Larry Fliegleman, Tyler Lebeau, Bruce Larrow, Joe Nudell, Derek Richardson, Miranda (Davidson) Brown and Andy Gilbert.

The forum began with candidates providing introducing themselves, before answering a few questions. Common themes of the evening were affordability and infrastructure.

Andy Gilbert has been a Hardwick resident since 2021, formerly a Cabot resident for fifteen years. His wife, Andrea Gilbert, owns Hardwick Veterinary Clinic. He said he felt the need to run because the town is going through a lot of transitions. "We faced some challenges around infrastructure, education, housing and affordability, and just thought it would be my time to contribute."

Miranda (Davidson) Brown is an area business owner and parent. She kept her introduction short, saying she's running because she loves this community. Brown grew up in Hardwick from the time she was eight, and has since raised her three children there. A project manager and business owner, Brown spends her days managing problems, solutions, budgets and resources, as well collaborating with other people.

Derek Richardson of DP Property Lawncare and Maintenance was born and raised in Hardwick, recently celebrating the ten-year anniversary of his lawn care business, established in February of 2016. Richardson, a husband and father, stated he's running mainly because he thinks the younger generation needs to get involved. With this background as a business owner, he believes more can be done to keep people in the area.

Joe Nudell grew up in Hardwick, graduating from Hazen in 2007. Nudell says that like many residents, he moved away for college for some time before returning to Hardwick to start a family. For the past eight years, he has been working in public policy research. Like Richardson, Nudell is concerned younger people are being priced out of the area. He wants more to be done in the way of affordable housing and keeping young people in the community.

Ceilidh Galloway-Kane is running for her third term on the

select board. Galloway-Kane first joined the board six years ago, saying she felt the need to get involved, ask questions, and to do what she could for Hardwick. She has a young child, as well as being a business owner. She says she's running again to continue asking questions and doing the best she can for the community.

Bruce Larrow moved to Hardwick in July of last year. As he gets to know the community, he wants to be more involved. Larrow says having lived around the state, getting involved in local politics is the best way to start.

Tyler LeBeau has been a Hardwick resident for ten years. A husband and father first and foremost, he is a volunteer for the Hardwick Fire Department (HFD) and a nationally registered EMT for Hardwick Rescue. LeBeau prides himself on being an out-of-the-box thinker, regardless of the issue.

Larry Fliegleman began by remarking on how amazing it is to have seven candidates for two seats. Fliegleman volunteers for Neighbor to Neighbor, is a member of the planning commission, as well as a participant in productions at the Civic Standard. Fliegleman said as the community makes big choices about infrastructure, resilience and affordable growth, he sees a real opportunity to help the town move forward, while holding onto what it loves. He believes his administrative experience, combined with his current roles in the town, make him an ideal fit for the select board.

The question-and-answer portion of the evening saw candidates expand on some of their main ideas and motivations. Affordability and growth were a matter of great interest, appearing in some form or another in most responses. Candidates were first asked what they feel is the town's most important issue.

In line with Brown and Richardson's points on affordability, "I think we need to be creating more economic opportunities for younger people who are trying to live here," Nudell expanded saying, "We've got a lot of vacant storefronts downtown, almost a dozen of them. The select board's role in this could be more active. The select board has small business loans that I think a lot of people in town don't know about, that they could connect people with." Nudell said looking at new housing programs, financing more builds is also important.

LeBeau answered similarly, saying part of this is lowering taxes, as well as expanding the tax base by attracting new residents.

As for the town's greatest



Eight candidates joined the forum held in the Parker Ladd Community Room at the Jeudevine Memorial Library, February 21. Larry Fliegleman, Tyler LeBeau, Bruce Larrow, Ceilidh Galloway-Kane (incumbent), moderator Audrey Grant, Joe Nudell, Derek Richardson, Miranda (Davidson) Brown and Andy Gilbert introduced themselves and answered questions posed by Grant about how they'd serve the town if elected to the select board.

photo by Raymonda Parchment

unmet need, road conditions as well as parking downtown came up more than once, as well as the lack of a pharmacy. Flood resiliency was another answer.

LeBeau said we should be exploring ways to bring new businesses and foot traffic to the town.

Fliegleman said resilience, period. "I think that the safety nets we've relied on are vanishing, statewide and nationally. I think we've done a lot of work over the last few years since the floods to build up Hardwick's resiliency. We've written a local emergency management plan, an addendum that really details out some of what we can do on a number of different fronts, from the supply center to communications and all these different things that need to happen."

He says the planning commission has written zoning changes that should help us be more resilient around the rivers. Finally, he believes the essential services complex proposal is a very important step.

For the town's largest infrastructure need, many identified the wastewater treatment plant as well as the essential services complex as top priorities.

"We can't have the emergency services flooded during a flood, they have to be available," said Nudell. Galloway-Kane agreed, saying the essential services complex is a brilliant idea, noting all three properties are in need of upgrades and improvements.

LeBeau reiterated Galloway-Kane's sentiment, "In 2026, on both the rescue and fire side, we're seeing more calls than we ever have, in record numbers. By a lot. The facilities that we have right now, they're extremely limited. They're outdated, and portions of them are unsafe ... In order for us to maintain that level of response that everybody has come to love from what the folks do, we really need a building to grow into . . . As the needs change, as

the population grows, Hardwick changes, it's very important that we're still able to have the ability to respond in the best way we can."

LeBeau said the essential services complex will be big not just for the town, but for mutual aid responses in our surrounding communities.

Fliegleman too advocated strongly for the essential services complex, as well as the wastewater issue, "It doesn't feel like the most important thing today, but getting the wastewater treatment plant to higher ground is going to feel like the most important thing, when it does," he said.

Richardson was in agreement with the above points on wastewater and the essential services complex, adding that a maintenance plan will be a necessity. "When you don't take care of a property, it's going to run itself into the ground, and we're going back to this conversation in twenty years from now. Six million, that's a lot of money, so there needs to be a plan to sustain that forever."

He also highlighted the state of sidewalks in the downtown area. "The sidewalks in the village ... there's holes, there's cracks. The town is one person away from being sued from a broken leg or something like that. I think that should be addressed before anything else," he concluded.

Candidates were asked to consider if the current amount of town employees match the needs of the community.

Most candidates felt the town was either at or nearing capacity, with potential need for growth in the near future. Galloway-Kane noted the past two floods have added an enormous amount of administrative work, which will continue for the foreseeable future. Some emphasized the aging demographic of town employees, pointing to a need to incentivize younger employees to stay in the area. All

See CANDIDATES, next page

Faith Climate Action Day shortens distance between science, religion

by **Kate Kampner**

MONTPELIER – As the sun began to set over Montpelier on a recent evening, the verses of “We Shall Overcome” echoed across the statehouse lawn. The song was paired with hymns, moments of prayer and speeches from members of Vermont religious groups who believe their faith is a key force in climate change advocacy.

This was the scene at the first-ever Earth Vigil, the coda to Faith Climate Action Day. The annual event drew about 20 people to Montpelier to learn about climate-based policy and engage directly with lawmakers.

Vermont Interfaith Power and Light (VTIPL), a faith-based organization that educates different religious communities on environmental stewardship, has been hosting Faith Climate Action Day since 2020.

The organization partnered with other groups, such as Vermont Interfaith Action, VPIRG, 350Vermont and the Vermont Natural Resources Council, to host postermaking and legislative information sessions. VTIPL also put written letters from their members in legislators’ mailboxes.

Melissa Battah, executive director of the advocacy group Vermont Interfaith Action shared that these faith groups believe their traditions and values have a place to ignite Vermont policy.

“We are a unique group with a unique voice,” said Ron McGarvey, the president of VTIPL, who followed after her.

Woodbury resident Alissa Klar, a member of the Jewish Community of Greater Stowe synagogue, said legislators regularly hear from oil companies and environmental groups. Faith-based groups have another perspective, she said.

“I think the concept of, ‘We don’t own the planet. We’re just here to preserve it for the future . . .’ crosses through every religion,” she said. “It’s definitely in the forefront of Judaism.”

Klar has also seen climate devastation firsthand. She and her husband moved to Vermont in 2023, right after the summer flooding. Prior to that, they lived in California and had to evacuate from the 2020 wildfires.

As President Donald Trump’s administration, a cabinet known to have received endorsement from



Pastor Ed Sunday-Winters of the Greensboro United Church of Christ preaches to the multifaith crowd.
photo by Kate Kampner

conservative religious groups, recently canceled clean energy funding, Klar said it’s critical to try on the state level to “hold the line” against fossil fuels, an expressed priority of the group.

Traditionally, following member training and postermaking, VTIPL hosts a press conference to announce climate policy the group is prioritizing. This year is the first year the group instead held an Earth Vigil.

At the vigil, attendees held signs, reading, “People of faith demand climate action in VT” and “Climate is changing, why aren’t we?” The posters were illuminated by the attendees’ LED candles as they listened to Vermont faith leaders speak about how their faith can fuel action.

“How we treat the earth reveals who we are,” said Rev. Don Chatfield from All Souls Interfaith Gathering in Shelburne. “Environmental policy is not only economic policy, it is moral policy.”

Chatfield was joined by faith leaders from across the state. Along with them, Sen. Anne Watson, D-Washington, joined vigil speakers to review bills that would interest the group. She expressed how her relationship to religion energizes her work as a legislator.

“My political work here in this building is really about how I can better be a person who is a vehicle for God’s love,” she said to the crowd.

Chelsea Steinauer-Scudder, the organization’s coordinator, called the vigil “the beating heart of this work that we’re doing.”

“It’s nice to have these interfaith spaces and just seeing people coming together on this shared platform across different parts of the state, different religious affiliations,” she said. “Religion does community really well.”

Kate Kampner writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship.



Sen. Anne Watson, D-Washington, delivers a message of hope to the Earth Vigil attendees.
photo by Kate Kampner

Candidates

Continued from previous page commended the town staff for their unending efforts.

LeBeau said he thinks the current staff is stretched pretty thin, however, “I think it depends on what you want out of the town employees, more or less. And, what does future growth look like? In a perfect world, we hire a lot more town employees because we have so many people in Hardwick and we don’t know what to do with them.”

Fliegleman was in agreement, “The trick is, the needs are going to continue to change, all the time. There’s always going to be more. What can we make easier so that

the town staff doesn’t get pushed too far . . . We can’t let them get pushed beyond capacity so that they leave. We need them.”

Richardson emphasized the police department above others, “Our police station, they need help bad. They’re very, very understaffed and that goes back onto the budgets and all. They can’t afford to pay these people. They train them and they go to Morrisville and get paid 30, 40 grand more a year. So, some [departments], I think some are good, some aren’t. I think the police department’s the biggest one that needs attention.”

The fifth and final question had candidates state their vision of the future, the next five, ten and

fifteen years, for Hardwick. Many cited infrastructure, housing development and business growth. Affordability, specifically to draw young people and families was reiterated several times.

Gilbert set a goal for eighty more houses, as asked for by the state, but emphasizing the need for affordability, “We don’t want to gentrify, per se. We want to be Hardwick.”

“We really don’t have a choice, that we have to be more affordable, so that way, families and people can continue to live here and also come here,” said Galloway Kane. It’s all connected, she says, and she would love to see businesses thriving as well as the town becoming more

self-sufficient and resilient in the wake of state or national changes.

Before opening up to audience questions, candidates were asked where their favorite Hardwick food spot is. Many cited local staples like the Village Diner, the House of Pizza, and Cork and Fork, as well as the many options available at the farmers market like Nepali cuisine. Galloway-Kane struck out from the rest, saying “I am excited to have a meal at a future restaurant that has yet to exist,” saying there’s a few vacant spots around town which drew a large laugh.

For closing statements and audience questions, see the recording via the Hardwick Community Television website at hctv.us.

Meeting provides overview of town forest costs

by Rayonda Parchment

HARDWICK – Informational meetings Thursday, Feb. 19, provided an overview of the timeline, necessary steps and prospective costs to the taxpayer for those interested in the proposed Buffalo Mountain Town Forest. Frequently asked questions such as taxpayer cost were also addressed.

A potential contribution of \$25,000 from the town of Hardwick will come to a floor vote at town meeting, March 3, at 10 a.m.

The property being considered for acquisition to expand the existing town forest on Buffalo

Mountain is a 329-acre forest property south of Vermont Route 15, containing the summit of the mountain.

Presenting at the meeting was Rachel Kane, co-chair of the Hardwick Conservation Commission (HCC), Joe Nudell of the HCC, Hannah Redmon of Trust for Public Land (TPL) and Paul Cillo, board member of Northern Rivers Land Trust (NRLT).

Kane began with some background on the project, before addressing the usual concerns like

cost. A steering committee working with the select board would recommend how much funding to allocate for future maintenance. Applying for grants and donations is another option.

“The town of Hardwick has proposed a contribution of \$25,000. This financial commitment from the town is something that’s quite important in the process, where it shows the grantors, the town, is really interested . . . The town will actually receive the \$25,000 back to pay for the initial management costs. So that’s pretty good, even trade there,” she said.

For 329 acres of land, the temporary \$25,000 price tag is a “pretty good deal,” according to Kane.

In closing, she said, “For me, Buffalo Mountain, I consider it the heart of our town. It’s the background of the village, and it’s the view that tells you you’re home.”

Hannah Redmon of the TPL also spoke to the benefits of town forests. The TPL is an organization dedicated to creating and preserving lands for public use, and nationally has protected around 4-million acres of land. In short, the TPL finds grant money to create these public

lands which are then given to a town in perpetuity.

“Decisions about what’s going to happen in the town forest, how it’s going to be managed, that’s informed by community members,” said Redmon. She also cited ecological benefits before moving onto economics.

“A really big economic impact that we’ve been seeing is the outdoor recreation and the tourism from outdoor recreation, stimulating local economies. In Vermont, we’re number two in the country for how much outdoor recreation contributes to our GDP, just after Hawaii.”

Redmon continued, outlining the process which the TPL generally follows for public land acquisitions, emphasizing that the TPL only works with willing landowners and communities.

Redmon also outlined how the proposed conservation easement with Northern Rivers Land Trust would work. For a detailed description, visit hardwickvt.gov.

Joe Nudell provided a tour of Buffalo Mountain, with photographs, maps, as well as a detailed description of the mountaintop landscape and its ecological features. He also addressed the tax question, in

regards to the property leaving the tax base.

“Right now, it would be \$5,000 of municipal tax revenue, and so that would be absorbed by the rest of the property tax payers, and so that works out to a median of about three dollars on other people’s tax bills. Along those same lines there’s the question of shrinking the grand list, this property wouldn’t be developable . . . it’s not really a practical place for development anyway.”

Paul Cillo of NRLT also spoke, providing a budget overview as well as a potential timeline for the land acquisition, pending the town meeting vote. Cillo addressed the potential cost related to maintaining the property, and emphasized the matter would be up to the select board and steering committee.

Cillo also made sure to mention Wright Farm Road, a commonly used ATV trail that runs through part of the proposed forest, as well as another on the east side.

“Both of those trails, there’s no reason why those trails would not continue. In other words, being a town forest doesn’t make that impossible.”

State Historic Preservation Office announces preservation excellence awards

by Paul Fixx

MONTPELIER – The Vermont State Historic Preservation Office recently announced Curtains Without Borders (curtainswithoutborders.org) was honored with a Preservation Excellence award for its dedicated preservation of Vermont’s historic painted theater scenery. The Townshend Historical Society and Townshend Select Board were similarly honored for their preservation stewardship and ambitious rehabilitation efforts of the West Townshend Stone Arch Bridge.

In our area curtains at the Hardwick Town House and Craftsbury Town Hall have received curtain restoration work through Curtains without Borders.

“We are exceptionally proud to celebrate the Town of Townshend and Curtains Without Borders for their dedication to preserving our cultural heritage,” stated State Historic Preservation Officer Laura V. Trieschmann. “Their impactful work, preserving historic landmarks, educating the public, and sparking passion for our history through preservation, warrants recognition and provides a model for inspiration.”

Since 1996, Curtains Without Borders has led the documentation and preservation of historic

painted stage scenery. Under Director Chris Hadsel and Conservator MJ Davis, a project once expected to find 25 curtains grew into a statewide survey identifying 190 pieces created between 1890 and 1940. By 2018, the team cleaned and stabilized every curtain in Vermont, most of which are now displayed in their original community venues.

Charles Henry (1850-1917) of Ferrisburg, painted a large pair of curtains in the Hardwick Town House in 1903 at a cost of \$162.

The grand drape at 26’6”W x 17’6”H, was really too big for Henry’s capabilities. By 1990, it had numerous, large tears and it was taken to the Williamstown Regional Conservation Lab in Williamstown, Mass., to be conserved. The approach at that time was to treat it as a very large painting, so it was fully lined, but the result was that it could not roll up and down.

By 2003, there was more damage that was addressed by Curtains Without Borders, but it wasn’t until 2010 that special rigging was manufactured to allow it to roll most of the way up. Even so, the lined fabric is overly stressed and more work will have to be done in the future.

A street scene was found in the balcony, where people had just stepped on it for many years as



The restored grand drape in the Hardwick Town House painted by Charles Henry in 1903 was undertaken in the 1980’s. In October of 2003, another restoration of the curtains was completed under the direction of Christine Hadsel.

photo courtesy Curtains Without Borders

they went to their seats. It is worn but works as a backdrop on the otherwise cavernous stage.

There were other curtains in the Town House, probably at least one interior and a country scene, but they have been lost.

A pair of Charles Henry (1850-1917) curtains are in the Craftsbury Town Hall. The second one is not the more common street scene but a garden as seen from a balcony. The grand drape has one of Henry’s stock images of the stag at evening time. Both curtains were conserved by Curtains Without Borders in 2009.

Recognized as one of America’s Treasures by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Curtains



The curtain painted by Charles Henry that is now used as a backdrop in the Hardwick Town House was found in the balcony where it had been stepped on for years. A restoration in October of 2003 funded by the Vermont Painted Curtain Project followed earlier work on it in the 1980’s.

photo courtesy Curtains Without Borders

without Borders effort was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, Save America’s Treasures grants, and the Vermont Legislature. Vermont’s pioneering work in saving these remembrances of village life has since evolved into a national movement.

The Division for Historic Preservation, part of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DCHD), is dedicated to identifying, preserving, and interpreting historic resources on behalf of the citizens of the state and promoting them as significant components of our communities. DHCD works to support vibrant and resilient communities, promote safe and affordable housing for all, protect the state’s historic resources, and improve the quality of life for Vermonters.

Electric department seeks to understand demand, meet it

by Paul Fixx

HARDWICK – A power outage early Tuesday morning, February 16 left most of the Hardwick Electric Department (HED) service territory without service for two or more hours. “The outage was caused by a pole fire owned by Green Mountain Power (GMP) south of our Hardwick substation,” Scott Johnstone, HED General Manager said.

“It covered almost our entire service territory. We got disconnected from GMP and then Morrisville [Water & Light] backed us from the west, ending the outage.”

On Wednesday, Feb. 18, Johnstone reported, “I believe GMP came to town yesterday and repaired the damage to their system that caused the outage.”

During the outage, customers who were able to access the internet reported the link at the top of the HED website (hardwickelectric.com) never showed outages in the HED service area.

Johnstone explained, “Currently we are challenged outside of work hours to keep the map up as we don’t have any office staff working to do that. [It is a] manual task. Once we install advanced meter infrastructure (AMI) this fall, those maps will auto-populate.”

Johnstone joined HED in mid-October, after the previous General Manager Sarah Braese had left her position with the department.

He said pressures from legislation and regulation are causing small municipal electric departments throughout Vermont to look at closer cooperation with their neighbors. Swanton and Enosburg are already working together and in this area Barton, Orleans and Lyndon are doing the same.

Lamoille County municipal electric departments are doing the same, looking at collaborative and cooperative agreements.

Johnstone joined HED as its general manager through a cooperative agreement with Morrisville Water & Light (MW&L), a department of the Village of Morrisville, where he also serves as manager.

