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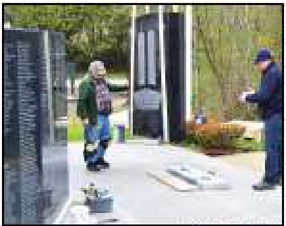

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Dennis Beaudin (left) guides the 4,400-pound African jet black granite Veterans monument to its base in Memorial Park on May 16 in Hardwick. The Global War on Terror monument has 32 names engraved on it. At right is Steve Benoit of Rock of Ages. The crane was operated by Brandon Mayo of Mayo Rental LLC.

New Granite Panel for Memorial

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – On the morning of May 16, the Hardwick Veterans' Memorial received a new panel to honor the service of those from Hardwick, Greensboro, Stannard, Walden and Woodbury who have served or are still serving in the Global War on Terror. Thirty-two names are on the back of the panel after an exhaustive search to ensure the list was complete, according to Hardwick American Legion Post #7 Commander George Gattone. The front of the panel is graced with a design originally conceived by Legion Chaplain Reggie Gates. The third person taking lead on the project was Lynn Brosseau-Bessette. The work to bring the panel to fruition has been going on for almost two years, according to Gattone.

Gattone wanted to clarify that the Hardwick Memorial differs from some other monuments in that the names listed on it are those who served, not necessarily those who perished. Gattone is himself a veteran who served in Afghanistan.

"9/11 changed all of us as Americans," said Gattone. "For me personally it had a significant impact. Myself and my peers knew we would be going overseas, and potentially some of us wouldn't come back."

Gates, who is a Vietnam veteran, said the base was put together by the Legion to save on expenses, and is made from Woodbury Gray granite. The panel itself is specially-colored black granite from Africa, according to Gattone and Gates. It weighs in at just over two tons and its dimensions are

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Annual Spring Fest This Weekend

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK – Almost seven decades in the making, Hardwick's long-renowned Spring Fest is coming back to town this Saturday, an all-day long event that starts with a bird-watch in the early hours and ends with big fireworks at dusk.

Some of the big highlights include the Spring Festival Run at 8 a.m., with a 1.6K run for all ages, then a 5K walk and run at 8:15 and 8:30 a.m., respectively. Then there's a book sale at the library at 9 a.m., a ceremony at the war memorial at 10 a.m., with the next big event being the Spring Festival Parade at 10:30 a.m.

The parade starts up Main Street near the high school and comes down through town right along to Spring Street and to Atkins Field. It's got fire trucks, musicians, and enough candy to keep little kids bouncing through any Vermont or latecomers that Vermont may bring.

At Atkins Field there will be lots of food, music, games and other events for much of the afternoon. The Kiwanis Club will be providing grilled foods among other vendors and some of the fun includes a bouncy house, scavenger hunt and petting zoo.

Bethany Dunbar, community projects manager for the Center for an Agricultural Economy, has continued to play a key role in setting up the event. "The basic set up at Atkins is going to be very similar to past years with the sustainability tent on one side and games for kids on the other side," she said.

Dunbar noted that Nancy Notermann is once again going to be running the human truck pull which starts at 1 p.m. Notermann is trying to gather teams of five people to pull a tractor trailer 50 feet in record time – each team gets two tries.

Last year a group of little ones participated unofficially in this event. "It was really funny watching eight or nine little kids pull a truck while trying to get adults to join in," Notermann said. "We're really looking for different organizations to compete against each other."

Then at 2:00 will be the Fourth Annual Sgt. Tristan Southworth Memorial Day Little League Classic for the baseball and softball leagues. There won't be a crafts fair this year, but there will be the sustainability tent with the Agency of Natural Resources Fish and Wildlife biologist, teaching and running projects about bats. Children will be able to make bat masks and there will be information about how to make bat houses to attract bats because they're pollinators. Of course any pollinator event must and will have the pollinator orchestra led by Emily Lanzner of the Jeudevine Music School.

In the sustainability tent, the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District will have "waste warriors" helping people figure out what to do with all their waste for the most efficient responsible disposal.

