THE
Hardwick Gazette
Since 1889

75 cents

Wednesday, August 9, 2017 | Hardwick • Cabot • Calais • Craftsbury • Greensboro • Marshfield • Plainfield • Stannard • Walden • Wolcott • Woodbury | Volume 128 Number 31

An Empty Pond

photo by Doug McClure

Great Hosmer Pond is quiet and empty, despite the sunny weather. The Craftsbury Outdoor Center agreed to keep its sculling vessels off of the pond between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. to assuage property owners who want to water ski on the pond. The Agency of Natural Resources has proposed a new rule that specifically limits the times that racing shells and rowing sculls can be used on the pond.

Town Plans for New Garage Building and Heating System

By Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — After fire severely damaged the roof of one of the buildings at the town garage last winter, the town is working on a bid document for a new 50-by-50-foot storage structure.

The town will pay for a cement foundation and insurance will cover the rest.

Town manager Jon Jewett said that the town will write its own bid document to save time, which is crucial, as the bid must be ready by September. The select board agreed with this approach.

The town also needs a plan for how to heat the primary town garage building. In past years, an old under-sized wood furnace supplied the heat. With September around the corner, time is short.

"We either need to find somebody right off who can put in a heating system for the coming season, or we need to get some firewood up there and plan to do this next year," said board chair Eric Remick.

The coldest months, when the furnace is most needed, are also the busiest times for the road crew, which makes it difficult to keep it burning.

The board discussed purchasing a wood pellet or coal-based heat source. For now, the decision is to order 20 cords of wood, rather than rush the decision on a long-term solution.

The board formally changed the traffic ordinance to prohibit any cars from cutting through the

See GARAGE, Page Four

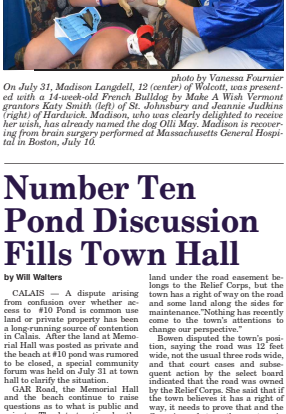

photo by Vanessa Fournier

On July 31, Madison Langdell, 12 (center) of Wolcott, was presented with a 14-week-old French Bulldog by Make A Wish Vermont grantors Katy Smith (left) of St. Johnsbury and Jeannie Judkins (right) of Hardwick. Madison, who was clearly delighted to receive her wish, has already named the dog Olli May. Madison is receiving from brain surgery performed at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, July 10.

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Art teacher Mimi Smyth watches as Zhou Haolan, 16, (American name: Kevin), left and Zhou Jinghan, 13, (American name: Beal), right, use stencils to paint designs on t-shirts during the Chinese Cultural Camp held at Hazen Union last week.

Survey Results on Cabot School Future

by Will Walters

CABOT — A public forum will be held tonight to discuss the results of the community survey on the future of Cabot School. The school board conducted the survey in July, over the internet and via physical questionnaires that were available from the town clerk's office and the library. The forum will be held in the Cabot School Performing Arts Center, starting at 6 p.m.

In addition to the survey results, discussion on an alternative Vermont Academy will be on the agenda. The Academy was discussed at recent school board meetings as an alternative to complying with Act 46 requirements.

198 respondents answered 18 survey questions about what the community wants for educational opportunities for Cabot students.

Cabot residents with at least one child in school comprised 46.97 percent of respondents; 34.76 have lived in Cabot for over 10 years; and 89.3 percent voted in the June 20 vote on merging with Twinfield Union School and Danville school. Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents (65.6%) voted against the merger.

Those who voted 'yes' to the merger ranked the factors that influenced their vote (from most to least influential) as: closing the entire school in the future; maintaining and strengthening focus on our PK-8 program; feeling like the oth-

See SURVEY, Page Four

INDEX

VAST Settlement ..... Page 2
Route 2 Construction ..... Page 2
Cardboard Armada ..... Page 2
Salvation Farms Manager ..... Page 2
Funowry Performances ..... Page 9
Auditions for Murder ..... Page 6
Sports ..... Page 7
Three Sisters Review ..... Page 8
Summer Music Review ..... Page 8
Business Directory ..... Page 8
Classifieds ..... Page 9

hardwickgazette.com

Number Ten Pond Discussion Fills Town Hall

by Will Walters

CALAIS — A dispute arising from confusion over whether access to #10 Pond is common use land or private property has been a long-running source of contention in Calais. After the land at Memorial Hall was posted as private and the beach at #10 pond was rumored to be closed, a special community forum was held on July 31 at town hall to clarify the situation.