Johnstone said his work and the work of the commissioners looking to the future is in understanding customer demand and working to be ready to meet it.

Most of Vermont’s small electric utilities are members of Vermont Public Power Supply (VPPSA), that provides them with needed services, including rule- and rate-making.

HED customers now pay less for their electricity than 90% of Vermont residents, said Johnstone.

HED rates are currently in the upper third of Vermont electric utilities, but below the largest of them, which include GMP, Burlington Electric, Washington Electric Coop and Vermont Electric Coop, he said.

Within HED, Johnstone noted the line crew is well-staffed. Business and Finance Manager Beth Essary has recently retired.

In Greensboro, new discussions between HED, the Town of Hardwick, The Greensboro Association, the Town of Greensboro and perhaps the State of Vermont will be happening to identify appropriate ownership and management roles for the Caspian Lake dam, said Johnstone.

HED manages the dam under state guidance, which means it does not serve any power generation function and HED has no financial interest in continuing to own it. Changes in how insurance is obtained for dams may make it difficult to insure in the future, said Johnstone.

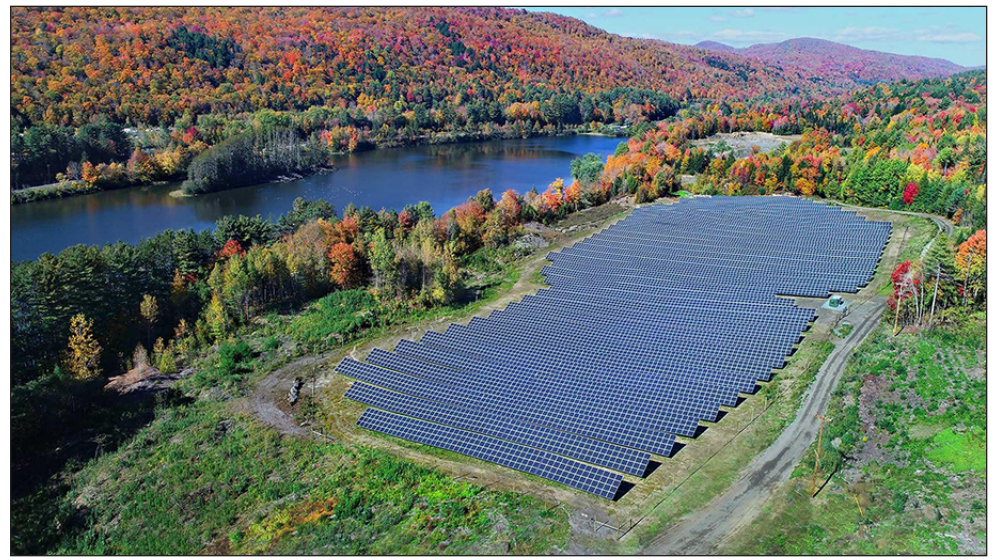
The property there is owned by the Town of Hardwick. The situation is further complicated because the dam is in Greensboro and controls the water level for lake-shore property owners, represented by The Greensboro Association.

Additional complications arise because HED’s roughly 4,350 customers come from eleven Vermont towns with approximately 325 miles of transmission and distribution facilities. Investments funded by those customers have supported construction and maintenance on the dam over many decades, thus the Vermont Public Utility Commission will be involved in approving any potential changes to the dam’s ownership.

Jackson Dam, on the Lamoille River in Hardwick is also owned by HED and no longer serves the purpose of generating power. Studies have recently begun on the value of that dam, vs. the value of removing it. Those discussions are ongoing with no plans for repairs or removal made yet.

A critical dam in HED’s power portfolio is Pottersville Dam, also known as the Wolcott Dam. It is a 52-foot-high concrete hydroelectric structure located on the Lamoille River in Wolcott. Built in 1920 and operated by HED, it supported local power generation until 2023 flooding damaged it.

The turbine damaged then had been supplying about 10% of HED’s power. That turbine has now been refurbished, but penstocks damaged since 2023 need repairs that are being reviewed by FEMA, said Johnstone. Those costs are likely to be in the \$6.5



In 2021, HED added the H11 project on Billings Road to its energy portfolio. The ten-acre 1,650 kilowatt PV solar generation facility is named for Hardwick and the eleven towns served by HED. It provides 6% of all energy needs for HED customers annually for less than half the cost of net metered energy, helping HED meet one of its most important goals: to provide reliable and affordable electric power services. *courtesy photo*

to 6.7 million dollar range. The FEMA review might take another three months and, with appropriate approvals and financing, the dam could be reenergized in 2027.

The Pottersville Dam is an important power source for HED because it’s within the HED service area and supplies power without fees for transmission that most other sources supplying power to the HED system require.

Johnstone said HED commissioners will be looking at other aspects of that dam, possibly improving the trash rack, taking steps to ensure there’s enough water flow to wash sand from the bearings, and new technologies to monitor and manage it.

There’s also work to be done throughout the HED distribution system to upgrade transmission lines to handle the newer loads

like electric vehicle charging. That could mean investment in the \$10 million range to meet customer expectations about outages, Johnstone said.

On top of that, new trucks cost about \$425,000, requiring ten years of reinvestment because of the way the state requires utilities to fund themselves out of current operating funds without building up capital funds. That adds interest expenses to any large investment made by the utility.

Future work on the HED system is likely to include Distributed Energy Resource Management (DERM), used by electric utilities to control, optimize and visualize distributed energy resources (DERs), such as solar, wind and batteries, to improve grid reliability, manage congestion and increase capacity.



Maddox Robinson, a ninth grader at Hazen Union bench pressed 195 lbs. on his way to winning the high school boys bench press competition during Winter Carnival, February 20. *photo by Vanessa Fournier*

photo by Vanessa Fournier

District clarifies Pre-K configuration, respects voter wishes

by Paul Fixx

CALAIS – Following the February 10 vote in which Calais and Worcester voters overwhelmingly voted not to close their schools, rejecting school board recommendations to consolidate five schools into three, Calais residents have learned Pre-K students from Calais will need to enroll elsewhere, a fact confirmed by School Board Chair Flor Diaz Smith who said, “Pre-K students will be at East Montpelier. . . The program at Calais needs to go back to Rumney Elementary.”

East Montpelier already has a full day Pre-K program and it will be a morning and afternoon program with before and after care. The same as in Berlin Elementary School. The two programs will stay in place and Calais Pre-K teacher and program had come temporary to Calais from Rumney and now is moving back to serve both Doty and Rumney.

A community member contacted Superintendent Steven Dellinger-Pate who gave a detailed explanation of the work of a Pre-K and Extended Day Programming Task Force formed at the beginning of this school year “to ensure our offerings align with the WCUUSD Strategic Plan Goals.”

“The group was intentionally composed of diverse stakeholders that included two school administrators, an early childhood education expert (Rebecca Webb), two Pre-K teachers, a parent representative, a special education representative and a school board member,” said Dellinger-Pate.

Communication about the process began with formal recommendations to the board in October 2025, said Dellinger-Pate. “During the budget process, it was determined that the initial recommendation was not financially sustainable. As a result, the program was scaled back to the current half-day, full-week model at 12.5 hours per week.”

Then, “On November 11, we provided information to the board that our current planning involved consolidations of the Calais

and East Montpelier Elementary School (EMES) Pre-K and the Doty and Rumney Pre-K to ensure full-time staffing,” he said. “The plans remained subject to final enrollment numbers and district configuration.” Dellinger-Pate said prior to February 2, a message was posted on the district website and families were notified. That information read: “Washington Central Unified School District (WCUUSD) will offer half-day (morning or afternoon), full-week (Monday-Friday) programming for Pre-Kindergarten students. The school-based programs will provide 12.5 hours of preschool services per week, exceeding the state mandate, with extended care options available for a fee through Community Connections. The current plan for PreK sites is a morning or afternoon program at Rumney, a morning and afternoon session at Berlin, and a morning and afternoon session at either EMES or Calais; all contingent on enrollment and our elementary school configuration. PreK enrollment begins on February 2 and our configuration vote is on February 10, so we will make final decisions on program locations no earlier than these dates and most likely not until mid to late March.”

“That message was revised this week [the week of February 16] to denote the sessions will be at Rumney, Berlin and EMES,” he said.

Diaz Smith added, “East Montpelier already has a full day Pre-K program and it will be a morning and afternoon program with before and after care. The same as in Berlin Elementary School. The two programs will stay in place and Calais Pre-K teacher and program had come temporarily to Calais from Rumney and now is moving back to serve both Doty and Rumney.”

In response to questions about a statement in the district’s annual report, in which Diaz Smith wrote about moving to a three-school mode, she responded, “The statements in the annual report about moving to a three-elementary school model came after a lot of work to communicate what the



Calais Elementary School

courtesy photo

board, the configuration committee, and the administration felt was best for our students.

“Looking back, I’m guessing the sentence you’re referring to would have been clearer if it said something like: We believe reconfiguring from five elementary schools to three multi-town schools will help us better align our resources...”

“That wording aside, we respect the outcome of the vote and remain committed to providing the kind of education we believe, and that our school families tell us. All students deserve: reasonable class sizes, dependable transportation,

access to counseling, nursing, and other support services, equitable access to programs, strong and collaborative teaching teams and meaningful opportunities to learn and grow.”

“After the vote, I shared that we respect and understand the will of the voters in Worcester and Calais, and that we’ll keep moving forward, as we always have, with their students’ best interests at heart.”

She added: “I am going to change that one sentence on the online version of the report for clarity. We can’t re-issue the printed one.”

Prices shown valid 02/27 - 03/02
Member-owner deals valid 02/01-02/28

BUFFALO MOUNTAIN MARKET
COOPERATIVELY OWNED SINCE 1975
Weekly Highlights

Just a taste of the deals this week. Stop in for hundreds of local items, cafe food, and more!

Energy Bars Clif, varieties, 16 oz 3/\$5	Grapeseed Oil La Tourangelle, 16.9 oz \$9.49	Cold Pressed Juice Lakewood, varieties, 32 oz \$5.99	Organic Agave Madhava, varieties, 11.75 oz clean & simple \$4.29
Organic Farfalle Pasta Montebello, 16 oz 2/\$7	Organic Coconut Milk Native Forest, 13.5 oz \$2.99	Gluten Free Graham Crackers Pamela's, 7.5 oz \$5.49	Organic Tea Pukka, varieties, 1.41 oz \$5.99
Organic Kale Crackers RW Garcia, varieties, 5.5 oz \$4.99	Organic Herbal Tea Teeccino, varieties, 2.12 oz \$5.99	Crispy Cookies Tate's, varieties, 7 oz 2/\$9	Gluten Free Bagels Lid's, 14 oz \$5.49
Ground Coffee Green Mountain, varieties, 12 oz \$7.99	Sandwich/Salad Dressing Miracle Whip, 30 oz \$4.99	Chili Seasoning McCormick, 125 oz \$1.49	Maple Leaf Cookies Butternut Farms, 14 oz \$3.99

Some of our Member-owner Deals This Week ...

Breath Mints Vermints, varieties, 1.41 oz \$2.69	Sapi Yaki Higgins, varieties, 5 oz 10% off	Chocolate Bars Champlain Chocolates, varieties 10% off	Botanical Tea Sprouting Soul, varieties, 16 oz 25% off
---	---	---	---

75 Mill Street Hardwick, VT 05843 • 802 472 6020 • www.buffalomountainmarket.com

Thanks
for saying
you saw it in the
Hardwick Gazette
hardwickgazette.org

EDITORIAL

A reporter opinion: community spirit shines

At the age of twenty-four, I have many choices to make in the coming years about where and when I want to lay down roots.

Similarly to one of the candidates Saturday evening at the Hardwick select board forum, I moved away for college and later returned. I relocated from southern Vermont for the opportunity to intern at my local newspaper for credit. Graduating in December of last year, I have since worked at The Hardwick Gazette as a paid staff member.

I am grateful to work with seasoned team members, who work tirelessly each week to produce what is truly a community-oriented newspaper. To that point, my time working with this news organization has allowed me to view my hometown through an entirely new lens.

I have grown a newfound appreciation and love for what surrounds me, and deep respect for the unending efforts of our town officers and community organizations that have created the Hardwick we live in today.

In my coverage of area select board meetings and other municipal proceedings, I usually find myself one of few, if not alone, in the audience.

To see nearly 60 people seated in the Parker Ladd Community Room this past Saturday was most definitely a pleasant change. I was truly heartened to see the select board candidate forum this past Saturday was so well attended.

I am also happy to see this amount of candidates to have submitted petitions in the first place; a rarity for many communities.

All in all, I was deeply impressed by the eight individuals who offered their time to answer questions and introduce themselves as potential select board members.

I was especially thrilled to hear these candidates highlight the need for younger generations to become involved in shaping the future of the town. I was also glad to see a range of ages, occupations and backgrounds for prospective select board members. To see parents, business owners and community members get involved is fantastic.

I would like to make a special mention of our excellent moderator, a local community organizer younger than myself.

I also appreciated the continued emphasis on the need for affordable housing and infrastructure, so that young people might have an incentive to stay and raise their own families here.

While I have some time before those steps, I want my community and hometown to continue to thrive, even if or when

I'm not there.

I want people who love Hardwick to shape Hardwick. Candidates wholeheartedly displayed their love for this town Saturday evening, and I encourage others to watch the forum for themselves via hctv.us.

Town officers and select board members have unending work. They are constantly looking to what's next, as they must, and I would be happy to see many of the candidates on the ballot taking up the mantle.

Raymonda Parchment
reporter, The Hardwick Gazette

LETTERS FROM READERS

Issues that he cares about

To the editor:

I encourage you to consider voting for Larry Fliegelman for the one year select board position on this year's town meeting ballot. I first spent time with Larry when he assumed a major role in managing the Hardwick Emergency Supply and Support Center in the aftermath of the 2023 flood. When Hardwick Neighbor to Neighbor (HNtN) took responsibility for this resource at the request of the town, we had no clear structure for how to best tend to this task. With his background in educational leadership, Larry applied his systems thinking and his strong organizational skills which were key to creating a structure to manage the center. He was subsequently instrumental in drafting an Emergency Supply and Support Center Operating Manual that is now part of the town's Emergency Management Plan.

Similarly, when HNtN offered to assist residents with FEMA applications, he immediately

volunteered his time to help people sort through often confusing options and paced them through the application process with both competence and compassion. He was quick to assume a leadership role in these efforts, is calm under pressure, and has a great sense of humor.

One other reason I am going to vote for Larry comes from our conversations about his work as a devoted educator. He cares deeply about the well being of all children and is an ardent advocate for any child who is in need of support. Larry goes above and beyond for issues that he cares about, a key attribute of an effective select board member. His work on the planning commission is another example of his commitment to this town.

Please vote for Larry Fliegelman for select board on March 3, Town Meeting Day, at the Town House.

Helen Beattie
Hardwick

THE Hardwick Gazette Since 1889

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

EDITOR - Paul Fixx

REPORTER - Raymonda Parchment

PRODUCTION - Sandy Atkins,
Dawn Gustafson, David Mitchell

SPORTS - Ken Brown, Eric Hanson

PHOTOGRAPHER - Vanessa Fournier

CARTOONISTS - Julie Atwood, Abrah Griggs,

Joe Heller, Kay Spaulding

WEATHER - Tyler Molleur

CIRCULATION - Dawn Gustafson

OFFICE HOURS: Monday and Tuesday 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.; Wednesday 9 a.m. to noon; Thursday and Friday closed. Phones are usually answered during office hours and other times when possible. Please leave a message if there is no answer, or email the appropriate address.

The Hardwick Gazette assumes no financial responsibility for typographical errors or omissions in advertisements but will reprint that part of the advertisement in which the error appeared. Advertisers must notify the Gazette within five days of any error that occurred. Copyright 2026 by Northeast Kingdom Public Journalism, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission from Northeast Kingdom Public Journalism, Inc.

ADVERTISING

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

CONTRIBUTORS

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

BOARD MEMBERS

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

Letters to the Editor, Opinions and Editorials: We believe a newspaper should be a community forum for people to discuss and debate issues of the day and welcome letters from all political points of view as the free expression of reader's opinions. Letters with claims of fact that are false or potentially damaging may be rejected.

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

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

Submissions of Content and Deadlines: The Hardwick Gazette is published late on Tuesday each week with Wednesday's date. Submit community event information, announcements, opinions, press releases, paid ads and business news the Friday before publication by 5 p.m. Local news and sports items, letters to the editor and church submissions are due Monday by noon. Deadlines may be earlier for holidays. Obituaries may be submitted at any time. We make every attempt to confirm receipt of obituaries. Call to confirm receipt of any obituary submitted Tuesday if it is important it appears in that week's edition. Photos capturing news and community events are welcome with details with the full name of each identifiable person, what is happening, when and where the photo was taken and why it is newsworthy. When sending photos, send unedited files in the largest size available to ensure the best page and web presentation.

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

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

YANKEE NOTEBOOK

In case we survive it

by Willem Lange

EAST MONTPELIER – I’m writing this before this year’s State of the Union speech. As an old hand at backstage preparations, I can well imagine the excitement currently infusing whatever passes for a green room wherever the president is getting ready for his coming performance. And I can imagine the anxiety of the speechwriters, handlers and medical personnel as Himself gets ready to face the world.

Like a dozen or so Democratic members of Congress, I will not be among his audience. There’s no point. The man lies so easily and constantly that years ago I ceased to credit anything he says. I can get the digests of the speech tomorrow, both pro and con. And if I were being honest (as with varying degrees of success I generally manage to be), I’d admit that what I’d be looking for, instead of hyperbole and outright mendacity, would be further evidence of mental deterioration. The digests I read tomorrow will largely explore the same question.

When we were kids, we liked a joke about the fellow who sat on a hillside above a single-track railroad and saw the eastbound express coming from one direction and the westbound from the other. “And what did you think?” asked the reporter.

President Trump keeps a schedule that, frankly, amazes me. Europe, Asia, Florida, New Jersey, I don’t know how he does it. Except for his frequent unscheduled dozes, his lizard brain seems alert and ready to respond, even if occasionally at a fourth-grade level. Probably his greatest vulnerability is that he can’t resist the lure of a camera and the opportunity to say something.

“Well,’ I thought, ‘what a hell of a way to run a railroad.”

Which is exactly the way I feel as I watch what’s called the Trump Administration trying to run the machinery of the United States. Having won the office by arousing its base with threats of an “enemy within,” runaway inflation and alleged “ripoffs” by other countries supposed to be our friends and allies, we then seem to do whatever we can to exacerbate those probably illusory problems.

Surely there must be a better way to run a country (or any organization, come to think of it) than by making enemies at every opportunity. The president has been doing this for decades, first as a “businessman” inclined to declare bankruptcy and leave employees and contractors in the lurch. All of them, I’m sure, are silently waiting for a chance to get even, which they know they never will.

There’s no point reciting chapter and verse of the president’s professional history. It’s been part of public awareness for a decade. What’s becoming fascinating is the question of how long can he and his minions hold together a deteriorating situation.