"Two years ago Hardwick set the world record for the most dishes washed simultaneously, but it didn't last long. Somebody broke it just a few weeks later but it was such a fun day and now we have all those plates so we can still save a lot of, you know, not using paper plates and less waste," Dunbar said.

The current weather report as of Tuesday was for thunderstorms, but Dunbar said rough weather has never stopped Spring Fest before. "Who knows, but it will still be fun," she said. "We all have fun stuff to do in the mud, in the rain, or the sunshine."

photo by Doug McClure

Route 14 South at the Cooper Brook Bridge by M&M Beverage, where water went over the brook's banks and flooded the road, as well as several residences.

Cooper Brook, Buck Lake Brook Flood

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – For the second time in a month, Cooper Brook went over its banks the morning of May 20 due to torrential rains, flooding parts of Rte. 14 as well as residences and a large section of Atkins Field. In Woodbury, Buck Lake Brook also surged over its banks and flooded the highway, the former country store, the Volunteer Fire Department and surrounding structures' basements. While the April 20 flooding was due in part to remaining ice, this week's flooding was due to a huge downpour which one Woodbury Volunteer firefighter said was "four or five inches."

Hardwick Town Manager Shawn Fielder said the "very low lying areas" around Cooper Brook mean that waterway is very susceptible to flooding, especially in this case where a wet spring had already saturated the ground. Fielder said no easy fix exists as of now that can solve that issue. "I am not aware of a mitigation technique that would be easy to implement to prevent impacts to Rte. 14 and/or properties in the area."

The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) is in the process of a major revitalization effort in low-lying Atkins Field which also flooded in a large swath. Community Programs Manager Bethany Dunbar surveyed the site that morning and said the ongoing project has measures to mitigate flooding impacts, though challenges do exist, especially regarding the granite shed.

"We have to make the pavilion

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New CAE Director: 'A Community and an Organization I Care About'

by Doug McClure

GREENSBORO – The Center for an Agricultural Economy (CAE) has selected a new executive director, Jon Ramsay. Ramsay has previously served on the CAE board and comes with not just over 20 years of experience at the Vermont Land Trust (VLT) under his belt, but a lifetime's worth of experience in all aspects of farming "in every corner of the state."

Speaking at his home on the family's historical farm in Greensboro, Ramsay described his life as a kid on a dairy farm, what that taught him not just about farming but work ethic, and how it is has informed and influenced his adult life. Though he is just a few days on the job, he said he is very excited about the work that lies ahead. Much of the mission of the CAE is "improving the food systems for our farmers and communities," he said.

In his years at the VLT, Ramsay said he saw firsthand many cases illustrative of the challenges farmers face in 2019 and worked to resolve them across the state. "I can feel proud to visit literally any corner of the state and say I've worked with those farmers or helped those farmers," he said.

With that VLT experience, Ramsay said he has met "hundreds" of farmers and those working with them. He has a special interest in helping new and young farmers. "It's hard to enter farming as a young person.

photo by Doug McClure

The Center for an Agricultural Economy's new executive director, Jon Ramsay, at his historical family farm in Greensboro where he grew up.

I want to help new farmers, beginning farmers. It means something to me. I grew up farming and it's a big motivator, this community I care about."

His parents' farmhouse is just down the road, and he works with them on a herd of around a hundred beef cows. The transition phase now from VLT to CAE is a gradual one, and he is splitting time during the week between each as he shifts into the new role. The timing is also coincident with turning the cows out on

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Hazen Service Week Enters Second Year

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK – May 13-17 was Hazen Union's second annual Service Week, where students work on projects in the community as well as Hazen's greenhouse and kitchen. The Center For an Agricultural Economy (CAE) was a community sponsor again this year.

CAE Education and Agriculture Coordinator Sierra Rozzo said the program, which is for grades 10 to 12, not only uplifts the school for lower grades during their standardized testing week but, more importantly, also develops connections between the school and community.

"The value of Service Week is it strengthens the community and connects students to a deeper understanding of where they live. It's all part of the value of place-based and community-based learning, and it gets students engaged and invested in the place they live," she continued.

Rozzo said the CAE's mission of being a resource for the community lines up with the Service Week. She noted that a lot of the host sites for the 19 projects of Service Week also work with Hazen in other ways which reinforce those school-community bonds. Many of the projects were walking distance from Hazen, but some required transportation, for which both the CAE and Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) pitched in funding.

