



Andrew Whitcomb (left) and Travis Tombley (right) of L & S Property Holdings Inc.'s lay out Hardwick's new thematic crosswalks at the intersection of Main and Hill. The new crosswalks should be more durable than earlier crosswalks. Tombley said that while the new crosswalks are slightly colored on the pavement, summer traffic should shape them to the road so snowplows don't carve them.

Rainy Spring Festival Has Good Turnout

By Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — In the minutes leading up to the start of the annual Spring Festival parade, the drizzle turned into a downpour. It looked like tough luck for this year's iteration of the longtime town tradition. However, shortly after the parade started, the rain lightened up. Fire trucks, Read and Puppet performers, steel-drum players from the Jeudewine Music School and many others marched along the parade route while throwing sugar beads treats to sugar-like ones lining the streets.

Joe Brannon of Hardwick is in charge of organizing the much-anticipated duck-drop event. Hundreds of rubber ducks are marked with a number, were dropped from the fire department's ladder truck over a duck-shaped kiddie pool. Participants purchased numbers for the ducks and the person whose duck number is closest to the target was half of the money raised. The rest of the money went to recreational projects, arts and crafts, including possibly a park revitalization project at Maslovie Pond.

"We used to do a duck race in the river, but it got to be too dangerous," Brannon said. "I came up with the idea to have them drop them on the street."

The target was to sell 400 duck numbers. Hours before the drop, Brannon said they were closer to 500. In the end, 450 rubber ducks were sold for \$1,000. He was joined by Bill and Robin Durkee of Woodbury had the winning duck.

The human tractor pull was another popular event. Blake Curtis from Stannard was a member of the winning team.

"We came, we saw, we pulled the truck," he said joking. "We couldn't let the farmers, the Black Dirt Farm team win."

Holly Curran of the Recreation Committee ran the "kiss peddle" pull, with kids taking turns pulling a miniature truck. She was joined by a sled of sleds behind it. Like everyone else, Bill and Robin were on the way out.

"It's so hoping for a good turnout like this year," she said. "It's not perfect and not every one should do it, but it should be good."

Connie Bellavance, past president and current volunteer for the Kiwanis organization, was busy preparing grilled food. "I said that despite the weather it was business as usual."

"We sold out of food last year and we are doing very well right now," she said.

Local resident Nancy Natterman helped set up an outdoor course for kids that proved to be very popular.

Emily Laxner of the Jeudewine Music School led a steel drum band, which performed in the parade and continued performing remnants of popular rock songs at Albans Field. The band played in support of efforts to save the honey bee. Laxner said efforts spearheaded by Rep. Joseph Trinneer (D-Calderwood) of Stannard to push a ban on neonicotinoid pesticides, which endanger bees, was unsuccessful this year but got the conversation started.

Deborah Hart, operations manager, set **FESTIVAL 2**

CAE's Vermont Farm Fund Passes Lending Milestone

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — In seven years, the Vermont Farm Fund (VFF) has lent over \$1 million to Vermont farmers and food producers to boost the local agricultural economy. The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) said in a press release. The exact figure: \$1,059,094 in 71 individual low-interest loans.

The VFF was started in 2011 by Pete's Greens of Craftsbury and the CAE, as a response to the losses Tropical Storm Irene wreaked on Vermont. The loans are not just for emergencies, but also for growth

and expansion. Some recipients of funding have gone through more than one round of loans.

"The funding for these low-interest loans comes from individual farmers and family foundations. Each tax-deductible gift supports a virtuous cycle, where payments from one generation of loans finances the next. Funds are lent to a farm, repaid, and loaned out again and again," the release said.

Loan recipients in our area include: Solversons in Marshfield, which is a "family-run fermented foods company," according to the release.

See **PAGE 2**.



Maria Adochino (left), Maria Adochino-Gerdinich and Tori Restorick look over the new Cabot Artisan Gallery, which opened on Saturday. The gallery, located in the Cabot village business district on Main Street, is open Friday through Monday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

New Artisan Gallery Open in Cabot Village

by Will Waters

CABOT — Opening day for the Cabot Artisan Gallery went according to the weather. Customers came when the rain took a break on Saturday morning and were more sparse when it poured. Those customers who were in the gallery when the rain began falling stayed until the downpour stopped. Apparently rain on opening day is not all bad.

The gallery on Main Street in the business section of Cabot village is in the former white building at the intersection of Whittier Hill Road and Main Street. It is a short walk from Cabot Creamery. The cream-

ery Visitors' Center pointed visitors to the gallery.

Jan Westervelt hosted the building to start a gallery in cooperation with the Cabot Community Association. The CCA is the owner/operator of the gallery, which is managed by Stacey Ducharme. Ducharme formerly ran the Artist's Hand, in Montpelier. Westervelt said the opening had a good number of visitors and many sales. Stacey and Mandy also had a flow of browsers, as some buyers, as well. Westervelt said most were local people who seemed interested in having on-site.

See **GALLERY 4**.