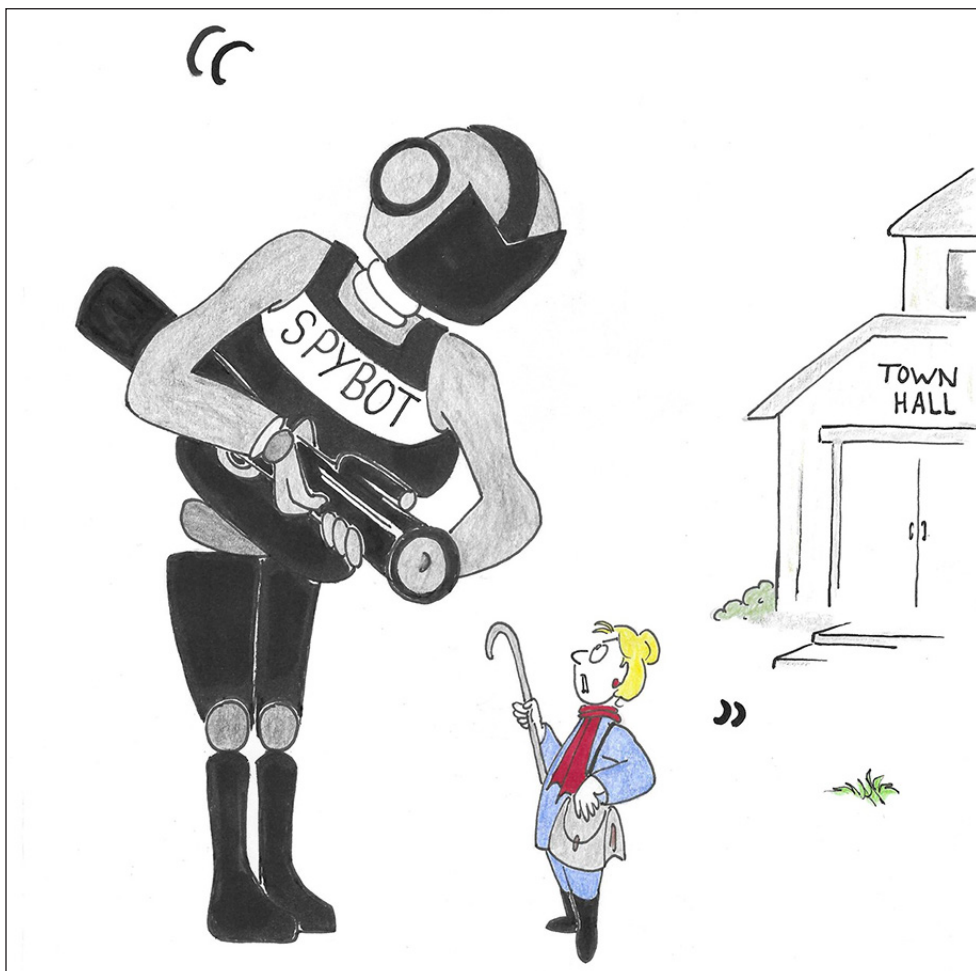
Probably the main failing of an authoritarian government (which ours currently resembles closely enough to qualify as one) is its inability to recognize dissonant facts. Some of us recall that in World War II General Rommel, probably Germany’s most competent field commander, advised headquarters in Berlin in July of 1944 that the press of Allied men, armor and materiel were irresistible, and that a negotiated peace was the best way out of a deteriorating situation. He was forced to commit suicide soon afterward. His opinions had been contrary to doctrine.

The Trump Administration gets at least as much negative information as the Berlin regime ever did. After tonight it’ll get a lot more. It’ll likely ignore it and attack the people who offer it.

President Trump keeps a schedule that, frankly, amazes me. Europe, Asia, Florida, New Jersey, I don’t know how he does it. Except for his frequent unscheduled dozes, his lizard brain seems alert and ready to respond, even if occasionally at a fourth-grade level. Probably his greatest vulnerability is that he can’t resist the lure of a camera and the opportunity to say something. What comes out, unfortunately, is often a garbled mess of windmills, beautiful clean coal, threats, complaints and statistics pulled right out of thin air. Every syllable and lapse is noted, as well as every bruise or anomaly. Many of us wonder, given his age and increasingly obvious impairment, and his genius for creating enemies, how much longer he can last.

There’s no doubt that we’re living in unprecedented times, the like of which the media cannot fathom or keep up with. It behooves those of us watching from the hillside as an apparently inevitable train wreck hurtles to a conclusion, to keep recording it all in our journals and letters. Probably very few people still alive could have believed, ten years ago, that we might come to this, and those not yet here may not someday believe that it did. In case we survive it, we need a record of it.

Woodsmoke by Julie Atwood



“LISTEN YOU BIG BULLY, I’M GOING TO THE TOWN HALL MEETING AND YOU CAN’T STOP ME!”

MEETING MEMO

Wednesday, February 25

Hazen Union School District, 7 p.m., public informational hearing on the FY 27 Budget, 7:30 p.m. annual school district meeting.

Tuesday, March 3

Craftsbury Town School District annual school district meeting, 9 a.m. Followed by the annual town meeting.

Stannard Town School District annual meeting, 9 a.m.

Cabot Select Board, first Tuesday of month, 7 p.m.

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

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

OSSU Board, first Tuesday of the month, 6 to 8 p.m., OSSU Central Office, Hardwick.

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

Wednesday, March 4

Stannard Town School Board, first Wednesday, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m., Stannard Town Hall.

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

Thursday, March 5

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

Town Clerks

- Cabot: cabotvt.us
- Calais: calaisvermont.gov
- Craftsbury: townofcraftsbury.com
- Greensboro: greensborovt.gov
- Hardwick: hardwickvt.org
- Marshfield: town.marshfield.vt.us
- Plainfield: plainfieldvt.us
- Stannard: Stannard town clerk: (802) 533-2577, open Wed., 8-noon, townofstannard@myfairpoint.net
- Walden: waldenvt.gov
- Wolcott: wolcottvt.org
- Woodbury: woodburyvt.org

ANOTHER OPINION

After the buyout: standing in the in-between

by **Kristen Leahy**

HARDWICK – Recently, I spent a bitterly cold afternoon walking through several flood-impacted sites in Hardwick with a group of University of Vermont students. They are enrolled in a course on climate adaptation and are thinking about what towns manage after buyouts are complete.

We were standing in places where water flowed in 2023 and again in 2024. The ground was uneven, and in a few spots the river was still actively reshaping the landscape. That felt appropriate. “After” is rarely a settled condition.

Buyouts are often described as an endpoint. A property is acquired, a structure is removed, and risk is reduced. But standing in these places, it becomes clear that buyouts do not end the work. They change it.

In Hardwick, we have completed or are in the process of completing twenty flood-related

buyouts following the 2023 and 2024 floods. These are homes that experienced repeated inundation, severe erosion, or both. In some cases, residents had real choices to weigh. In others, continued occupation or rebuilding was no longer realistic.

Once a structure is gone, the land remains. So does the river. And so do the responsibilities.

As we moved from site to site, I talked with the students about sequencing. In practice, the order in which towns act, wait or pause often matters more than any single project. Moving too quickly can close off options or unintentionally pressure people who are still deciding whether to participate in a voluntary program. Waiting too long can leave risk unaddressed. Much of the work after buyouts is finding a balance.

Vacant parcels continue to flood. Riverbanks keep eroding. Funding programs move on different timelines. Some sites are cleared while neighboring buildings remain in place, waiting

on decisions that have not yet been made. What follows a buyout is often a long stretch of interim conditions. The land is neither restored nor abandoned, but actively managed.

At one site, technical studies suggest that future restoration could reduce flood impacts both upstream and downstream. Several properties there are still in the buyout process. I explained why the town has chosen not to advance a detailed concept yet. It is not because there are no ideas. It is because preserving agency matters. Advancing a plan too early can make a voluntary decision feel predetermined.

At another site, multiple federal programs are addressing related risks, including acquisition, stabilization and hazard mitigation, but they cannot be combined. I described how towns end up managing land, communication and safety across overlapping efforts that were never designed to line up neatly.

What I hoped the students

took away is that the period after buyouts is less about construction and more about stewardship. Towns become caretakers of land, risk and expectation. The work is quieter than demolition and slower than design, but it carries long-term consequences.

As more communities face flooding and erosion, buyouts will remain part of the conversation. Understanding what comes after, the sequencing, the waiting, the coordination and the responsibility, is just as important as understanding how buyouts work in the first place.

Standing in these places with students, it was clear that adaptation does not happen all at once. It unfolds over time and relies as much on judgment as it does on technical solutions.

That is the part of the work that continues long after the buyout is complete.

Kristen Leahy is the zoning and floodplain administrator and resilience and adaptation coordinator for the Town of Hardwick.

Kicking the tax can

by **Jack Hoffman**

TURENNE, France – Some school districts are experiencing sticker shock heading into town meeting. Their projected tax increases for the next school year seem out of line with their proposed spending increases. A few different things can cause this, but one big factor was the Legislature’s decision last year to use one-time funds to lower tax rates for the current school year.

School tax rates are determined by per-pupil spending. But from year to year, spending and tax rates don’t necessarily track one another. For one thing, property taxes are the shock-absorbers for the funding system. Tax rates for other sources of education revenue, such as the sales tax or rooms and meals tax, are fixed. So if they fall short in any given year, property taxes have to make up the difference and rates go up accordingly.

Property values also affect school property tax rates. If values go up, school taxes will go up without a change in the tax rate.

In recent years, we’ve also been experiencing the effect of using so-called one-time funds to take the place of property taxes in the Education Fund. This has kept property taxes and property tax rates lower than they would have been. For fiscal 2026, the legislature used \$78 million from the General Fund and another \$32

million in reserves to buy down the tax rates.

While that provided immediate relief for homeowners, it only pushed the shortfall into the next year. The projected tax increases school districts now face are needed to cover fiscal 2027 spending increases, which, anecdotally, appear to be modest, and to fill the gap created by the use of one-time funds this year. Already the governor and the legislature are talking about another infusion of one-time money to hold down school taxes for next year.

One consequence of these tax rate buy-downs is that each December the tax commissioner issues a dire warning about a looming property tax increase. The governor, in turn, calls for school funding reform to reduce education spending.

In December 2024, the commissioner warned, based on preliminary school budget projections, that the average property tax bill would rise 14 percent for fiscal 2026. Some school boards presumably responded to the pressure. But after the rate buy-down, the average tax bill increase was only 1.1 percent, according to the Legislature’s Joint Fiscal Office. In the December 2025 letter from the commissioner, the warning was that property taxes would rise 12 percent in fiscal 2027. But this isn’t another double-digit increase in school taxes. It’s

this year’s increase being pushed off to next year.

If Montpelier does follow through this session with another buy-down and forestalls next year’s projected tax increase, we can expect the December 2026 letter from the commissioner to forecast another big tax hike.

That \$78 million transfer from the General Fund to the Education Fund did lower property taxes this year. The governor has talked about a similar transfer for next year. These payments are viewed as one-time bailouts. They also could be seen as an overdue rebalancing of the education funding system.

In the early 2000s, when we adopted the current system, 60 percent of the revenue in the Education Fund came from property taxes, and 40 percent came from General Fund sources: dedicated taxes or direct transfers. The ratio has fluctuated, but generally shifted more of the burden onto property taxes. This

year’s buy-down lowered the property tax share to 64 percent from 67 percent. But it will jump back up to 68 percent next year unless the General Fund picks up more of the cost.

Maintaining that 60-40 split would provide real long-term property tax relief by ensuring any spending increases are fairly distributed across the revenue sources.

In the meantime, if Montpelier does decide to do another round of buy-downs, at least it should target the relief to homeowners who need it. High-income Vermonters already pay a smaller share of their income to support education than their less well-off neighbors. Increasing fairness is an important part of tax relief.

Jack Hoffman is senior analyst at Public Assets Institute (publicassets.org), a non-partisan, non-profit organization based in Montpelier. He is a resident of Marshfield currently living in Turenne, France.

Cabot Enjoy upstairs bedroom-half bath in home surrounded by rolling fields. Host seeking guest with some daytime availability to accompany her outdoors as safety presence, lift-carry items, run occasional errands, provide occasional transportation. Rent-free with utility share. No smoking, no pets. Nut-free household.
802-863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application.
Interview, references, background checks required. EHO.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

How are the children?

by Rep. David Yacavone

MONTPELIER – How are the children? That is the question we should be asking with the same discipline and transparency we apply to state revenues: reviewed regularly, measured honestly and reported for all to see.

We love our children. Yet too many of them fall victim to neglect, instability and despair.

The data tell a sobering story. There are more than 1,000 juvenile delinquents in Vermont. Research suggests that roughly 80 percent of serious juvenile offenders will be arrested again as adults. For many, the path is tragically familiar: repeating cycles of trauma, instability and broken opportunity that often span generations.

If we are serious about

changing outcomes, we must ask: How do we break this cycle?

Frederick Douglass offered the answer more than a century ago: “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.” His words are not just poetic, they are practical. Prevention is almost always less costly, both financially and socially, than remediation.

In Montpelier, we routinely search for efficiencies to reduce the cost of government. We renovate state buildings to save energy, consolidate school districts, debate leasing versus buying vehicles, and scrutinize contracts line by line. We apply rigor and long-term thinking to infrastructure and budgets.

But when it comes to perhaps the most profound question of all, How are the children?, we lack

the same sustained, statewide focus. There is no comprehensive, measurable plan that aligns our efforts around a single goal: ensuring every Vermont child has a real opportunity to succeed.

In the 1990s, under the leadership of the late Con Hogan, Vermont’s Human Services Secretary, strengthening children and families was a central organizing principle of state policy. Communities were engaged. Prevention was prioritized. Questions like, “Are children entering school ready to learn?” and “How do we strengthen families before a crisis hits?” were front and center.

Today, we do important work: feeding the hungry, housing the homeless, and expanding childcare. These efforts matter. But too

often they address problems after families have already reached a breaking point. Prevention as a first strategy has faded from view.

The executive and legislative branches share a responsibility for changing this trajectory. If we truly want to reduce long-term costs, in corrections, health care and human services, we must invest earlier, smarter, and more deliberately in children and families.

There are too many lost children right in front of us.

The question remains: will we measure their well-being with the same seriousness we measure our balance sheet?

David Yacavone represents Lamoille-Washington in the Vermont Legislature, including Elmore, Morristown, Woodbury, Worcester and Stowe.

Montpelier, the big picture

by Rep. Richard Bailey

MONTPELIER – The governor gave his budget address, in which he proposed a 9.4 billion budget. While this does not raise any taxes rates or fees, it was my hope he would have offered a level funded or even a reduction in annual spending.

Vermont has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Since 2019 and the flood of emergency Covid-19 money, our state spending has increased from \$5.9 billion to \$9.4 billion. In other words, state government has given itself a 40% raise over that period. Did you get a 40% raise to pay the taxes necessary to cover this increase?

To continue this level of spending and spending growth, the legislature has, over those years, created a new payroll tax, a new sales tax on cloud-based software,

a new tax on short term rentals, instituted higher DMV fees, added renewable energy mandates to our electric bills, and of course, allowed property taxes and school spending to rise by double or triple inflation rates pretty much every year, all of this over the governor’s vetoes. This is unsustainable. It is what is at the bottom of our affordability crisis. We must and can spend YOUR money more efficiently, while letting you keep more of what you earn to pay your bills.

We can do better. Comparing Vermont to New Hampshire, their FY27 budget is \$8 billion to serve a population of 1,405,100 at a cost of \$5,700 per person. Vermont’s FY27 is 9.4 Billion to serve 650,000 at a cost of \$14,462 per person. The latest National Report Card scores show that Mississippi students are now performing better than Vermont students on math and literacy while they spend less

than half the amount per student that we do.

Right out of the box two Republicans proposed two bills to help reign in the school spending. Rep. Galfetti (R-Barre Town) proposed a three-year freeze on education property taxes at 2026 level for 2027-2029. The General Fund would cover the shortfall of the Education Fund in some manner. Rep. Feltus (R-Lyndon) proposed the state should begin using the Foundation Formula for educating children in the state in 2027 regardless whether the governance issues have been resolved. The school districts would get a fixed amount per student and schools would have to run the schools on money they receive.

Sen. Baruth (D-Chittenden Central) drafted a bill that proposes to limit the growth in each school district’s per pupil education spending in fiscal years 2028 and 2029 to a specified allowable growth percentage of the district’s prior year per pupil education spending. Both house bills are in Ways and Means, and they do not appear to be getting any traction to discuss. The senate bill is in Finance and there has been some testimony taken.

Instead of cutting taxes and spending, what we are seeing is a bunch of bills to raise more

taxes and spend more money: a 30¢-per-package tax on all retail deliveries, such as Amazon, UPS, even fuel deliveries; a tax on sweetened beverages (S.238); another surcharge on short term rentals; and, of course, we’re looking at another 6-12% property tax increase. The governor has proposed a buy down of the property tax increase, with surplus dollars, but the amount is still to be determined. Growing the economy is the smarter way to increase tax revenues rather than continually raising taxes.

In the House Energy & Digital Infrastructure Committee where I serve, we have taken testimony from the Agency of Natural Resources on the Climate Action Plan, extension of the sunset on the siting of telecommunication communications tower via the Public Communications Commission 248a process, the governor’s Clean Energy Standard, which would save Vermont rate-payers several million dollars if passed, and discontinuing the use of copper telephone lines as we convert to fiber throughout the state.

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

Heller’s World by Joe Heller



OUR E-MAILS
ads@hardwickgazette.org
news@hardwickgazette.org

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

Montpelier, the big picture

by Rep. Richard Bailey

MONTPELIER – The governor gave his budget address, in which he proposed a 9.4 billion budget. While this does not raise any taxes rates or fees, it was my hope he would have offered a level funded or even a reduction in annual spending.

Vermont has a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Since 2019 and the flood of emergency Covid-19 money, our state spending has increased from \$5.9 billion to \$9.4 billion. In other words, state government has given itself a 40% raise over that period. Did you get a 40% raise to pay the taxes necessary to cover this increase?

To continue this level of spending and spending growth, the legislature has, over those years, created a new payroll tax, a new sales tax on cloud-based software, a new tax on short term rentals, instituted higher DMV fees, added renewable energy mandates to our electric bills, and of course, allowed property taxes and school spending to rise by double or triple

inflation rates pretty much every year, all of this over the governor's vetoes. This is unsustainable. It is what is at the bottom of our affordability crisis. We must and can spend YOUR money more efficiently, while letting you keep more of what you earn to pay your bills.

We can do better. Comparing Vermont to New Hampshire, their FY27 budget is \$8 billion to serve a population of 1,405,100 at a cost of \$5,700 per person. Vermont's FY27 is 9.4 Billion to serve 650,000 at a cost of \$14,462 per person. The latest National Report Card scores show that Mississippi students are now performing better than Vermont students on math and literacy while they spend less than half the amount per student that we do.

Right out of the box two Republicans proposed two bills to help reign in the school spending. Rep. Galfetti (R-Barre Town) proposed a three-year freeze on education property taxes at 2026 level for 2027-2029. The General Fund would cover the shortfall of the Education Fund in some manner. Rep. Feltus (R-Lyndon) proposed

the state should begin using the Foundation Formula for educating children in the state in 2027 regardless whether the governance issues have been resolved. The school districts would get a fixed amount per student and schools would have to run the schools on money they receive.

Sen. Baruth (D-Chittenden Central) drafted a bill that proposes to limit the growth in each school district's per pupil education spending in fiscal years 2028 and 2029 to a specified allowable growth percentage of the district's prior year per pupil education spending. Both house bills are in Ways and Means, and they do not appear to be getting any traction to discuss. The senate bill is in Finance and there has been some testimony taken.

Instead of cutting taxes and spending, what we are seeing is a bunch of bills to raise more taxes and spend more money: a 30¢-per-package tax on all retail deliveries, such as Amazon, UPS, even fuel deliveries; a tax on sweetened beverages (S.238); another surcharge on short term

rentals; and, of course, we're looking at another 6-12% property tax increase. The governor has proposed a buy down of the property tax increase, with surplus dollars, but the amount is still to be determined. Growing the economy is the smarter way to increase tax revenues rather than continually raising taxes.

In the House Energy & Digital Infrastructure Committee where I serve, we have taken testimony from the Agency of Natural Resources on the Climate Action Plan, extension of the sunset on the siting of telecommunication communications tower via the Public Communications Commission 248a process, the governor's Clean Energy Standard, which would save Vermont rate-payers several million dollars if passed, and discontinuing the use of copper telephone lines as we convert to fiber throughout the state.

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

OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Radio nerd guides local station through expansion

by Eisha Qureshi

PLAINFIELD – “I’m a radio nerd.” That’s the self-description of Llu Mulvaney-Stanak, executive director of Central Vermont Community Radio, which operates WGDR in Plainfield and WGDH in Hardwick.

It’s been a challenging time for public broadcasting, but donors have stepped up, said Mulvaney-Stanak, who uses they/them pronouns.