CAR Road, the Memorial Hall and the beach continue to raise questions as to what is public and private. The latest action by the Women's Relief Corps to post the land has highlighted the need to clarify the issue.

The CAR Road has perplexed the select board as to whether it is a public right of way or not. Decades worth of public records do not seem to answer the question.

An incident from last year at the #10 Pond have brought matters forward. The select board, the state police and the sheriff's department were all involved with a former Montpelier resident who showed up at the pond access naked. A number of women were concerned – some said they were scared - by the man's harassment. His state of intoxication also made them worry about their safety.

Peg Bowen, treasurer of the Relief Corps, began the forum by giving a history of the property and Memorial Hall. The site is now owned by the Women's Relief Corps chapter of the Grand Army of the Republic organization. She cited a special state statute giving tax relief to the Corps.

Select Board chair Denise Wheeler took to a question regarding CAR Road and whether it was a town highway. She said that "historically, the town has considered CAR Road to be a fourth class town highway and (it) has been maintained as such by the town." She said that the town believes the land under the road easement belongs to the Relief Corps, but the town has a right of way on the road and some land along the sides for maintenance."Nothing has recently come to the town's attentions to change our perspective."

Bowen disputed the town's position, saying the road was 12 feet wide, not the usual three rods wide, and that court cases and subsequent action by the select board indicated that the road was owned by the Relief Corps. She said that if the town believes it has a right of way, it needs to prove that and the Corps is ready to go the court again to keep it from being "stolen" for a third time.

Wheeler moved discussion to the swimming access. Bowen said the organization has taken no official action to open it up for swimming. She said that people have used the beach area for swimming for many years and that camp owners claim to have rights to the access. She disputed any such claim, maintaining that the access belongs to the Corps.

Cathy Silk, president of the Stow chapter, said it has never been promoted as a swimming access and more and more people now are coming from out-of-town. She said "people always swam there and walked across private property to go out to the point and swim. We've never promoted it as a swimming access, especially a public one, because the liability would be enormous for us to do that."

Bowen said in response to Wheeler that nobody posted the access closed to swimming, "only the point where the (Memorial) Hall is has been posted." She said the clerk's office suggested posting the land because of the naked man. "I never saw him, although I have seen his car."

"Lucky you," said someone in the audience.

Wheeler said that the town

See TEN, Page Four

Agency of Natural Resources Joins the Hosmer Pond Debate

by Doug McClure

CRAFTSBURY — It's just past two-thirty on a summer August afternoon at Craftsbury Outdoor Center. The threat of storms is long gone and the sun is out, shining off the calm waters of Great Hosmer Pond. It looks inviting and cool. You just want to shake off the sultry air of late summer and jump in.

A few kids just did just that, but they've wandered off and now it's quiet. The sculling boats sit in their storage pens, untouched; the rows of chairs fronting the docks are empty. The lake is empty of people and vessels.

It wasn't always this way, and it isn't accidental how it changed. A group of property owners, led by Cliftondale County State's Attorney Sarah George, have claimed that the Craftsbury Outdoor Center (COC) is monopolizing the pond with its sculling classes. COC responded that it wasn't, and voluntarily scaled back its summer sculling operations, although that is the largest profit center for the COC and helps them subsidize classes for local residents.

Each side has its arguments, and each is looking for the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) to settle the dispute for once and all.

COC and the Friends of Hosmer Pond documented that sculling activities alone generate $1.2 million for the local economy, funding seventy-five jobs and a community rowing program. The rowing program meets three days a week during the summer and provides residents an inexpensive way to get into the sport, according to COC's Sheldon Miller.