New Homeschooling Group Earns High Praise from Expert

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — A new homeschooling co-op, run by local home educators, will be open to anyone who wants to join. The group is led by Retta Dunlap, Woodbury resident and director of the Vermont Home Education Network.

"It's something I believe in," she said. "It's not perfect and not every one should do it, but it should be good."

Dunlap said that the Vermont Home Education Network advocates for the rights of homeschoolers at the state level.

She said Vermont's 1980 Minimum Course of Study is the state statute and course that home schooling families follow. New homeschooling families should know how to get their program approved by the state and their child assessed each year.

She said parents choose the material to be used for the curriculum and that the resources available today are much greater than what she had access to almost 30 years ago.

"I started home schooling in 1980 and I only knew a few of the workbooks," she said. "Now, with the online resources and the stuff you can purchase, it's just gone through the roof."

Dunlap said that gathering materials and preparing lesson plans today are much greater than what she used to do. That is why groups like this new co-op are so important.

Weather conditions distorted the fireworks that closed out Spring Festival. One observer thought a mortar invasion was to blame.

Business Accelerator Preparations Begin

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — The Yellow Barn Business Accelerator (YBBA) project is in its early planning stages for completion, according to the Center for an Agricultural Economy's (CAE) Sarah Waring.

Town Manager Jan Jewett said the CAE, the town, and the Northeast Vermont Development Association (NVDA) have applied for a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), but with funds left over from the original grant, site surveying will begin soon.

"We're looking at delineating where the wetlands are, where the floodplain is and trying to generate topographical information about the property so we know what we have as a base property. And then we're going to look at all our permitting needs, which would be water, wastewater, highway access, and anything else that we might need to have to do a build-out of that facility."

Jewett said the town has signed a Letter of Intent with the Northeast Vermont Development Association (NVDA) has applied for a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), but with funds left over from the original grant, site surveying will begin soon.

"That's where they're at," she said. "There's very little precedent to go out and reinvent the wheel. So that's why you see a group like this in Hardwick and Greensboro popping up. They serve a need."

The curriculum chosen should be submitted to the appropriate state education personnel for review. Other options include a student portfolio submission, or a report submitted by a professional teacher who observes the child's progress, or a report submitted by a professional teacher who observes the child's progress, or a report submitted by a professional teacher who observes the child's progress.

Regarding the child's assessment, there is the option to use the conventional state assessment that public school children take. The tests are not a requirement for home-schooled children, however. Other options include a student portfolio submission, or a report submitted by a professional teacher who observes the child's progress, or a report submitted by a professional teacher who observes the child's progress.

Dunlap noted that homeschooling has bucked the trend of Vermont's shrinking student numbers, which has plagued public schools for decades.

"Homeschooling is the one form of education in Vermont that has not lost students," she said. "It has kept growing, while statewide school populations has dropped off significantly."

See **HOMESCHOOLING 2**.

charge and how much space would be needed.

Jewett said the results would "come together as a package to allow us to go for additional funding through the Economic Development Administration or through the Vermont Community Development Program or the Vermont Community Development Block Grant Program."

"The town will initiate some additional work later on in the summer, or in the early fall, probably start doing the engineering work."

Regarding the project's timeline, CAE's Waring said, "We still need to do a lot of fundraising. I would say the outlay would be 2019 for this plan's completion."

She said the estimates for job creation are still as outlined in the feasibility study: "roughly 20 to 30 jobs." The study estimated that these jobs would add up to a half-million dollars in salaries to the local economy each year.

"At this point it is early, but by a couple of local businesses, food, and farm-related businesses, as well as a woodworking business, are possibly interested in this plan's completion."

See **ACCELERATOR 2**.

Cabot School Budget Passes

by Will Waters

CABOT — Voters approved a budget for the 2019 school year. The budget for 2019 is \$1,191,191 for a total of 454 ballots. It was the third budget proposal sent to the voters this year. It was the first one that came in under the excess spending threshold that triggers a penalty tax.

A statement, Washington Northeast Supervisory Union 30 said, "The voters of Cabot today approved the budget for FY 2019 (\$1,191,191) school year by a margin of 200 votes and 191 no. Until last year, the budget proposal budget has never been able to offer employee contracts teach-

ers and support staff for next year, or to offer contracts to candidates that will be filling openings on the staff next year. With this budget approved, we will be extending contracts to our current employees and to new candidates for open positions. We will have some additional hiring to do, including the most critical position of school principal, but the removal of the uncertainty surrounding the budget allows us to focus on the next year with more certainty."

There were 70 absentee ballots from the town clerk's office as of 3 a.m. Tuesday morning, down from 12 the number submitted in the last year. The last budget proposal budget has never been able to offer employee contracts teach-

See **PAGES 2**.

hardwickgazette.com

In Sports, 10
 TWINFIELD GIRLS DROP IN STANDINGS

In Towns, 2
 LAKESHIRE STUDENTS CREATE MURAL

In Arts, 6
 KOVALS PHOTOGRAPHY REVIEW