Meanwhile, work continues on a new, taller antenna that will greatly increase the reach of WGDR’s broadcast signal.

They said the station is committed to broadening service while keeping things civil in a time of partisan divides.

“We are intentionally bringing a diversity of voices on the air,” Mulvaney-Stanak said. “You can’t be hurtful, you can’t be hateful, you have to cite your sources and remind listeners, people are not political.”

In the face of events like the recent violence and killings in Minnesota, the responsibility of journalists is to “get in the community and to gather those stories and to speak the truth,” Mulvaney-Stanak said.

The station does not take stands, but its hosts can and do, Mulvaney-Stanak said. They’re asked to read a disclaimer like this: “The views on this show are that of myself, the programmer and do not represent the station.”

Mulvaney-Stanak grew up in Barre and started doing radio in high school, starting on WGDR in the 1990s as a community programmer. In 2021, they were hired to run the station after Goddard College transferred the broadcast license to the community.

Stanak’s journey, and that of WGDR/WGDH, has been filled with many bumps along the road. When floods hit Central Vermont, the broader community was severely impacted. This was around the time the station lost \$150,000 in federal funding. Still, the station adapted.

The station focuses on “hyper-local content,” Mulvaney-Stanak said. For example, during the two most recent flood events, the station provided locals with information about emergency housing and recovery resources.

During the next emergency, more local residents will be able to hear a clearer, crisper signal throughout all of central Vermont. That’s because the station is



Central Vermont Community Radio Executive Director Llu Mulvaney-Stanak said the station is committed to broadening service while keeping things civil in a time of partisan divides.

photo courtesy Central Vermont Community Radio

building a new antenna.

A pine forest grew around the old tower on Goddard’s campus, and the trees are now taller than the antenna tower. The

new antenna will be at 1,400-ft. elevation, compared to 400 feet before. State funding is helping to upgrade existing gear.

Mulvaney-Stanak said community media offers a glimmer of hope by being a place where people can participate in media and have their individual voices heard.

“The best thing about community radio is that it is made up of the community you know,” Mulvaney-Stanak said. “It’s the folks you see at the hardware store, the people you see at the farmers market. There is a local accountability here that is unmatched.”

Eisha Qureshi writes for the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship, for the Hardwick Gazette.

Thanks

for saying

you saw it in the

Hardwick Gazette

hardwickgazette.com



WEEKS GONE BY

100 years ago in the Hardwick Gazette
February 25, 1926

Girl Scouts.

Grace J. Kelley, Captain
Ruby Grisworld, 1st. Lieut.
Mildred Stone, 2nd, Lieut.

The twenty-eight girls who answered to their names at Roll Call last Monday night, at Scout Headquarters, were certainly an enthusiastic bunch and the business of the evening was conducted with all the necessary "snap" to make it both interesting and profitable. Six new girls were admitted to membership at this meeting and added to a fourth patrol which will have a leader appointed at the next meeting.

These girls were as follows: Lilly McWilliams, Bella Leys, Dorothy Colburn, Earline Smith, Clarin Calcagni and Mable Besaw.

In the absence of the Secretary, who was visiting at Burlington over Washington's Birthday, the 2nd Lieutenant, Mildred Stone, was elected secretary, pro-tem. The Patrol Leaders, Lorraine Watt, Myrtle Leach and Fransisco Heath, were all present with most of the members of their patrols.

Arrangements were made for the food sale to be held next Saturday, in charge of Ruby Grisworld, Mildred Stone and Doris Wilson. The money earned from this sale will be used to help defray the expenses of the Anniversary Banquets.

Three tenderfoot enrollment cards were distributed Monday night to the following girls: Muriel James, Marjorie Chase and Lucy Hall.

At the conclusion of the regular business, the game of "Buzz" was played, until time for adjournment.

An old-fashioned straw-ride for all Scouts and their friends on Friday night, March 5th, to the Mineral Springs, with a steaming hot corn chowder supper, and all for twenty-five cents.

Come and bring your horns and your noisemakers and do not leave your appetites for chowder at home.

Junior Boy Scouts or Wolf-Cubs

The Cubs were there with their "grin" – thirty-four of them, last Tuesday night, and "A-kella", the old wolf, was with them. The pack found it a little difficult to get down to business at first, because several of the boys were a little tardy. The skating rink or the call

of the out-of-doors on one of the most beautiful nights of the winter, made them forget the lateness of the hour and the requirement of punctuality. But no boy was more than fifteen minutes late, and then they were there in spite of outside attractions, and this goes to show their real interest in Scouting, of time and thought to the work, which is a great encouragement to who must of necessity give a great deal of time and thought to the work. Three new boys were enrolled: Clifford Dugar, Leslie Smith and Robert Mercier.

There are now four full squads and a fifth started, making two troops of Junior Scouts.

Every boy has paid his enrollment fee of twenty-five cents and all but three have paid their monthly dues of five cents in full to date, and several have paid in advance.

At the next meeting Tuesday night, March 2nd, immediately following the business session, or at half past seven, a social will be held to consist of lantern slide pictures of the World War, games and refreshments, and everybody is invited.

Come and help the Juniors meet their part of the banquet expenses.

BASKETBALL

The Hardwick town team was considerably disappointed, as well as a large number of fans, at the cancelling of the game by Danville with the local team, which was to have taken place at the gym last Friday night. The local pro boys had an idea that they could defeat the fast Danville five this time and it is to be regretted that the visiting team could come as per schedule.

The local basketball season, insofar as H.A. is concerned, is fast drawing to a close, and the game here tomorrow night against its old-time and honored rivals, P.A. of Morrisville, should draw out a record-breaking crowd for the season. This game has always been known and advertised as the "Harvard-Yale" game of the Lamoille valley and this game this week will be no exception. Hardwick is putting in some good practice for this struggle and will try and even up for the defeat handed them a few weeks ago at Morrisville. It is a fact that P.A.

A Complete Line of 1927 CALENDARS

Gazette Office

has not been up against as strong teams as H. A., but that does not detract from its credit of winning 14 straight games this season and by big scores and by holding their opponents to small scores. It is also a fact that a majority of these games have been played at home, but the ultimate end was to get in trim for the two games with H. A. Peoples Academy has the best five it has put on the maple surface in years, and in Foss as a forward, and Sargent in the center position, the team has two very likely candidates for the all-state team, and will, no doubt, be a team selected to go to the state tournament in Burlington on March 12th and 13th. It is expected a large contingent of rooters will accompany the visiting team to this place and school songs and yells will be in order. Let's all turn out for this game and encourage our boys in their efforts to win and at the same time give the visiting team a cordial reception.

First Skiing Accident

Howard, the 13-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. John Dunn of High Street, is the first youngster to meet with more than a minor ski accident hereabouts, and this one came very near being serious. As it is the boy

is still suffering considerable pain.

The accident occurred last Sunday afternoon between 3:00 and 4:00 o'clock, while he was skiing down the rather steep hill back of the Hooker house, the course being down towards where the former stonished of the Hardwick Granite company once stood.

The land is now owned by E. R. Fletcher, and last fall the brush was cut off and piled up. This pile served as a good jump, as it was completely covered with snow. The boy had made two trips down the incline and over this pile of snow-covered brush, but the third time down he had a spill as he was right on top of the heap.

He struck his buttock and a round prong or part of a bush plowed a furrow over two inches deep and several inches in length on his body, necessitating six stitches to close the wound. It was very painful, but the youngster was game and went unaided to his home on High Street. Dr. Libbey of East Hardwick was called to attend him.

It is thought that all the silver was removed and if nothing new sets in the boy will be up and about again soon. It was fortunate that it was not that serious.

Let The Gazette Press Print Your Sugar Labels

Get the free newsletter featuring notable news,
arts, sports and opinion. Sit back,
relax and catch up.
hardwickgazette.org



or help at
hardwickgazette.org/donate

LETTERS FROM READERS

A voice for the community

To the editor:

As citizens of Plainfield know, it's been a rough few years. Natural disasters. Bitter conflicts. Difficulties filling open positions. Now we have an opportunity to begin turning things around. Vicki McDonald, a Plainfield resident of 42 years, is running for select board. Vicki was a VP at National Life for years, and has also served on the Twinfield School Board, Twin-

field Planning Commission, the East Village Advisory Committee and the housing committee. She offers leadership, listening skills, and budgeting experience, among other excellent qualities.

Please consider writing in Vicki McDonald's name on town meeting day for the three-year select board position. She'll be a voice for the whole community.

Leda Schubert
Plainfield

For the record:

Last week's story, "Journalism awards, report announced at Statehouse," should have referred to Cassandra Hemenway in the photo caption.

The photo last week of four 90 year-olds playing Bridge should have identified the person on the right as Janet Long, whose birthday was being celebrated that day.

Ask for safeguards

To the editor:

The Trump administration and Pam Bondi, attorney general of the U.S. Justice Department, believe that ICE agents should have total immunity in all their brutish and illegal actions. If Bondi succeeds in passing funding for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) without safeguards, our First and Fourth Amendment rights will be abolished.

Those rights guarantee the rights to free speech, to protest, to protection from unlawful search and seizure, and to due process for all people. If ICE agents can knock down doors of law abiding citizens, or kill legally protesting citizens in Minneapolis, then they will be

allowed to do that in Hardwick, too.

Contact our Vermont Congressional delegation now and insist that any funding for DHS include all the following safeguards: judicial warrants for all arrests and detentions; accountability for all actions contrary to the Bill of Rights and professional police conduct; due process for all suspected detainees during arrests, and detention; involvement of local and state police in all gathering of evidence.

Those are the same safeguards that all local, state and federal police agents must already abide by.

Bob Hawk
Walden

THE OUTSIDE STORY

Tiny king of the winter woods: Golden-crowned Kinglets

by Loren Merrill

MILLBROOK, N.Y. – The morning after a nighttime snowfall evokes feelings of newness and wonder. If the air is calm and the trees still retain their coat of fluffy white, I immediately bundle up and head out to explore. I trudge into the woods looking and listening for signs of life in this alien world. It is not uncommon for me to follow in the footsteps of others; coyotes, bobcats, foxes, deer, rabbits and squirrels have already been out and about. I visually follow their tracks, trying to decipher the short vignettes that have been temporarily etched onto the landscape. I stop for a few minutes to listen. Everything is still.

Then I hear soft vocalizations, quiet contact calls, of chickadees and titmice communicating with their flock mates while they search for food. The "yanking" of a white-breasted nuthatch, and the "churr" of a red-bellied woodpecker seem to break the seal on the library-like quiet, and soon the distant calls of crows and goldfinches flying overhead reach me on the ground. I start walking again until I reach a small patch of hemlocks from which I can just barely detect a new sound. A thin, high-frequency "tsee" call tumbles from the snowy branches, and I look up to see an impossibly small bird hovering at the end of a needled branch: a golden-crowned kinglet.

Golden-crowned kinglets are ping-pong-ball-sized (and -shaped) songbirds that breed almost exclu-

sively in coniferous forests. In the winter, they occupy a wider variety of habitats, including mixed woodlands, deciduous forests and even shrub-dominated landscapes. Their small size, quiet vocals, and inconspicuous gray-green plumage make them easy to overlook, but once detected, their bold white, black, and yellow head markings stand out.

For seven months of the year, the golden-crowned kinglet wears the crown of smallest bird in the Northeast, toppled from its throne by the feisty ruby-throated hummingbird in the warm months. We are often impressed by the hummingbird's physical and physiological feats: 50 to 80 wing beats per second, 20-hour nonstop flight across the Gulf of Mexico during migration, but those of the kinglet are no less impressive. Despite their tiny size and correspondingly large surface area to volume ratio (bad for heat loss), they can survive conditions down to negative 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Combined with the fact that these birds retain an invertebrate-based diet during the coldest months, when insects are in short supply, this seems an impossible task.

The question of how these six-gram birds survive such extreme winter conditions caught the attention of Bernd Heinrich a few decades back. Heinrich, a renowned animal physiologist and natural historian, spent several winters investigating the question. He found that kinglets are very well insulated, and they spend almost every moment of daylight looking



Golden-crowned Kinglets

for food. Between stomach-content analyses and whacking trees to see what invertebrates fell out, he was able to determine that geometrid caterpillars comprised the bulk of the kinglet's diet, at least in his part of western Maine.

Heinrich and some of his students also tracked birds at dusk to see what they did at night, and the enterprising researchers found that the tiny birds may conserve energy by huddling together in small groups. Heinrich and his students also found tantalizing evidence that the birds may roost together in miniature snow caves on evergreen branches, thereby benefitting from the snow's insulating properties. Heinrich recounts his studies on wintering golden-crowned kinglets in the book, "Winter World: The Ingenuity of Animal Survival."

A handful of winters ago, I came upon a golden-crowned kinglet hopping on some exposed barnacle and algae-encrusted boulders just below the high-tide line along the

coast. The kinglet appeared to be feeding; every so often, it would pluck something from the surface of the rock. I took some photos to document the behavior, and after the bird had retreated to the trees, I inspected the rocks where it had been feeding. I could see nothing that resembled animal matter, only tiny pieces of frozen algae. When I looked at my photos later, it did indeed appear that the bird was gleaning tiny flecks of algae from the rock. There is some evidence that golden-crowned kinglets will augment their diet with vegetable matter in the fall and winter, but I think algae would be new.

Regardless of whether the bird was eating algae or some other microscopic food, the experience solidified in my mind that these birds are the kings of winter survival.

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

THE OUTSIDE STORY

Bundling Up: Soil Microbes in Winter

by Maggie Weng

VERMONT – Like any good animal, we sense the change of seasons through a hundred subtle clues. Leaves change and shed, becoming crispy piles underfoot. Geese cross the bright sky. Other signs of winter are harder to define: the morning chill deepens its bite, the afternoon light becomes pale. Although we may be aware that other creatures are preparing for the cold, building their nutritious stockpiles and cozy dens, few of us think about the ground beneath our feet. Yet here as well a whole world is getting ready for winter.

A handful of soil contains an invisible ecosystem as complex as the forest aboveground. Its citizens are microbes, mostly single-celled organisms. Microbes exist across all three domains of life: Eukarya, Archaea and Bacteria. Although they are often associated with dirtiness and disease, most microbes are indifferent to humans and thrive in every kind of natural environment. In forests they are guardians of soil health, responsible for breaking down dead matter and recycling nutrients. Forests store about one-third of our carbon emissions thanks in no small part to microbes, which help draw down carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and fix it in stable forms. But like most creatures, microbes are vulnerable to icy temperatures. How do they survive the harsh New England winters?

Many rely on a thick coat of snow to stay warm. It may seem counterintuitive, but snowpack actually helps insulate the ground beneath it, preventing the soil from freezing solid. Sheltered from the

elements, microbes can continue the important work of decomposition, breaking down fallen leaves and recycling nutrients that will soon be needed by growing plants in the spring. But despite recent snowfall, snow here doesn't come like it used to: in the Northeast, warming temperatures have accelerated three times faster in winter than in spring and summer. To better understand how declining snowpack impacts forest soils, researchers at Dartmouth have set up an ongoing experiment called DeFROST that melts snowpack in experimental plots. By comparing their measurements to plots of undisturbed forest, they found that removing snowpack allowed moisture in the ground to freeze, filling up the pore space and blocking the movement of oxygen and other gases. In other words, the soil couldn't breathe.

These changes altered the way microbes lived their lives as well. "[We found] a shift away from decomposition and nutrient recycling towards low-oxygen processes that could lead to the destabilization of stored carbon," said Joanna Ridgeway, a PhD student at Dartmouth and the lead author of the study. The lack of oxygen meant that microbes got their energy from processes that didn't require it, producing potent greenhouse gases such as methane and nitrous oxide. Longer term, Ridgeway worries that continued winter warming could decrease the ability of forests to store carbon by creating less nutrient-rich soils and increasing emissions.

"I feel like it's my job to bear witness to the end of winter," said Dr. Caitlin Hicks Pries, whose



Snowpack

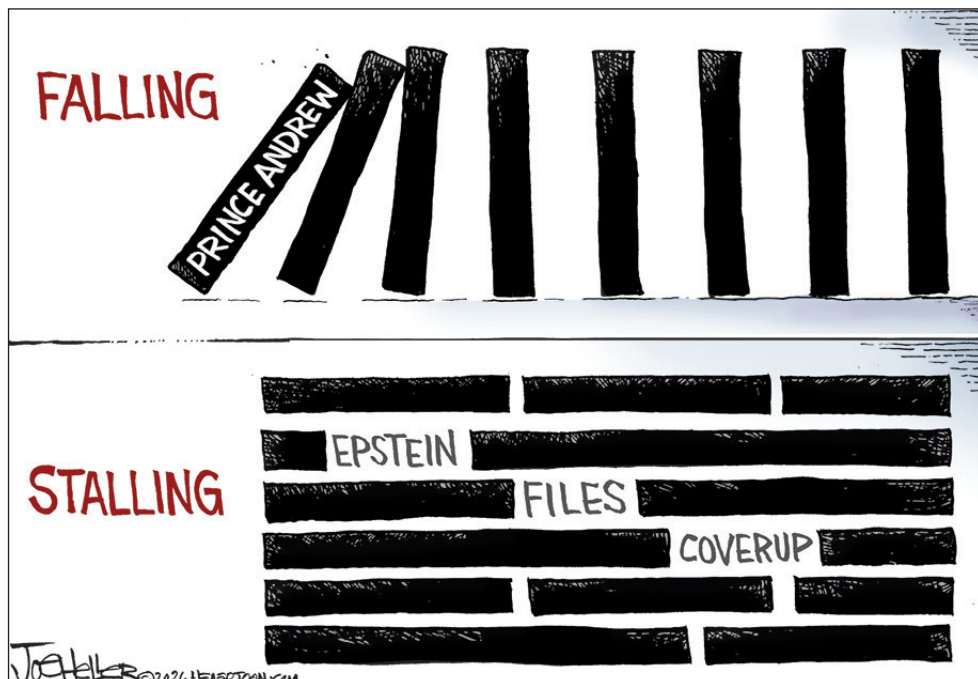
lab runs DeFROST. "We're losing winter really fast, and we don't even know what exactly is being lost. That's what we hope this project can help us figure out." She pointed out that the loss of winter snow also affects the rest of the year. Typically, winter microbial activity leads to a surplus of just the right nutrients during the growing season. If these processes are slowed or altered, plants will take longer to put out fresh growth, dragging stick season into mud season and leading to increased uncertainty about when to plant crops.

When snow does come to the Upper Valley, its dazzling surface

makes the day after the storm a celebration. As a kid, I would sometimes lie on it, not to make snow angels or go sledding, but just to feel the way it cupped my body like memory foam. I would stay there until the snow started melting in my hat, sharing the silence with the hemlocks who tucked their roots in the hardworking dirt. I was warm in my winter coat and, though I didn't yet know about them, the microbes were too: safe, protected, bundled up.

Maggie Weng is a writer and scientist currently working as a NASA postdoctoral fellow. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol.