VSAC Aspirations Project Coordinator Michelle Legare said the program raised the sense of community and boosted morale.

"We've done a lot of research on ways that you can raise postsecondary [school] outcomes. One of those ways is having the school and community that link one another. And it gives the community awareness of the good things happening in the school," she commented.

The time students spend on Service Week projects counts towards Hazen's graduation requirement of 30 hours of community service. Students can earn up to five hours per day of community service and up to eight per week. Participating in Service Week from tenth through twelfth grade would nearly fill that requirement.

Senior JayDen Lanphere said this was his first Service Week, though he does similar things to help out others, normally on his own time. He worked on garden beds and worked with another group to pick up trash.

"I feel like I did a lot for my community. I helped people that needed to be helped," he said.

Senior Jade Morrison is in her second Service Week. She worked at the Hardwick location of Heartbeat Lifesharing to pick up trash, as well as raking and moving rocks after plowing. She said she found it educational how Heartbeat depends mostly on its own resources and the community, adding the experience also showed her "different things you wouldn't otherwise see."

"I never knew about Heartbeat," she said. "I never knew there was a community like that. It's awesome to see."

Robert Gravel is also a senior on his second Service Week and said he worked on Hazen's Greenhouse which he felt was "pretty meaningful."

"[Service Week] definitely makes me want to do more, know what I can do to help others," he said. "It's good to have students out in the community."

Eighth-grader Bailey Shepard said even though he isn't eligible for Service Week for another two years he's "looking forward to it." He said he still helped out this year on his own with cleanup on the Hardwick Trails and helped design the Service Week banner. "It builds the idea of doing service in the community," he said. "And, it's way better than SBAC [standardized testing]."

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Bethany Dunbar, Center for an Agricultural Economy community programs manager, guides Jolie Langevin (left) and Dylan Kempton (right) on which garden beds need rebuilding at the community gardens on Atkins Field in Hardwick. The project was part of Hazen Union's 2nd Annual Service Week. The week included 160 students in grades 10 through 12 working four days at 19 project sites throughout the community.

Robitille Loses Supreme Court Appeal

by Doug McClure

MONTPELIER – The Vermont Supreme Court rejected Melissa Robitille's appeal of her 2017 conviction for the involuntary manslaughter of her 13-year-old son Isaac, referred to in court documents as "I.R."

Her attorneys appealed based on three grounds: "the trial court impermissibly restricted cross-examination of the State's key witness," "the State presented insufficient evidence to sustain her conviction," and "the court committed plain error in not providing jurors with a specific unanimity instruction." Isaac died the night of August 21, 2014, according to court documents. The medical examiner concluded his death resulted from alcohol toxicity exacerbated by Isaac's existing conditions. Isaac required caretakers to feed him through a tag connected to his stomach. Court documents note Isaac nonetheless "attended school and was learning sign language."

What actions resulted in Isaac's

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Supervisory Union Vacating Building

by Will Walters

PLAINFIELD – Select board member James Volz opened the recent board meeting stating the Cutler Memorial Library will be holding its annual Book and Plant Sale on May 31 and June 1 and encouraged people to come out for it. It is an important event that helps raise money for the library and provides community members the opportunity to purchase low cost and enjoyable reading materials which helps boost literacy in town.

Town Clerk Linda Wells told the board Washington Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU) will be vacating its office space in the municipal building as of October 1. The supervisory union will be dissolving since its two school districts, Twinfield Union School and Cabot School, have been reassigned by the Agency of Education to the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (CCSU) in Danville under Act 46. Almost all WNESU staff members have been reassigned to CCSU with Superintendent Mark Tucker being hired as interim superintendent for one year.

The select board discussed issues such as the possibility of making the space available for town use, presently needed repairs, recent weatherization measures, the loss of rental income and the contract of the existing lease agreement.

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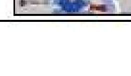
Wildcats Earn Second Win



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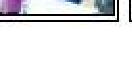
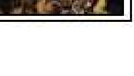
Craftsbury Academy Woodlot Meeting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