Heller's World by Joe Heller

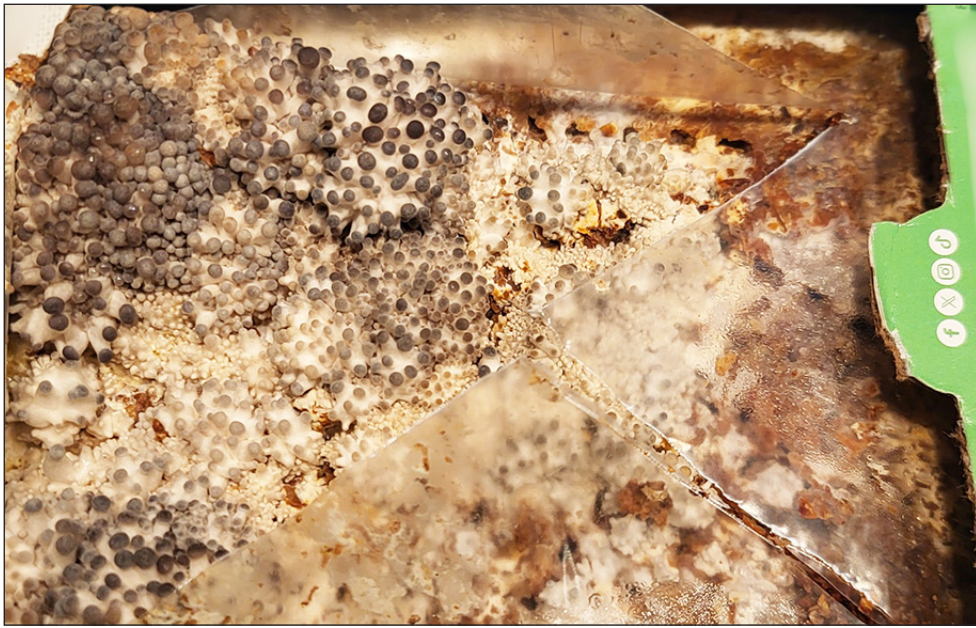


Hazen Union junior Will Helms as the Wildcat mascot wears a sumo wrestling inflatable to entertain the crowd gathered in the gym for the opening ceremonies and activities Friday, for the grade seven through twelve Winter Carnival and Wellness Fair.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

IN THE GARDEN

Grow gourmet mushrooms at home



Baby mushrooms will begin to grow from the mushroom kit. This is called pinning. photo by Andrea Knepper

by **Andrea Knepper**

FAYSTON – Growing mushrooms at home doesn't require special equipment or prior experience.

Fresh mushrooms can be grown with an at-home mushroom growing kit. Mushroom growing kits require minimal space and time, making it possible to grow your own food year-round, even during the cold Vermont winter months.

Mushroom kits are widely available and designed specifically for home use. They include a prepared growing block and instructions, which is all that is needed to easily grow mushrooms at home. Because mushrooms are fungi, they do not need soil and sunlight to produce a harvest. Common varieties such as

oyster, shiitake and lion's mane all grow well indoors and can be ready to harvest in as little as two to three weeks.

Check a local garden supply store for mushroom growing kits or look online. When shopping, look for a kit that has is certified organic, suitable for beginners with step-by-step instructions, variety and price. Oyster mushrooms are considered the most reliable variety for first-time growers. They grow quickly and are tolerant of a range of common household conditions, including the drier air often found in homes heated by wood stoves. Shiitake and lion's mane kits are also good choices for beginners, but can take longer to mature.

Most kits come with a block



At-home mushroom kits typically come with a prepared growing block that has been inoculated with mushroom spores. photo by Andrea Knepper

of growing material, usually a mix of sawdust and grain, wrapped in plastic. This block is called the substrate and serves as the food source for the mushrooms. The substrate is inoculated with mushroom spawn. The spawn grows into a web of white fibers called mycelium. The mycelium gradually takes over the substrate, turning it white and preparing it to produce mushrooms.

Getting started with a mushroom growing kit is straightforward. Kits include detailed instructions, but the process is generally the same across different brands, including cutting the plastic packaging according to the instructions and soaking the growing block in water.

Mushrooms need a lot of moisture, so the growing block will be watered every day.

Within one to two weeks, small clusters of mushrooms beginning to emerge. This is called pinning. These baby mushrooms grow quickly, sometimes doubling in size every day. Watering the mushrooms should continue until they have reached maturity. The instructions in a kit will describe what to look for, such

as the size and shape of the cap, to know when mushrooms are ready to harvest.

A mushroom growing kit can sometimes yield more than one harvest. After harvesting the first crop, a second flush can be attempted. To do this, let a growing block rest for about a week in a cool, dry place. Repeat the instructions included with the kit: soak the growing block again and water as directed. In most cases, subsequent batches of mushrooms will take longer to grow and have a smaller yield.

When the kit is done producing, add the substrate to a compost pile or directly to a garden beds. The mycelium has already broken down the growing material, so it is ready to enhance compost or garden soil.

Growing mushrooms at home is a fun, easy, and rewarding way to continue harvesting fresh produce throughout the year. Whether looking to add flavor to home-cooked meals or wanting to try a new gardening experience, a mushroom kit is an excellent investment.

Andrea Knepper is a UVM Extension Master Gardener volunteer from Fayston.



The result of an at-home mushroom kit is to harvest gourmet mushrooms. photo by Andrea Knepper



Hazen Union staff (from left) Jason Bahner, Joe Fiorentino, Joel Heller, Maxfield English, Evan Chartier, Josh Fox, Jennifer Luck-Hill, Amanda Munson and Michelle Fox team up for the tug of war event during the school's Winter Carnival held February 20. photo by Vanessa Fournier

IN THE GARDEN



Research suggests that just taking time to view leaves on plants like this *Monstera deliciosa* and other natural elements can help reduce stress and stimulate curiosity.
photo by Debra Heleba



The dazzling colors and textures of Rex begonias can bring visual interest to your home or work and lift spirits during the winter months.
photo by Debra Heleba

Fight winter blues with plants

by Deborah J. Benoit

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. – Adding a bit of greenery to surroundings might help chase winter blues away. Each year, shorter daylight hours and colder temperatures send many retreating indoors. Less exposure to sunlight brings with it reduced levels of Vitamin D and a potential imbalance in bodies of serotonin and melatonin, hormones important in controlling stress and regulating sleep.

For millions of people, dealing

with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), also popularly known as the winter blues, is no joke. It might manifest itself as a lack of energy and motivation, poor sleep quality, trouble getting out of bed in the morning, even general grumpiness. Some suffer from mental fatigue or are unable to concentrate.

According to the theory of biophilia, humans are drawn to connect with nature. Depriving ourselves of such interaction can harm our well-being. Adding plants to rooms at home or work is one way to help cope with SAD and it's a natural choice for gardeners.

Houseplants beautify indoor spaces and lift spirits year-round. During the winter months, houseplants can serve therapeutic roles as well. Just as going for a walk in the woods or tending the garden can help boost moods, so can caring for houseplants.

Those with an interest in a particular plant, such as African violets (*Saintpaulia*), might consider adding a pot or two near a sunny window. A larger plant such as a Meyer lemon (*Citrus x limon* "Meyer") provides a visually pleasing focal point in a room, while caring for it becomes a relaxing routine. Potted herbs under a grow light in the kitchen are both fragrant and satisfying to use when cooking.

Caring for houseplants provides a quiet time to relax and unwind. They can reconnect one to nature during months when lush, green gardens and parks are sleeping beneath a blanket of snow. The simple, mindful routine of watering houseplants, cleaning dust from their foliage, pruning or rotating pots can help focus thoughts and reduce stress. Sharing space with plants provides more than a visual link with nature. Caring for them can help reduce anxiety, ease mental fatigue and increase attention and cognitive performance.

Even potting soil has benefits.

Research has shown that *Mycobacterium vaccae*, a bacterium in soil, may prompt the release of serotonin in the body to reduce anxiety and stress and acts as an antidepressant.

Houseplants can help relieve stress by reducing the amount of cortisol (a stress hormone) in the body. Caring for houseplants stimulates the senses of sight, smell, touch and taste if you're growing edibles such as a tray of salad greens. The fragrance of flowering plants like jasmine (*Jasminum polyanthum*) can make a room smell like springtime.

Including plants in home décor may also help improve air quality. During photosynthesis, plants take in carbon dioxide and release oxygen into the air. In addition, a 1989 NASA Clean Air Study suggests that some common houseplants such as the peace lily (*Spathiphyllum*) can help reduce the amount of contaminants in the air.

Spend some quality time tending to houseplants, then bundle up and step outside into the sunshine. It won't be long before spring is in the air.

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.



David Perrigo (right) of West Glover was once again the Master of Ceremonies for the Curds and Curling Cheesy Winter Competition, Saturday at the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro. photo by Vanessa Fournier

Thanks

for saying
you saw it in the
Hardwick Gazette

hardwickgazette.org



OUR COMMUNITIES

“The Farm Boy” screening, March 1

GREENSBORO – The Greensboro Historical Society hosts a screening of “The Farm Boy” at Fellowship Hall at 2 p.m., March 1.

“The Farm Boy” is a WW II-era love story written and directed by Vermont farmer-filmmaker

George Woodard. During intermission, Woodard will discuss the stories and research that inspired the film.

Admission is free and refreshments will be served. All are welcome.

Drinks for democracy, March 3

HARDWICK – Drinks for democracy will take place March 3, after town meeting, from 6 to 8

p.m., at the Cork and Fork Restaurant. The event is sponsored by Indivisible Hardwick.

Registration open for Organic Dairy Producers Conference, March 6

RANDOLPH – The University of Vermont Extension Northwest Crops and Soils Program will hold the 2026 Vermont Organic Dairy Producers Conference, Friday, March 6, from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The one-day event will take place at the Vermont State University’s Randolph campus, Judd Hall. Through a series of panel discussions, farmers will share their experiences and researchers will provide project updates. Discussions will cover everything from cow behavior to production cost trends to managing forage.

Register online at go.uvm.edu/2026organicdairy or by phone by calling the UVM Non-Credit Registration Office at (802) 656-8407 by March 2. In-person registration opens at 9 a.m. on the day of the event.

To view the flyer click Vermont Organic Dairy Producers Conference (uvmd10.drup2.uvm.edu/d10-files/documents/2026-02/2026-Organic-Dairy-Producers-Conf-2page-flyer-FINAL.pdf).

For an accommodation related to a disability, please contact UVM Student Accessibility Service at access@uvm.edu or (802) 656-7753 as soon as possible.

For more info contact carol@bramblewoodmusic@gmail.com

Carol and Doc performance, March 7

PLAINFIELD – Central Vermont’s Carol Hausner and Jonathan “Doc” Kaplan will play traditional music at the Plainfield Granary,

Saturday, March 7, from 7 to 9 p.m., at 153 Main Street in Plainfield.

For more info contact carol@bramblewoodmusic@gmail.com

Group sing, March 8

CRAFTSBURY – On Sunday, March 8, the Craftsbury Public Library, will host a houghtonany group sing from 4 to 6 p.m.,

with Don Houghton.

“Rise Up Singing” songbooks will be provided and all are welcome.

Secretary of State, March 11

MONTPELIER – On Wednesday, March 11, at 7 p.m., the League of Women Voters of Vermont (LWVVT) will present Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland-Hanzas who will discuss two bills now before Congress: the SAVE Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act. The former, which has passed the House, would require proof of United

States citizenship to register an individual to vote in elections for Federal office. The John R. Lewis Act would modernize and revitalize the Voting Rights Act of 1965, strengthening legal protections against discriminatory voting policies and practices.

This will be a virtual presentation. Visit the lwvofvt.org for registration information.



A temporary bridge that workers will use during reconstruction of a retaining wall along Main Street between the Village Restaurant and the former swinging bridge, is placed across the river awaiting its spring installation.

photo by Paul Fixx

Woodbury Mountain presentation

WOODBURY – Thursday, March 12, beginning at 6:30 p.m., field biologist Sophie Ehrhardt and Jason Mazurowski of the Northeast Wilderness Preserve will offer a presentation on the Woodbury

Mountain Wilderness Preserve in the Woodbury Community Room at the library. This event is a collaboration between the Woodbury Conservation Commission and the Woodbury Community Library.

Annual Pie Breakfast, auction, March 14

WOODBURY – The Woodbury Community Library Pie Breakfast and silent auction is scheduled for Saturday, March 14, from 8 to 10:30 a.m., in the Woodbury Elementary School gymnasium. The auction closes at 10 a.m. There is elevator access available on the premises. In the event of inclement weather, the

pie breakfast will be held on Sunday, March 15.

The pie breakfast and silent auction is a fundraising event for the library. Tickets are available at the door. More information can be found at woodbury-communitylibrary.wordpress.com/2026/02/04/23rd-annual-pie-breakfast-and-silent-auction.

EDUCATION

CCV Announces Fall 2025 Student Honors List

MONTPELIER — Students at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) named to the fall 2025 Student Honors list are Charlotte Cloutier, Noah Haveson, Kristina McIntosh and Stefany Trautner of

Hardwick; Marie Barney, Shannon Cookson, Alanna Flynn of Marshfield; and Joann Marckres of Woodbury. This honor recognizes part-time students with a 4.0 grade point average.

CCV announces fall 2025 Deans List

MONTPELIER — The following students at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) were named to the fall 2025 Dean’s List: Seville Murphy of

Calais and Alexis Christensen of Hardwick. This honor recognizes full-time students with a grade point average between 3.5 and 3.99.

CCV Announces Fall 2025 President’s List

MONTPELIER — Students at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) named to the fall 2025 President’s List are Cheyenne Herdling

of Cabot and Khamden Luangrath of Hardwick. This honor recognizes full-time students with a 4.0 grade point average.

Hardwick Large furnished bedroom and shared half-bath available in spacious 1800s farmhouse. Plant enthusiast seeking housemate interested in sharing occasional company, occasional shared meals. \$500 per month plus \$50 utilities. No smoking. Pets considered. (802) 863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO.

EDUCATION

School radon testing results mixed

by Paul Fixx

VERMONT – Auditor Douglas R. (Doug) Hoffer released information on February 19, about research his department has done on radon testing in schools. “Vermont schools should be healthy and safe environments in which to learn and work,” he said.

The Vermont Legislature passed and the Governor signed into law a bill which required all public and approved independent schools to test for radon. In 2022 a second bill extended the testing deadline to June 30, 2025.

Hoffer reported, “The radon testing legislation did not include a reporting requirement. As a result, the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and the Agency of Education do not have a comprehensive list of which schools complied with the requirement or the testing results. In order to determine how this public health initiative rolled out, I asked my staff to look into it.”

That research discovered 206 (69%) public schools had completed radon testing by June 30, 2025, as required.

By January 31, 12 more schools had completed the testing, raising those tested to 73%.

Twenty schools had radon levels at or above the EPA recommended action level of 4.0 pCi/L.

In this area, all Orleans South Supervisory Union (OSSU) schools are reported to have been tested with only Craftsbury Elementary School reporting a test above the recommended action level, with a reading of 4.4 in the unoccupied basement.

People’s Academy in Morrisville tested two areas with elevated radon levels: A reading of 7.0 was found in a sub-basement storage and a reading of 4.3 in a gym trainer’s office.

Area schools that Hoffer reported haven’t performed testing include Cabot School, Danville School, Twinfield Union School and Walden Elementary School.

“The statute required schools to make the radon measurement results available to each employee and student at the school, although it did not specify how that should be done,” said Hoffer.

“Methods varied. Some schools sent letters to all families, some included the information in newsletters and others posted the information on school websites. However, the report indicated “many schools that tested

did not provide us with documentation that they provided any notification.”

Hoffer’s role as Vermont State Auditor is to act as the chief watchdog for taxpayers, ensuring state government accountability, efficiency and transparency. The office identifies waste, fraud and abuse through various kinds of audit, while evaluating if state programs effectively use public funds.

In his report, Hoffer said, “The state did not require schools to report the results of the radon testing. Collecting state-wide data and analyzing trends is important for evaluating radon safety in Vermont schools. It also provides opportunities for data-driven decision making and increased accountability and transparency.

He suggested requiring schools to report testing results to VDH.

“While we intended to gather information on all schools required by statute, we were able to identify lessons learned after contacting the public schools,” said Hoffer.

“We encourage VDH to reach out to the approved independent schools who are also required to complete radon testing to verify their compliance with statute.”

Hoffer recommended clarifying how stakeholders should be notified. “While some schools chose to notify staff and students, some interpreted the statute to mean results merely need to be made available upon request. Transparent communication is a key aspect to building community trust and maintaining healthy and safe schools,” he said.

Hoffer concluded by saying, “I want to acknowledge my staff who conducted this research and the many school officials who complied with this important public health requirement.”

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in rocks, soil, and water that has no color, smell, or taste. While radon is present in outdoor air, radon levels can build up inside buildings. Unless a radon test is performed, there is no way of knowing if radon is present in a building. Breathing air with radon increases the risk of developing lung cancer and is the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States after cigarette smoke. Its presence in school buildings poses risks to the adult staff who work in the schools year after year, and to children whose developing lungs can lead to higher absorption levels.



Craftsbury Academy students Lillian Allen (left) and Cosmos Gletsos received Gold Key Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for their exceptional artistic and literary talent. photo montage courtesy Craftsbury Academy

Academy students win Gold Key Awards

by Craftsbury Schools Staff

CRAFTSBURY – Two Craftsbury Academy students, Lillian Allen (12) and Kosmos Gletsos (11, Green Mountain Technology and Career Center), are among 167 young artists and writers from across Vermont who have been recognized by the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards for exceptional artistic and literary talent.

Both Allen and Gletsos received Gold Key Awards for their artistic work. Allen is one of three seniors statewide who were awarded Gold Keys for their writing portfolios (collections of six works). Gletsos received his Gold Key for photography.

Allen’s portfolio will now be entered into consideration for the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards’ highest honor, a Portfolio Gold Medal, 16 of which will be awarded nationwide in both art and writing. Winners of Portfolio Gold Medals receive scholarship awards of \$12,500.

Reflecting on connecting themes in her portfolio, Allen shared, “The pieces connect in the sense that they are stories I felt were missing from the shelves. There is a little bit of me in everything I write, so they are also all connected in that way, too.” She added, “As for the most meaningful piece to me, it is probably “Burning Betrayal” because it is the piece I’m the most proud of, and the one that I had the most fun writing.”

Allen also credits her Vermont roots as an influence on her storytelling. “I feel like there are definitely elements of Vermont that have affected my writing. The most obvious case being in Big Poppy, where I wrote about a hunting trip up in Maine. While not taking place in Vermont, it has family traditions, superstitions, and is written through the eyes of someone born and raised here.”

Reflecting on his work, Gletsos shared, “I love taking photos of things

that inspire me and having the ability to create my own environments. I’m especially passionate about using the sky to outline my subjects, keeping as much detail as possible in the clouds to make my photos more compelling. Color is also something I pay close attention to; I try to capture scenes with more interesting and dynamic color palettes than usual.”

The students’ award-winning writing and artwork will be exhibited at the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center from February 20 to March 6. An awards ceremony will take place at the museum Saturday, March 7, at noon, where Allen will read an excerpt from “Burning Betrayal.” Gletsos hopes to attend, pending any schedule conflicts. The ceremony is free and open to the public, and doors open at 10 a.m. Cartoonist and illustrator Harry Bliss will deliver the keynote address.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is a national recognition program for aspiring visual artists and writers. Each year, students in grades 7 to 12 are invited to submit art and writing in dozens of categories, including ceramics, digital art, painting, photography, poetry, science fiction and personal essay/memoir. Submissions are judged on a statewide level, with the top award winners then considered for national awards, including college scholarships, museum exhibitions and publication opportunities.

A list of all Vermont award winners (Gold Key, Silver Key, and Honorable Mention) is posted at brattleboromuseum.org. National awards will be announced in June.

Since its founding in 1923, the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards have helped launch the careers of Truman Capote, Lena Dunham, Stephen King, Sylvia Plath, John Updike and Andy Warhol, among many others.

EDUCATION

Craftsbury Academy receives grant to launch rocketry club

by Lisa Stinson

CRAFTSBURY – The countdown has begun for the newly formed Craftsbury Comets Rocketry Club, which recently announced it is the recipient of a \$1,000 Northrop Grumman Foundation STEM Innovation Grant through the American Rocketry Challenge (ARC). The grant will fund materials and tools needed for students to design, build and launch a competition-ready rocket this spring.

The Northrop Grumman Foundation STEM Innovation Grant Program supports first-time teams from designated Title I schools competing in the American Rocketry Challenge. In addition to \$1,000 in funding, the grant includes a starter kit with competition guidance, supply resources, safety information and the 2026 rules, as well as mentorship from professionals affiliated with the National Association of Rocketry and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics.

The Craftsbury Comets meet Mondays from 5 to 6 p.m., and the club is open to interested students. Those wishing to join may contact club advisor, Ben Luce.

Luce brings experience in physics and research to the program. He holds a Ph.D. in physics and spent 14 years as a research scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, where he conducted research in nonlinear dynamics and oversaw renewable energy research. He served as a professor of physics at what is now Vermont State University for 15 years, teaching courses in physics,

acoustics, electricity and electronics, and renewable energy.

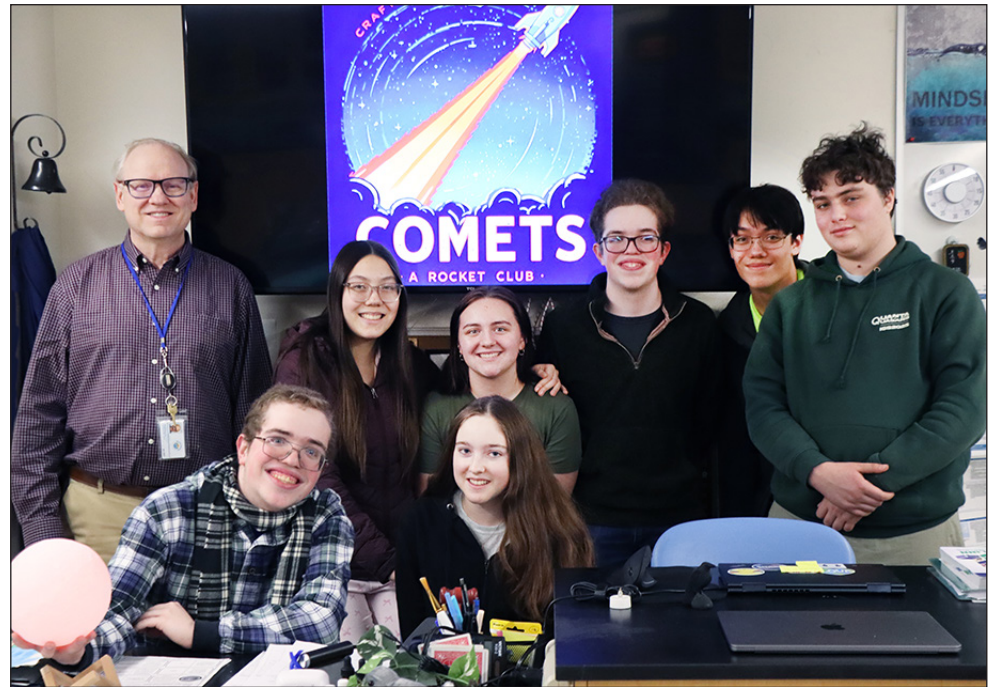
In addition to Luce’s leadership, the club is being supported by mentor Ken Matzner, who is consulting with the team as they design, build and test their rocket. Matzner’s guidance provides students with additional technical insight as they prepare for competition.

“The Rocketry Club is a great vehicle (pun intended!) for the students to explore a wide variety of aerospace engineering and science questions, develop their skills with tools like 3D modeling and flight simulation tools, and have a lot of fun in the process,” said Luce. “The grant was needed to enable the club to purchase many different materials to assemble the rocket, as well as a flight simulation program. We’re grateful for the support!”

Eleventh grader Raz Mille, who has been interested in space and engineering since childhood, described the club’s beginnings with humor and enthusiasm. “The rocketry club started with the question: ‘How can we blow stuff up and get school approval for it?’ What started as a small group of people who wanted to blow things up turned into a larger group of kids genuinely interested in how to create rockets.

As a group, we started researching the national rocketry challenge and decided that we wanted to create a functional rocket and compete in the challenge. We are now on our way towards our first real rocket launch and are very excited to see where things go next.”

Reilly Gerhard looks forward to building engineering skills



Members of the Craftsbury Comets rocketry club include, front (all from left) Parker Holcomb (12), Nora Van Gulden (10); back, club advisor and high school math teacher Ben Luce, Arwen Alexander (11), Eva Small (11), Tucker Holcomb (12), Theo Alexander (11), and Raz Mille (11). Not pictured is Reilly Gerhard (11).

courtesy photo

through the club. “I enjoy the science and engineering aspect of the club, even though we haven’t fully reached that stage yet.”

The team is preparing to meet the 2026 American Rocketry Challenge requirements, designing a rocket that carries one raw Grade A Large egg (55 to 63 grams) in any

orientation to 750 feet and returning it safely to Earth uncracked within 36 to 39 seconds.

The team will continue meeting throughout the winter and spring as members finalize their design, conduct test launches, and prepare for official competition flights under the 2026 challenge guidelines.



An all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner fundraiser, held to support a Panama Service Learning Trip by Spanish Language students, featured a menu of salads and vegetables, a Jasper Hill cheese board, Patchwork Bakery bread, spaghetti with gluten free and vegan sauce options, and homemade desserts. Volunteers helping with the meal are (from left) World Language Teacher Kay Freedy, Trevor Smith, Nathan Hayden, Sophia Foster, Brianna Holbrook and Marina Smith. More info about Hazen’s Panama Service Trip is at hazen.ossu.org/en-US/international-programs/panama. photo by Paul Fixx



At the Hazen Union School Winter Wellness Fair, Senior Chloe Dyer (left) and Ashley Gravel, owner of Wild Magnolia, and “A Window Between Worlds” facilitator, create a “Focus Stone” while promoting an alternative to traditional therapy using art. photo by Abrah Griggs

Walden Share spacious rural home with Christian man in his 90s seeking evening company, overnight presence, cleaning, occasional errands, some shoveling. No substance use. Zero rent, max. \$200 utility share. Large bedroom, private bath on upper level. Cat considered.

(802) 863-5625 or HomeShareVermont.org for application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO.

EDUCATION



Hyla Thompson, fifth-grade student at Craftsbury School, served as co-moderator at a mock town meeting, February 16. *courtesy photo*

Craftsbury students hold mock town meeting

On Monday, Feb. 16, democracy was on display as Craftsbury students held a mock town meeting, learning how voices are critical to the school community.

The meeting was facilitated by Jeannine Young, Craftsbury Town Moderator, and by student Co-Moderator, Hyla Thompson, fifth-grade student.

Craftsbury town officials, including Town Clerk Michelle Warren, supported the event.

Students opened with the Pledge of Allegiance and community member, Don Houghton, led students in a song all about town meeting.

Thompson, called the meeting to order with a gavel.

The students were presented with two articles to hold discussion and vote on.

First, they decided whether to dedicate the day of May 29 to

planting the school garden instead of the already scheduled community service activity of greening up the Minden playground and painting the fence on the Common. Students discussed various pros and cons of each experience, including asking if they could paint the Common fence blue.

In the end, an amendment to the article was proposed by Lincoln Robillard, fourth grade, and students voted to split the afternoon between both community service activities.

Second, students weighed the decision of using the \$100 currently allocated for ice cream-making for field day to instead be used to buy supplies for grades three to five dedicated to an art project. After much discussion, including the importance of having a cool treat on a hot day, students voted to continue with ice cream making this year.

OBITUARIES

Georgia Myer

SHELBURNE – Georgia Myer, age 72, a fierce, fearless and independent soul, finally found freedom from Alzheimer’s as she passed away on Thursday, Feb. 5, at the Arbors Memory Care facility in Shelburne. She was born in New York City and was raised between San Francisco, Calif. and Princeton, N.J. She graduated from Bennington College where she not only earned her BFA but also fell in love with Vermont, residing there for the past 35 years.

Artist, kayaker, accountant, writer, scuba diver: Georgia had many talents. Acerbic at times, she was a person with a big heart and a wicked sense of humor. She will be missed by her sisters Ginny Kester (Greg) and Jody Myer - Lynch (Tom Lynch), and many beloved nephews, nieces, great-nieces and -nephew, cousins and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, Sam and Fefa Myer, and her husband Patrick Farmer.

Georgia was a big personality who made the world more exciting.



Georgia Myer

We take solace in knowing that she will once again know no boundaries. We would like to thank the staff at the Arbors for their wonderful care and compassion for Georgia for the past two years. If one would like to honor Georgia, the family asks to please remember her through a charitable contribution to the arts or Alzheimer’s research. There will be a private celebration of life.

OUR E-MAILS
ads@hardwickgazette.org
news@hardwickgazette.org



Please join us for a
CELEBRATION OF LIFE
Ellen Bryant Voigt
 SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH, 2026
 1:00 PM
 ALUMNI HALL, 45 COLLEGE ST.,
 MONTPELIER, VT 05602
 Reception to follow

The
**Hardwick
 Gazette**

Independent
 local news
 since 1889.



now free online at hardwickgazette.org

Woodard discusses films, farms and more

REVIEWS

by David K. Rodgers

GREENSBORO – George Woodard of Waterbury Center gave a fascinating talk about his life as a dairy farmer, an actor and filmmaker in the Fellowship Hall of the United Church of Christ in Greensboro on Saturday afternoon, Feb. 21, sponsored by the Greensboro Free Library. He described it as a kind of pot luck of personal history combined with film clips and stills.

His grandfather was born in 1888; with his parents he came to Vermont from New Hampshire and acquired the present farm where George now lives in 1912. George's father, Walt, inherited the farm and milked cows until 1961. George had two brothers and a sister. His brother Steve becoming a veterinarian. George himself started up the farm again in 1975 and had a small herd of about 25 cows for roughly forty-five years until recently.

He got interested in films from watching one picture in particular, entitled "The Miracle of Paradise Valley" and then became entranced by cowboy movies on television, especially "Gunsmoke" with Marshall Matt Dylan (James Arness), at the same time, when he was in high school he became attracted to live theatre and acting with the Lamoille County Players at the Hyde Park Opera House, under the inspired mentorship of Steve Hall, who was director for decades, taking roles in numerous productions. He went to Vermont Technical College in Randolph and

spent three years in Los Angeles as an actor in low budget films before returning to Vermont.

There was a musical background in his family, his father playing the guitar. With his brothers, he had a band that in 1974 won a contest in Barre against forty other Vermont bands. Later, for a number of years, he had his own entertaining variety show, "The Ground Hog Opry." He also began making short films, some humorous skits, utilizing young relatives and actors, as well as documenting the daily work of a typical dairy farm, like haying and milking the cows.

He got his son, Henry, used to being in front of the camera from as early as age four, later teaching him to be a camera man and write his own plots. Henry himself became an excellent fiddle player. By the time he was 10 or 11, George felt Henry was ready to star in his first full-length feature film, "The Summer of Walter Hacks," as he had simultaneously developed acting skills.

A major part of George's talk gave deep insights into his creative process of making a film, with many clips of how he shot different scenes in "The Summer of Walter Hacks" that gives it the beautiful and powerful flow of montage that is the essence of great films. In the chase episode of the later part of the movie, there is tremendous tension as Henry on his bicycle is trying to escape the villain in his truck. George had to use a number of various supports for his camera in addition to the regular tripod, such as rolling dollies, hand-held manipulation, platforms attached to moving vehicles or even laying on the hood and running boards of



George Woodard speaks about being a dairy farmer, actor and his filmmaking career to community members in the Greensboro United Church of Christ Fellowship Hall on Saturday afternoon. photo by Bianca Caputo

a truck, involving some danger.

All of these camera angles and sequences had to be worked out beforehand through his creative imagination, to dovetail with the plot and enhance the drama, an impressive amount of improvisation and problem solving to achieve his original vision.

Finding appropriate vintage sites ("The Summer of Walter Hacks" was set in the early 1950s) for background, building special rooms for certain scenes, matting out certain features and adding others, changing the camera light filter to simulate the passing of the day and playing with special lighting effects all required a command of detail in technology and experience. Add to this the writing of the script with meaningful dialogue and engaging in momentum, assembling a cast of competent actors and actresses who are totally convincing in their roles and being a cameraman who can frame the shots with a sense of proportion and composition and celebrate the richness of black-gray-white tones, all this is quite astonishing for one person to

accomplish and result in a unified work of art.

George's second feature film, "The Farm Boy," released in 2023, is set in the mid 1940s, first in Vermont and then at the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardenne Forest towards the German border, also starring his son Henry. It will be shown in the Fellowship Hall of the United Church of Christ in Greensboro this coming Sunday afternoon, March 1, at 2 p.m., sponsored by the Greensboro Historical Society as a prelude to their exhibition, The Homefront in Vermont During World War II, to be held this coming summer. Don't miss this terrific film.

George is currently working on another major film based on rum-running in Vermont during prohibition in the 1920s. He had also written and illustrated a children's book on mysterious happenings in a cow barn on Christmas Eve, and is finishing up another book on a boy haying and encountering various animals.

For more information, go to HangingMudFlapsProductions.com



Hazen Union sophomore Ava Gallison (left) and senior Julia des Groseilliers (right) arm wrestle during Winter Carnival activities Friday.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Walden Heights Nursery & Orchard

Workshops - Sunday, March 29

Pruning Fruit Trees
Learn all you need to know to successfully prune for tree health and increase fruit production.

Fruit Tree Grafting
Learn various grafting techniques & take home 2 or more trees.

For more information or make a reservation, visit WaldenHeightsNursery.com or call (802) 563-3012

Cold hardy fruit trees & plants	More than 350 varieties of apple trees	Consultations & Orchard Mentoring	Fruit CSA & Farmstand
---------------------------------	--	-----------------------------------	-----------------------

Curds and Curling, Saturday, February 21



Thirty-two teams participated in the 4th annual Curds and Curling competition at the Highland Center for the Arts (HCA) in Greensboro, February 21. An estimated crowd of 730 people attended the event sponsored by Jasper Hill and HCA. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Ruth Leech, of Underhill, carefully aims for the target before releasing a cheesy curling stone during the Curds and Curling tournament held Saturday at the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro. photo by Vanessa Fournier



Juggler Rob Crites of Gravity Cirque entertained the crowd inside and out during the 4th annual Curds and Curling tournament Saturday at the Highland center for the Arts in Greensboro. Enjoying the entertainment are the Bent family of Peacham, (from left) Florence, 2; her dad Peter; her brother Gus, 4 and mom, Meagan who is carrying Sylvia, 2 months in her coat.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Irish traditional band Dervish performs March 14



Dervish, an Irish traditional band, including (from left) Michael Holmes (bouzouki), Liam Kelly (flute, whistles), Cathy Jordan (vocals, bodhran), Shane Mitchell (accordion) and Tom Morrow (fiddle), performs at the Barre Opera House, March 14. courtesy photo

BARRE – One of Ireland’s traditional groups, Dervish, will be at the Barre Opera House, March 14, at 7:30 p.m.

Originating from County Sligo, Ireland, Dervish features some of the country’s finest traditional musicians, fronted by vocalist and bodhrán player Cathy Jordan, winner of the TG4 (the Irish Public television station) “Singer of the Year Award” in 2024.

Dervish’s touring history, includes performances at festivals

like Rock in Rio, where they played to an audience of 250,000, and Glastonbury. They’ve also served as cultural ambassadors, accompanying Irish leaders on state visits and even performing an impromptu session on the Great Wall of China.

Tickets may be ordered online at barreoperahouse.org or call the Barre Opera House at (802) 476-8188. The Opera House, at 6 North Main Street in Barre, is handicapped accessible and equipped for the hearing impaired.

BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Flooring



Mon. - Fri., 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Sat., 9 a.m. - noon
"Quality You Can Stand On"
454-7301, Hollister Hill,
Plainfield

Laundry



Self-serve • Open daily 6 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Drop-off service available, call Derek, (802) 793-7388

Martial Arts



Offering
Jiu Jitsu to kids ages 4-15 and Karate for ages 4 to Adult. First class is free to try!
802-282-8215 (Adam)
adambeckley87@gmail.com
martialartsinhardwickvt.com

Moving



RELOCATING?
• household • commercial
CALL KASEY
(802) 223-5434
LOCAL PENSKE AGENT
55 YEARS MOVING EXPERIENCE

Plumbing



LICENSED & INSURED
HOLMES PLUMBING
Glenside St., RFD 1, Hardwick, VT 05843
Josh Holmes • 472-6228

Restaurants



The Village Restaurant
Home Cooking at Its Best
74 South Main St., Hardwick
(802) 472-5701
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
Daily, 6 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Tree Work



(802) 595-1448
Pruning • Removals
• Danger trees
• Cabeling
Firewood • Logging
View enhancement
Free estimates
Fully insured
jacob.clark@peregrinetreework.com
Peregrinetreework.com

Services



Septic Tank Pumping • Line Jetting & Thawing
Water Treatment • Pump Sales & Service
Aggregate- Gravel & Stone Products
Pond Aeration
24/7 Emergency Service
120 NORTHGATE PLAZA, SUITE 2 MORRISVILLE
802.888.5722 | MANOSH.COM

Services



Septic Tank Pumping • Line Jetting & Thawing
Camera Inspection • Hydro-Vac Services
Catch Basin Cleaning • Lift Station Maintenance
24/7 Emergency Service
120 NORTHGATE PLAZA, SUITE 2 MORRISVILLE
802.888.5722 | MANOSH.COM

Services



• Dumpster rental
• Excavation
• Landscaping
• Stump Grinding
dwrichardson1999@gmail.com

EVENTS

Wednesday, Feb. 25

Pizza and movie, 1 to 4 p.m., for ages 5 and up, Cabot Public Library. Pre-registration is appreciated. Information, cabotlibrary.com/.

"Woodbury Through the Eyes of a Forester," 6 to 8 p.m., Woodbury Community Library, presented by Stephen Slayton, former Vermont County Forester.

"From Earth to Earth," a short documentary discussing natural burial in Vermont, 6 p.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library, Parker Ladd Community Room, 93 N. Main St., Hardwick. Information: jeudevinememoriallibrary.org or (802) 472-5948.

Thursday, Feb. 26

Book group, 2 to 3 p.m., Cabot Library, "All About Me! My Remarkable Life in Show Business" by Mel Brooks. Information: cabotlibrary@yahoo.com.

Basketball, 5:30 p.m., Twinfield junior varsity boys vs. Williamstown at Twinfield.

Basketball, 5:30 p.m., Hazen Union boys junior varsity basketball at U-32.

Basketball, 7 p.m., Twinfield varsity boys vs. Williamstown at Twinfield.

Basketball, 7 p.m., Hazen Union boys varsity basketball at U-32.

Saturday, Feb. 28

Bowling, 9 a.m., Craftsbury Academy bowling team at Sparetime, Colchester, state tournament.

Sunday, March 1

Film, 2 p.m., Fellowship Hall, Greensboro Church of Christ, "The Farm Boy," hosted by the Greensboro Historical Society. Refreshments served. All welcome.

Tuesday, March 3

Blood Drive, by the American Red Cross, 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Hazen Union School, Hardwick. To make an appointment, call (800) 733-2767 or visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter Hardwick.

Drinks for democracy, after town meeting, 6 to 8 p.m., Cork and Fork Restaurant, Hardwick. Sponsored by Indivisible Hardwick.

Saturday, March 7

Bowling, 10 a.m., Craftsbury Academy bowling team at Maple Lanes, Claremont, N.H., Senior Classic.

Music, 7 to 9 p.m., Plainfield Granary, 153 Main St., Plainfield. Carol & Doc, playing originals and songs of Alan Greenleaf on guitar, mandolin and piano. Information: carolbramble-woodmusic@gmail.com.

Sunday, March 8

Group sing, 4 to 6 p.m., Craftsbury Public Library. Rise Up Singing songbooks provided. All are welcome.

Wednesday, March 11

Discussion, 7 p.m., virtual presentation of Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland-Hanzas discussing the SAVE Act and the John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, 7 p.m. Presented by the League of Women Voters of Vermont. Virtual presentation. To register go to <https://bit.ly/JLewisandSAVEAct>

Ongoing Wednesdays

Pilates, 9 a.m., mat level 2, at the Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Chair Yoga, 9 a.m., Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

Office hours, 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. John The Baptist Episcopal Church, 39 W. Church St., Hardwick. Information, (802) 472-5979.

Historical Society, 10 a.m. – noon, Craftsbury.

Parents of Challenging Children, 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., first Wednesday of month, support group for adoptive parents of children presenting serious emotional and behavioral challenges, Easter Seals Vermont, 641 Comstock Road, Berlin. Information, (802) 223-4744.

Outdoor Story, Activity, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Cabot Recreation Field Pavilion with the Cabot Public Library's Amanda Otto for stories, songs, snacks, crafts, open play and special programming.

Parenting Group, 10:30 - 11:30 a.m., Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Caregivers can relax and connect with each others while their babies play. Geared toward babies to 18 months. Siblings invited. Information at jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

Book-lovers social, 10:30 a.m. to noon, every first Wednesday morning, at the Craftsbury Public Library. Sharing books, authors or books new to the library collection, no assigned reading. Tea and coffee, handwork projects welcome.

Brain Injury support group, 1 - 2:30 p.m., second Wednesday of month, Vermont Department of Health, 107 Eastern Ave., Suite 9, St. Johnsbury, hosted by The Vermont Center for Independent Living. Information, (800) 639-1522 or tyoungkman@vcil.org.

Quilters, 1-4 p.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library, the second and

See EVENTS, Next Page

EVENTS

fourth Wednesday of the month. All levels welcome.

Acudetox, 4 p.m., ear Acupuncture, good for anxiety, depression, various organ supports, North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, 802-851-8120.

Community Supper, 5:30 p.m., The Civic Standard, S. Main St., Hardwick.

Food Shelf, 5 to 6:30 p.m, fourth Wednesday, , 49 Valley Lake Road, South Woodbury. Information, (802) 472-6292.

Al-Anon, 5:30 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

TOPS (Take Off Pounds Sensibly), 3:30 - 6:30 p.m. Weigh-in at 5:15 p.m. United Church dining room, Hardwick.

Death Cafe, 6 p.m., second Wednesday of month, Albany Public Library, 830 Main St. Information: (802) 755-6107, albanypubliclibraryvt.org.

Jam Session, 6 to 8 p.m., J.W. Simpson Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road, East Craftsbury. All ages and abilities. Old-time jam sessions held on the first and third Wednesdays of each month.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 7 p.m., The Church in Cabot, 2 Common Road. Beginners' and open meeting.

Ongoing Thursdays

Alcoholics Anonymous, 8 - 9 a.m., St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church, West Church St., Hardwick. Literature and open meeting.

Tai Chi, 9:30 - 10:15 a.m., Church of Christ, Greensboro. Advanced Tai Chi taught by Norma Spaulding. Information, (802) 472-8724, nspauld@gmail.com

Arthritis Relief, 10 a.m., Community Center, Hardwick. Exercise class sponsored by the NEK Council on Aging. Information at Sara, Shbeharsing@gmail.com.

Office hours, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., St. Norbert Church, a part of Mary Queen of All Saints Parish, 193 S. Main St., Hardwick, Father Raj Madri. Information, mary-queenofallsaints@comcast.net (802) 472-5544.

Tai Chi, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30, Church of Christ, Greensboro. Qigong and Tai Chi, taught by Norma Spaulding and Paul Fixx. Information at (802) 472-8724, nspauld@gmail.com and (802) 441-4599, pfixx@pfixx.net.

Story Time, 10:30 a.m. preschool, Greensboro Free Library. Information, (802) 533-2531.

Story Time, 10:30 a.m. Jeudevine



Erik Townsend (left) of Westmore playing for the Border 1 team sends a wheel of Jasper Hill cheddar cheese curling stone toward the target at the Curds and Curling tournament, February 21, at Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro. Renee Fuller of Newport is at his immediate right.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Memorial Library, 93 N. Main St., Hardwick. Books, songs, art activities and more for ages 5 and under. Information, jeudevinyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov, (802) 472-5948.

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.

Diabetes support group, 1:30 p.m., The Health Center, Plainfield. third Thursday each month. Information, (802) 322-6600 or dgrabowski@The-Health-Center.org.

Peace Vigil, Thursdays, 2 - 3 p.m., Hardwick Peace Park, S. Main St., Hardwick, (beside the river).

Sign Language, 2 p.m., practice group, John Woodruff Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury. Information at (802) 586-9692 or wsimpsonmemorial.org.

Hang Out, 2:45-6 p.m., The Civic Standard, S. Main St., Hardwick. Relax, make art, play games, get help with homework, 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.

Refuge Recovery, 3 p.m. Thursdays, North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

All Recovery, 4 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Craftfit, 4:30 p.m., Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

Taming Knotweed, 4:30 p.m., Town Highway 19 across from Little Hosmer Dam. Bring water, bug spray, gloves, assorted clippers, shovels. Craftsbury Conservation Commission.

Dance, 5:30 p.m., Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Prayer Service, 5:30 p.m., Touch of Grace Assembly of God, corner of Rtes. 15 and 16, E. Hardwick. Information, touchofgraceagvt@gmail.com

Grief Support, 5:30 to 6:30 p.m., first and third Tuesday of each month, a safe, confidential space to can share a story or be surrounded by those who understand and care, Lamoille Home Health & Hospice Building, 54 Farr Avenue, Morrisville.

Information, Oona Lee at (802) 888-4651 or olee@lhha.org.

Trivia, 6 - 8 p.m., Village Restaurant, S. Main St., Hardwick, unless there is a home basketball game. Limited menu of burgers and appetizers. Hosted by Annie Houston. First come, first serve event, with room for about 10 teams.

Al-Anon, 6 p.m., Church on the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Services, 6:30 p.m., Hardwick Bible Baptist Church, 296 S. Main St. For transportation or information, (802) 472-5294.

Narcotics Anonymous, 7 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Film Series, "Glimpses of a Maybe Future," 6:30 p.m., second and fourth Thursdays of the month, Jaquith Public Library, Marshfield. Information: (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

Ongoing Fridays

Pilates, 9 a.m., level 3, at the Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Taiji, 10:15 a.m., intermediate, Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Storytime, Playgroup, 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Information at jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

Homeschool Program, 10:30 a.m., Friday, Greensboro Free Library. Information, (802) 533-2531.

Meditation, 3-3:45 p.m., Craftsbury Community Care Center, 784 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury, the second and fourth Fridays, with Nancy Milholland. Open to all, sponsored by the Mental Health Resource Group of Craftsbury.

Farmers Market, 4 to 7 p.m., 13 Mill St., Plainfield. Food and craft vendors, baked goods, fruits and veggies and more.

Haiku Club, 5:30 - 7 p.m., The Civic Standard, S. Main St., Hardwick, every first Thursday, Read published haiku, brainstorm Vermont kigo, or season words, write a haiku. No previous writing experience needed. Hosted by Mark Scott.

Contra Dance, 7-9:30 p.m., Cabot Town Hall, 3084 Main St., Cabot, second Fridays, through June 7. All dances taught, no partner needed, all welcome. Information, cabotdance@aroundvt.org.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 7 p.m., for women only, North Central Vermont

See EVENTS, Next Page

EVENTS

Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

The Hardwick Gazette at Front Seat Coffee, Fridays, 10 a.m. Visit with Gazette staff.

Ongoing Saturdays

Alcoholics Anonymous, 8:30 a.m., step meeting, North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

History book group, second Saturdays of the month, 2 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, Marshfield. Information: (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com or jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

Food Shelf, 9 to noon, third Saturday of each month from 9 to noon, 49 Valley Lake Road, South Woodbury. Information, (802) 472-6292.

Fiber Arts, 10- 11 a.m., Woodbury Community Library, meets the third Saturday of the month.

Historical Society, 10 a.m. – noon, Craftsbury.

AI-Anon, 10 a.m., Community Justice Center, St. Johnsbury, information, (802) 626-5355.

Overeaters Anonymous, 10 a.m., Zoom meeting, North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Acudetox, 11 a.m., every fourth Saturday, ear acupuncture, good for anxiety, depression, various organ supports, North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information: (802) 851-8120.

Taming Knotweed, 11 a.m., Town Highway 19 across from Little Hosmer Dam. Bring water, bug spray, gloves, assorted clippers, shovels. Craftsbury Conservation Commission

Osteoporosis Education and support group, 1 p.m., first Saturday of month, Better Bones of the Northeast Kingdom, Community Room at Community National Bank, Derby. Information, BetterBonesNEK.org or Mary King at Mary@BetterBonesNEK.org, or (802) 535-2011.

Craffit, 2:30 p.m. Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

Vigil Mass, 4 p.m., St. Norbert Church, a part of Mary Queen of All Saints Parish, 193 S. Main St., Hardwick, Father Raj Madri. Confessions before Mass, Information, mary-queenofallsaints@comcast.net (802) 472-5544.

Contra Dance, 8 - 11 p.m., Capital City Grange, Montpelier. Newcomers lesson at 7:40 p.m. First, third and fifth Saturdays. Information at (802) 225-8921 or cdu.tim@gmail.com

Albany Library Writing Group, first and third Saturdays of the month, 2 to 4 p.m., Albany Public Library, 830 Main St. Information: (802) 755-6107, albanypubliclibraryvt.org.

Ongoing Sundays

Service, 8:30 a.m., United Church of Marshfield, U.S. Rte. 2, worship service and Sunday school, Pastor Carlyle Pierce. Information, (802) 684-2114.

Mass, 8:30 a.m., St. Norbert Church, a part of Mary Queen of All Saints Parish, 193 S. Main St., Hardwick, Father Raj Madri. Confessions before Mass, Information, mary-queenofallsaints@comcast.net (802) 472-5544.

Service, 9 a.m., Danville United Methodist Church, Danville Green, Rev. Henry Cheney. Information, (802) 684-3389.

Sunday School, and prayer, 9 a.m., adults, Touch of Grace Assembly of God, corner of Rtes. 15 and 16, E. Hardwick. Information: touchofgraceagvt@gmail.com

Sunday School, 9 a.m., The Wolcott Mennonite Church, Rte. 15 between Morrisville and Wolcott, for all ages. Information, (802) 888-5277, (802) 888-9113.

Sacrament Meeting, 9 a.m., The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Rte. 15 W, Johnson. Bishop Erik Worthington, (802) 326-3035, mormon.org.

Children's story time, 9:30 a.m., The Christian Community, Heartbeat Lifesharing, 218 Town Farm Road, Hardwick. Information, thechristiancommunityvt@gmail.com.

Service, 9:30 a.m., West Danville United Methodist Church, Vt. Rte. 15, across from Joe's Pond, Pastor Pam Smith. Information, (802) 684-1201.

Service, 9:30 a.m., Hardwick Bible Baptist Church, 296 S. Main St. For transportation or information. (802) 472-5294.

Bible study, 10 a.m., East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church, 1773 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury, VT 05856. Information, (802) 586-7707, ecpcvt@gmail.com, eastcraftsburypresbyterian.org.

Worship, 10 a.m., and Sunday School, Albany Methodist Church, Route 14.,

Service, 10 a.m., United Church of Hardwick, 216 South Main Street. In person, Zoom or livestreaming. Communion Service, first Sunday of month. Rev. Avril Cochran, Pastor. Jean Hackett, music director, an Open and Affirming Congregation. Information, (802) 472-6800 for information.

Service, 10 a.m., United Church

of Cabot, 2 Common Way, refreshments following. Information, (802) 563-2278.

Service, 10 a.m., Touch of Grace Assembly of God, corner of Rtes. 15 and 16, E. Hardwick. Information, touchofgraceagvt@gmail.com

Children's service, 10 a.m., The Christian Community, Heartbeat Lifesharing, 218 Town Farm Road, Hardwick. Information, thechristiancommunityvt@gmail.com.

Service, 10 a.m., St. John The Baptist Episcopal Church, 39 W. Church St., Hardwick. Rite II Service with music and coffee hour following service. Information, (802) 472-5979.

Service, 10 a.m., the United Church of Craftsbury, an Open and Affirming Congregation; Affiliated with the United Church of Christ. Handicap accessible, (802) 586-8028, unitedchurchofcraftsbury.com, unitedchurchcraftsbury@gmail.com.

Service, 10 a.m., the Wolcott Mennonite Church, Rte. 15 between Morrisville and Wolcott, Pastors, : Marlin Wadel and Stephen Groff. Information, (802) 888-9113, (802) 888-5277.

Service, Sunday School, 10:15 a.m., Calais-Woodbury United Church, Rte. 14, South Woodbury. Communion, first Sunday of month. Church phone, (802) 232-1013, information, (802) 456-1557.

Service, 10 a.m., First Universalist

Parish of Derby Line, P.O. Box 454, Derby Line, VT 05830, (802) 873-3563, derbylineuu.org, Zoom service.

Service, 10 a.m., United Church of Christ, 165 Wilson St. 802-533-2223, also online. Communion Service first Sunday of the month. Rev. Dr. Ed Sunday-Winters. Coffee hour following service. An Open & Affirming Congregation. guccvt.org.

Mass, 10:30 a.m., St. Michael's Church, 270 Bend Road, Greensboro Bend, a part of Mary Queen of All Saints Parish, confessions before Mass, Father Raj Madri. Information, (802) 472-5544.

Service, 10:30 a.m., The Act of Consecration of the Human Being, The Christian Community, Heartbeat Lifesharing, 218 Town Farm Road, Hardwick. Information, thechristiancommunityvt@gmail.com.

Service, 10:30 a.m., Hardwick Bible Baptist Church, 296 S. Main St. For transportation or information, (802) 472-5294.

Service, 11 a.m., East Craftsbury Presbyterian Church, 1773 East Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury, VT 05856. Sunday Service, 11 a.m., handicapped accessible. Rev. Joe Welker, Pastor. Information, (802) 586-7707, ecpcvt@gmail.com, eastcraftsburypresbyterian.org.

Service, 11 a.m., First Congregational Church (NACCC),

See EVENTS, Next Page

THE Hardwick Gazette

WE ARE
HIRING

ADVERTISING SALES REPRESENTATIVE

The Hardwick Gazette is seeking qualified interns and experienced sales representatives to join our team selling ads and sponsorships for our digital publication and website.

We will provide training, sales tools, and lead sources. We are as committed to your success as you are; our goal is to have you up and running quickly and building a book of business.

We offer generous commissions paid bi-weekly with mileage reimbursement. The position may be full or part-time depending on the candidate's experience and ability to commit time to the position.

The Gazette sales territory is primarily in Hardwick and extends across the eleven towns we cover, then west to Morrisville, Johnson and Stowe; north to Newport and Derby; south to Barre and Montpelier, and east to the Interstate 91 corridor north and south of St. Johnsbury. One or more sales reps may be offered all or part of the territory.

This is an exciting opportunity to use your communication skills getting to know the businesses and civic organizations in our communities while helping to build a solid financial foundation for the community-owned, nonprofit Hardwick Gazette.

Some sales experience preferred. Must have own vehicle.

Send letter of interest to ads@hardwickgazette.org

EVENTS

123 E. Church St., East Hardwick, worship led by Jim Casavant, interim Pastor. Closed in winter. Information, (414) 856-1620.

Pickleball, 11 a.m., Hardwick Elementary School gym. Beginners group. Information, Sara at Shbeharsing@gmail.com.

Service, 11 a.m., Trinity Assembly of God, Rte. 15 East, Hyde Park. Pastor Ron Doyle. (802) 888-7326.

Fellowship Service, 11 a.m., The Healing Stream Church of God, Wolcott Town Hall, Pastor Peter LaBonnville, Wheelchair accessible.

Spanish Club, 11:30 a.m., Woodbury Community Library, meets the second Saturday of each month.

Worship, 11:30 a.m., Wolcott United Methodist Church, Route 15.

Pickleball, noon, Hardwick Elementary School gym. Intermediate and above, noon to 2 p.m. Information, Sara at Shbeharsing@gmail.com.

Service, noon, Hardwick Bible Baptist Church, 296 S. Main St. For transportation or information, (802) 472-5294.

Mending Circle, 3 to 5 p.m., every third Sunday, The Civic Standard, S. Main St., Hardwick. Bring clothes in need of fixing. Materials, instruction, snacks supplied.

Poetry Readings, third Sunday of each month, 2 to 4 p.m., Jaquith

Public Library. Each reading will feature two Poetry Society of Vermont poets. Information: (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 6 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn Street, Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Evening Service, 7:30 p.m., The Wolcott Mennonite Church, Rte. 15 between Morrisville and Wolcott. Information, (802) 888-5277, (802) 888-9113.

Ongoing Mondays

Pilates, 9 a.m., level 1, at the Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Adaptive Biking, 2 - 3 p.m., the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, beginning at the trailhead parking lot on Creamery Road in Hardwick. Reservations or information, kerry@adaptivesportspartners.org, call (802) 427-4116.

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

Mending, 3 p.m., Craftsbury Public Library.

Quit Tobacco, support group, 3 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Adaptive Biking, 3:30 - 4:30 p.m., on the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail, beginning at the trailhead parking lot on Creamery Road in Hardwick. Reservations or information, kerry@adaptivesportspartners.org, (802) 427-4116.

Dads' Group, 5 - 6 p.m., at the Oxbow in Morrisville. Connect with other dads. Information, Rob at rcary@LRCVT.org or (802) 730-3000.

Dance, 5:30 p.m., Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Service, 6 p.m. Walden United Methodist Church, 109 Noyestar Road, handicap accessible, (802) 684-1201.

Families Anonymous, 6 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Alcoholics Anonmous, 7 p.m., United Church of Hardwick, 216 S. Main St. Open discussion. Information, (802) 748-3708, local AA (802) 334-1213 or toll-free (877) - 334-1213.

Ongoing Tuesdays

Qigong, 8:30 a.m., the Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Tai Chi, 9:30 to 10:15 a.m., Jeudevine Memorial Library Parker Ladd Community Room, Hardwick. Advanced Tai Chi, taught by Norma Spaulding, Information at (802) 472-8724, nspauld@gmail.com.

Tai Chi, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Jeudevine Memorial Library Parker Ladd Community Room, Hardwick. Tai Chi for Fall Prevention, taught by Norma Spaulding. Information at (802) 472-8724, nspauld@gmail.com.

Storytime, 10 a.m., Craftsbury Public Library, early literacy for children ages 0 - 5. Information at childrenslibrarian@craftsburypubliclibrary.org or (802) 586-9683.

Exercise, 11 a.m., Highland Center for the Arts, 2875 Hardwick St., See EVENTS, Next Page

WGDR 91.1 FM
WGDH 91.7 FM
CENTRAL VERMONT COMMUNITY RADIO

SPRING FUNDRIIVE

MARCH 6-22, 2026

Support local commmuntiy radio with a gift at WGDR.org.

EVENTS

Greensboro, lead by certified AFE crystal.morrissey@ncvrc.com instructor Alice Perron. Information esanderson@nekouncil.org, (802) 751-0431.

Moms in Recovery, support program, 1 - 2 p.m., tailored to support pregnant and parenting mothers and their families. In person, North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Suite 2, Morrisville. Information, (802) 635-0084.

Kids' Chorus, 3 p.m., Jeudevine Library, Hardwick. For ages 8 and up. Vocal warm-ups, musical games and group singing. Information at jeudevineyouthlibrarian@hardwickvt.gov or (802) 472-5948.

Dungeons & Dragons, 3:30 - 5 p.m., Cabot Public Library, ages 9 - 13. Mysteries and magic, tails and talons, puzzles and prophecies.

Craftfit, 4:30 p.m., Craftsbury Outdoor Center.

Crafting Group, 4:30 - 6 p.m., Jaquith Public Library, 122 School St., Marshfield. Information, jaquithpubliclibrary@gmail.com, (802) 426-3581, jaquithpubliclibrary.org.

Magic, 5 p.m., The Civic Standard, S. Main St., Hardwick, A group of young people get together at to play Magic: the Gathering, hosted by Dean Burns. New players are welcome.

Friends of Jeudevine Library, 5:15 p.m., third Tuesday of every month at the library, N. Main St., Hardwick.

As Bill Sees It, AA Meeting, 6 p.m., North Central Vermont Recovery Center, 275 Brooklyn St., Morrisville. Information, (802) 851-8120.

Taiji, 6 p.m. Barn off the Common, Craftsbury Common.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 6 p.m., meditation meeting, United Church, 6 Church Lane (next to library), Craftsbury Common. Open meeting.

Community Services

Aging assistance, Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging, St. Johnsbury, (800) 642-5119.

Aging assistance, Central Vermont Council on Aging, Montpelier, (802) 479-0531.

Community dinners, United Church of Hardwick, noon, third and fourth Thursdays, eat-in or take out. (802) 472-6566 to reserve meal.

Crisis line, 24 hours, involuntary custody screening, Lamoille County Mental Health, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., (802) 888-5026; nights and weekends, (802) 888-8888.

Food pantry, Woodbury-Calais Food Shelf, serving Calais, Woodbury, Cabot, (802) 472-6292..



Hazen Union sophomore Kolbey Rich tries the Concept 2 rowing machine during the Winter Carnival and Wellness Fair, February 20, as Grace Donabedian (left) of the Green Racing Project Athletics of the Craftsbury Outdoor Center looks on. photo by Vanessa Fournier

Food shelf, vtfoodbank.org/nuture-people/3squaresvt, (802) 855-6181.

Human services, Northeast Kingdom Human Services, 181 Crawford Road, Derby, (802) 334-6744.

Human services, Northeast Kingdom Human Services, 2225 Portland St., St. Johnsbury, (802) 748-3181, nkhs.org

Meals on Wheels, Greensboro Nursing Home through Northeast Kingdom Council on Aging, (800) 642-5119.

Meals on Wheels, Vermont Center for Independent Living, Montpelier, (802) 224-1825, melissa@vcil.org.

Mental health, Lamoille County Mental Health Services, 72 Harrel St., Morrisville, (802) 888-5026, (802) 228-0591, lamoille.org.

Mental health, Washington County Mental Health Services, 9 Heaton St., Montpelier, (802) 223-6328, wcmhs.org

Recovery center, St. Johnsbury Recovery Center, 297 Summer St., (802) 751-8520, recoveryinfo@stjkrcc.org, kingdom-recovery-center.com

Thrift store, Angel Outfitters Thrift Store, United Church of Christ, 216 S. Main St., Hardwick, Thurs., 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Sat., 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.; (802) 472-6800.

Veterans' services, Caledonia County, (802) 338-4324.

Veterans' services, Lamoille County, (802) 338-3411.

Veterans' services, Orleans County, (802) 338-4325.

Veterans' services, Washington County, (802) 338-4318.

Libraries

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. Story time 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, Mon. to Fri., 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 - 6 p.m., Tues., Wed. and Fri. 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m., Story time, Fri., 10 a.m.

Cutler Memorial Public Library, 151 High St, Plainfield (802) 454-8504, cutlerlibrary.org, Tues., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Wed., 3 - 6 p.m.; Thurs., 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Glee Merritt Kelley Community

Library, 320 School Hill Drive, Wolcott, (802) 472-6551, Mon. - Thurs., 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Fri. closed; Sat., 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Greensboro Free Library, 53 Wilson St., Greensboro, (802) 533-2531, greensborofreelibrary.org, Mon. and Wed. closed; Tues., 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Thur. and Fri., 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sat., 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.; Sun., noon - 2 p.m.

Hazen Union School Library, 126 Hazen Union Drive, Hardwick, (802) 472-6511, hazenlibrary@ossu.org, 7:30 a.m. - 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. - noon and 3 - 6 p.m., Sat. and Mon. 9 a.m. - noon, closed Sundays.

Jeudevine Memorial Library, 93 N Main St., Hardwick, (802) 472-5948, jeudevinememoriallibrary.org, Mon. and Wed. 1 - 6 p.m., Tues., Thurs. and Fri. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

John W. Simpson Memorial Library, 1972 E. Craftsbury Road, East Craftsbury, (802) 586-9692, jwsimpsonmemorial.org. Wed., 9 a.m. - noon and 6 - 8 p.m.; Thurs. 9 a.m. - noon and 2 - 6 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m. - noon; Sun. noon - 2 p.m.

Morristown Centennial Library, 7 Richmond St., Morrisville, (802) 888-3853, centenniallibrary.org, Tues. and Wed., 10 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.; Thurs. and Fri., 10 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; Sat. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Walden Community Library, Walden Elementary School, 135 Cahoon Farm Road, (802) 563-2195, walden.mimas.opalsinfo.net/bin/home, Tues., 6 - 8 p.m.

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

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



Delivering On A Promise
Dead River Company

**Propane • Heating Oil • Diesel
Heating Equipment Installations**
189 Railroad St., St. Johnsbury, VT
(802) 748-8934 or (800) 222-9276



Lincoln Hill of Hazen Union sidesteps between Lake Region's Jackson Hunt (left) and Brody McDonald (right) as he readies to shoot during play in the Wildcat den February 19. Hill scored 16 points which included four 3's. Hazen won 63-39.

photo by Vanessa Fournier



Hazen Union's Sully Laflam (No. 15) sets to make a shot defended by Konnor Farley of Lake Region during February 19 action in Hardwick. Following the play are Landon Richards of the Rangers (left) and Wildcat Ethan Gann (right). Hazen took the victory 63-39.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Lamarre's career week help Wildcats rebound

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – The Hazen Union boys basketball team rebounded from a disappointing season series sweep to Randolph to start the week with dominating wins over Lake Region and Montpelier to stay in the hunt near the top of the Division III standings.

Sophomore Eli Messier punished the Wildcats in the paint with a game-high 25 points to lead Randolph to a hard fought 66-59 road win at the Cat Den last Tuesday. The Ghosts rallied from a double-digit deficit early in the first half to take a 34-32 lead into the break. Jamison Lamarre (17 points) and Lincoln Hill (four 3-pointers) helped the Cats retake the lead 48-46 with eight minutes to play. It was too much Messier and sixth man Lincoln Galenski's 20 points off the bench down the stretch however as Randolph reclaimed the top spot from Hazen in the current division III standings. Morgan Michaud added 13 points for Hazen and Sully Laflam chipped in with 10. Randolph improved to 15-3 on the season.

Lamarre answered the bell on Thursday night, draining five threes on his way to a career-high 31 points to lead Hazen to a 63-39 home thumping over Lake Region. The junior guard added 11 rebounds to his impressive night as the Wildcats took a nine-point advantage into the

break and extended their lead to 18 with eight minutes to play. Hill drained four more threes to complement with 16 points and 3 steals, Laflam added seven points and six assists and Michaud five points and seven rebounds in the win. Keagan Tartaglio led the Rangers with 11 points as they fell to 4-14.

Lamarre took it to yet another level on Saturday, pouring in 35 points and grabbing eight rebounds in a resounding 65-43 home win over five-time defending Division II state champion Montpelier. Lamarre torched the Solons with a variety of midrange floaters and finishes at the rim, helping the Wildcats open up a one possession game at the break with a 12-0 run in the first eight minutes of the second half and a 31-10 run to end the game. Hill (15 points) drained two more field goals from long distance, Michaud hauled in 15 boards and freshman Noah Foster chipped in with 5 points in the win. Stone Poor paced Montpelier with 21 points as they fell to 10-8. This was the first win for head coach Aaron Hill and his Wildcat program since joining the highly competitive Capital League in 2021.

Hazen (14-4) holds on to the #2 spot in the current Division III standings behind the Galloping Ghosts. Woodstock (15-3), Winooski (13-4) and Vergennes (10-6) round out the top five. With

just one week remaining in the regular season, the coveted top two seeds in the division are still up for grabs. Hazen welcomed

Spaulding to town on Monday for Senior Night and will wrap up the regular season on the road against U-32 on Thursday.

Lady cats earn inside track back to Barre

by Ken Brown

HARDWICK – The Hazen Union girls basketball team put an emphatic punctuation on the regular season last week with a lopsided home win over Harwood on Senior Night.

Senior Isabelle Gouin torched Harwood with a season-high 20 points to power the Lady Cats to a 60-30 home win on Saturday afternoon. Fellow seniors Ella Renaud, Sadie Gann and Ari Nichols joined Gouin and Julia des Groseilliers in the starting lineup to give Hazen a 14-9 edge after one period. Newly minted 1,000-point scorer Kelsie Rivard poured in 13 points in limited action as the Lady Cats extended their lead to 30-16 at the break. Freshman Eloise Foster added seven points, while Renaud (four points), Nichols (four) and des Groseilliers (three) rounded out a balanced scoring attack for Hazen. Liv Kielich led Harwood with 11 points and Adelaide Chalmers added nine in the loss as they wrapped up the regular season at 6-13.

Hazen's five seniors were honored before the game for their outstanding high school careers. Long-time Hardwick Community Television contributor, Hazen Union alum and de facto voice of Hazen Union athletics Lance Hall was also honored before the game.

Gouin also drained a three on her big night and put a bow on a stellar athletic career at Hazen in front of a packed house at the Cat Den. Gouin has been a varsity

player for the Lady Cats in both basketball and soccer since eighth grade. This past fall, Gouin broke the all-time scoring record for the Hazen girls soccer team with 56 career goals. She earned Mountain League Player of the Year honors and was named to her second consecutive Vermont All-State team. des Groseilliers has also been a key contributor to the rise of the Lady Cat basketball program since she was a freshman. Her inside presence as a sophomore helped Hazen win the Division III state championship in 2022. Over three decades earlier, her Aunt Jennifer des Groseilliers also cut down the nets for Hazen at the Barre Auditorium, setting the all-time school scoring record with over 1,900 career points.

The Lady Cats (17-2) locked up the No. 1 seed for the upcoming state tournament for the second time in three years. Their only losses of the season came to Division I powerhouse CVU and a Lamoille team that will enter the Division II tournament a perfect 19-0. Head coach Randy Lumsden and his talented club earned the only bye in the upcoming Division III bracket and will host a quarterfinal game this weekend for a chance to make it to the Final Four at the Barre Auditorium for the fourth consecutive season.

Hazen will host the winner of No. 8 Whiter River Valley vs. #9 Green Mountain on Saturday at 2 p.m. All home games can be live streamed on Hardwick Community Television (hctv.us).



Twinfield-Cabot's Sam McLane (No. 1) turns the corner on Caku Brown of Stowe during play at Twinfield February 17. Twinfield-Cabot prevailed 67-32.

photo by Vanessa Fournier



Twinfield-Cabot's Zepherin Hebert stays ahead of Hayden MacDonald of Stowe during action at Twinfield, February 17. In back is Trojan Azeem Stewart (No. 11). Twinfield-Cabot defeated Stowe 67-32.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Trojans hold on to top spot with two more wins

by Ken Brown

MARSHFIELD – The Twinfield-Cabot boys basketball team navigated their way through the bottom half of the Mountain League last week, getting out with good health and staying atop of the current Division IV standings at 16-1.

Eli Russell drained four 3-pointers on his way to a 16-point night to lead the Trojans to a 67-32 home win over Stowe last Tuesday on Senior Night. Fellow seniors Zepherin Hebert (15 points) and Thomas Gouge (8) punished the Raiders in the paint and beyond the arc as the Trojans took a 50-20 lead into the final period. Sophomore Azeem Stewart added 13 points for Twinfield-Cabot in the win. Ben Smith led Stowe with 11 points and Caku Brown chipped in with 9 as they fell to 3-14.

Tej Stewart, Sam McLane, Sam Churchill, Ben Monaco and Wyatt Bickford were also honored before the game for their outstanding high school careers on the hardwood. It has been a historically great senior class for Twinfield-Cabot in multiple sports the past five seasons. In head coach Kris Bador's second season on the sidelines, the Trojans made it back to the Barre Auditorium last March for the first time in nearly a decade. They came a field goal away from

the Division IV state title game. They're on pace to return to Barre next month, securing their first top seed in the division since the legendary Chad Copeland days fourteen years ago.

This same class brought a 16-0 record to Rutland in the Division IV soccer state championship match this past fall before coming up just short to undefeated Twin Valley. Russell was also the point guard for the Trojans on the pitch, scoring a career-high 30 goals, while earning Mountain League Player of the Year honors and being a Vermont All-State selection for a second straight year. McLane was also a terror for the Trojan soccer team this past season, scoring a career-high 26 goals. Stewart and Russell have a chance to put a punctuation on a historic season for the Twinfield-Cabot hoop program in the next two weeks as they both are inside of 40 points from reaching 1,000 for their careers.

Gouge led the Trojans on Thursday night with 13 hard points inside as they cruised past Northfield on the road 53-40. McLane added 10 points and Russell, nine, as Twinfield-Cabot ballooned a seven-point halftime lead to 13 with eight minutes to play. Former Hazen Union standout Damian Morrison led the Marauders with 13 and Alex Colgan and Elijah Scott added 10 points apiece in the loss.

The Trojans remain percentage points ahead of undefeated West Rutland for the top spot in the current Division IV standings due to their rugged schedule out of division. MSJ (16-2), Williamstown (14-4) and Twin Valley (14-4) round out the top five. Defending champion

Danville looms in the #6 spot at 13-6.

Twinfield-Cabot will be tournament tested this week as they welcomed Oxbow to town on Monday and Williamstown on Thursday before wrapping up the regular season on the road against Richford Saturday.



Eli Russell of Twinfield-Cabot looks for an open teammate with a wrap-around pass while surrounded by Stowe players (from left) Ben Sherman, Lucca Willett and Jakob Jensen. In back is Twinfield-Cabot's Ben Monaco. The home team beat their Stowe guests 67-32 during the February 17 game held at Twinfield.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

ERIC HANSON'S SKI REPORT



Craftsbury Green Racing Project skier Margie Freed tags off to Joanne Reid in the Olympic women's biathlon relay. photo by Nordic Focus

Day-one of Vermont High School Ski Championships

RIPTON – Division 1 and 2 Vermont high school cross country ski teams gathered at the Rikert Touring Center for the freestyle individual and relay races on February 19. From December into February, most schools compete in weekly races within their region of the state, thus the state meet is a chance for all the schools to go head to head.

In the boys 5 km race, James Langan of South Burlington had the fastest overall time of the day in 12:48. Graham Moriarity of St. Johnsbury was 12th among the D1 group. In D2, Jorgen Pirrung (Middlebury) was 1st in 13:10 with Isaac Nadzam (Montpelier) 2, and Tobias Counts (Arlington) 3.

More local finishers included Magnus Hayden (Peoples) 4, Oakley Crawford (Craftsbury – CA) 7, Max Demaine (Lake

Region – LR) 11, Oryon Hart (CA) 13, Eli Davis (LR) 44, and Linden Urie (LR) 48. Lake Region trains with the Craftsbury team.

In the afternoon relay, the Stowe boys won the D2 race in 26:25 followed by PA in 27:16 and Lamaille Union in 8th. Three LR boys teamed up with CA's Oryon Hart to have an unofficial time of 28:24, which would have put them in 4th in D2. To have a scoring team, each school needs four skiers, which neither LR or CA have.

In the girls individual race, Acadia Enman led the D1 girls in 14:35 with St. Johnsbury's Tillie Lange 3rd. Mary Harrington (Middlebury) placed first in D2 in 15:00 with Woodstock girls taking the next three spots. Aemilia Terrone had a good race for Craftsbury placing 6th with Nora Demaine of Lake Region in 14. Hadley Abbene led the Peoples Academy team in 7 with Ava Strattman 9, and Lilly Sudabby 17. Leah Jourdan of Lamaille was 12th. In the girls D2 relay, Woodstock showed their depth winning in 29:24 with Montpelier 2nd, Middlebury 3, PA 4, and Lamaille 5.

The second day of the state championships takes place in Craftsbury on Feb. 24 for the classic ski races. The overall team results will be shared next week.

Margie Freed skis, shoots for U.S. in Olympic Biathlon Relay

ANHOLTZ, Italy – Although the team struggled a bit on the range, Margie Freed of the Craftsbury Green Racing Project (GRP) was part of U.S. squad that finished 18th in the 4x6 km women's relay. Freed teamed up with Deedra Irwin, Luci Anderson and Joanne Reid.

The U.S. men's team had their best Olympic showing, placing 5th powered by Campbell Wright who has podiumed on the World Cup this season and placed 12th in the Olympic sprint race.

Jack Young reflects on being at the Olympics

CORTINA, Italy – Young is a Craftsbury GRP skier and a North Country Union graduate. He wrote this for EnjoyWinter Athlete Force on Feb. 14.

“The Olympic classic sprint, the only race I had any chance of competing in, has come and gone. It was even easier than I thought it would be to just be a part of a great U.S. Men's team and not dwell on my lack of racing. Why? Because Ben Ogden won a silver medal! It's hard to describe how much this result means for U.S. Skiing as a whole. Anyone who has been paying attention to Ben, Gus (Schumacher) and JC (Schoonmaker) over the past few years knows that something special has been building, and Ben finally broke through on the biggest stage in the world for cross country skiing. I am so incredibly happy for him and for the implications for this Men's squad in the future. The result shows exactly what's possible for all of us, and it's quite motivating for me knowing that in the next Olympics, the sprint will be freestyle.”

After Young wrote that, Ogden and Schumacher won another silver medal in the team sprint competition. That medal, along with Jessie Diggins' bronze in the 10 km freestyle race, made this the most successful Olympics ever for the United States. Ben is from Landgrove and his medals are only the 2nd and 3rd Olympic medals ever for the men's team, with the last medal being won by Bill Koch in 1976.

Diggins is the most decorated cross country skier for the U.S. with several World Cup overall titles, three Olympic medals and dozens of top finishes on the World Cup circuit. She is retiring after this season and had trained and lived in Stratton much of the past 10-15 years.

KEN BROWN'S SPORT NUGGETS

Twinfield-Cabot girls wrap up regular season

WELLS RIVER – The Twinfield-Cabot girls basketball team fell to Blue Mountain last week to wrap up their regular season at 1-17.

Ava Kingsbury punished the Lady Trojans inside with 20 points and 11 rebounds as Blue Mountain raced past Twinfield-Cabot on the road last Wednesday 46-25. Addison Murray added eight points and five assists as the Lady Backs took a 21-8 advantage into the break and never looked back. Junior Chloe North drained a three and led Twinfield-Cabot once again with nine points. Eighth grader Sydney Patten knocked down a field goal from long range for the Lady Trojans as she enjoyed a career-high nine-point night for the Lady Trojans.

Twinfield-Cabot hit the road for the daunting task of taking on top seeded Richford Tuesday in the first round of the Division IV state tournament. Blue Mountain (9-11) earned the No. 9 seed and traveled to Long Trail Tuesday night.

Hunt to start spring golf program at Hazen

GREENSBORO – Hazen Union head golf coach Andy Hunt will look to get a jump-start on the upcoming high school fall golf season with the purchase of a new golf simulator for interested golfers this spring.

Hunt has raised enough money to purchase a golf simulator and hopes to draw interest from aspiring golfers in Hardwick, Greensboro, Craftsbury and surrounding towns to start a new spring golf program. Hunt enjoyed record numbers for

Hazen's golf program last fall, but his roster lacked experience in high school competition. The spring program, coupled with the new simulator, will help his golfers be more prepared when the high school golf season gets underway in August.

Contact Coach Hunt at peatedmalt@gmail.com for more information.

Ruggles leads Hilltoppers to first title in two decades

ST. JOHNSBURY – Senior Lydia Ruggles claimed her third straight all-around individual state title and led the St. Johnsbury Academy (SJA) gymnastics team to their first team state championship since 2005 over the weekend.

The Hilltoppers finished the season undefeated, recording

the highest score (145.875) in 17 years at a Vermont state championship. They were five points clear of two-time defending state champion Essex. The Lady Hornets have dominated the sport the past two decades, winning 15 state titles. Ruggles won the floor exercise (9.9) and the bars (9.5), while placing second in the vault and sixth in the beam. Ruggles is the only gymnast to win an all-around title for SJA in nearly 60 years.

Danville's Eliska Siebenbrunner wrapped up a highly successful gymnastics season for the Lady Bears as an independent. The multi-sport standout posted multiple top-five finishes for Danville this winter.

Siebenbrunner excelled on the pitch for her Caledonia United soccer team last fall, earning a Vermont All-State selection.