In July, George, acting, she said, as a private citizen, talked to media state-wide. She said that she wanted to water-ski on Great Hosmer Pond more often than she currently can. She contends that the COC is monopolizing the lake.

Water-skiing on Great Hosmer Pond is logistically challenging in any common use scenario. According to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) map, of the pond's 149 acres, just 32.81 acres (22 percent of its surface) is 200 feet or more from the shoreline. Vermont Statutes Annotated (VSA) Title 23 Section 3311(c)(1) states that "a person shall not operate any vessel, except a sailboard or a police or emergency vessel, within 200 feet of the shoreline, a person in the water, a canoe, rowboat, or other vessel, an anchored or moored vessel containing any person, or anchorages or docks, except at a speed of less than five miles per hour which does not create a wake. "

The 32.81 acres, are not contiguous: the largest area is the one in front of the COC with 19.49 acres, according the DEC. The second largest area is 8.02 acres and is at the opposite end of the lake. That area has a loon nesting site, a separate DEC fact sheet says, which under the Use of Public Waters (UPW) rules means neither people nor vessels can come within 300 feet of the birds during nesting season (May 1st–July 31st).

Given the shape of the pond and the DEC rules, Great Hosmer is a poor candidate for water skiing. Add other craft, swimmers and loons, and the logistics for water skiing get even more daunting.

George has admitted that she is the only regular user of a high-speed boat on the lake.

The situation gets even more complicated. A quirk of legislation puts the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in charge of enforcement of the rules governing speed boats.

Contacted by The Gazette, DMV Commissioner Robert Ide said that "an antiquated law that no one can explain gives the DMV regulatory authority for setting speed limits for boats. We've never been asked to do so. We have no experience doing this. We believe this responsibility properly lies with the ANR. We're anxious to get this responsibility moved to the ANR and will work on doing so during the next legislative session."

Asked whether the DMV has the resources for enforcing boat speed limits, Ide said: "We don't even have a boat."

The next steps are determined by the ANR's rule-making process. On July 25th, the ANR issued a proposed change to the UPW rules specific to Great Hosmer Pond. The change adds a single paragraph which states:

"Use of racing shells and rowing sculls is prohibited on the Pond

See DEBATE, Page Four

Greensboro Association, DEC Seeking the Right Dam Solution

by Doug McClure

GREENSBORO — A perennial problem plaguing Caspian Lake for ninety years has been the lake's water level. Ever since Greensboro business folk invested $50,000 to create seventy-eight summer camps on its shores in 1922 as "Highland Estates," the lake has shown a propensity to overflow, according to H. Clay Simpson's History of Caspian Lake.

The history says that in the granite boom days of the 1920s, the search was on for a way to power Woodbury's granite finishing quarries using water, and Caspian's high-flow dam was considered a prime candidate. In the end, just as with Hardwick's Jackson Dam, the Woodbury Granite Electric Company looked elsewhere and the project sat idle. Hardwick purchased the Caspian Lake Outlet, the beach, and the water rights. According to the history, the Gazette reported "the very few voters who attended instructed the Trustees to purchase what was known as the Cuthbertson Lot situated between the highway and a water gate at Caspian Lake."

From the start, according to the history, the relationship between Hardwick and the camp owners was difficult. The summer was wet and they blamed Hardwick's water release policies for camps flooding. The case went to court in July and the court "required Hardwick to make predetermined releases of water in the future for each season of the year," Simpson's history says.

During the October Flood of 1927, the lake's dam broke and it flooded Greensboro. The water overwhelmed Cuthbertson's store — now Willey's — and a grist mill, the History says, a flooding so severe that people feared the entire shore might break loose and pour down the valley to flood Hardwick itself.

That flood was the impetus for camp owners to form the Greensboro Association in 1934, with a primary goal of monitoring the lake's water level, Simpson says. Since then, the Association has broadened its focus to include water quality, lake protection, and overall improvement of the lives of the village's residents.

Now, the Association is working with the State of Vermont's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Watershed

See DAM, Page Four

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Stephanie Gargulio (center) helps Gracie Laurence, 9, (left) and Taylor Thompson, 7, (right) build a Fairy House on Hardwick Trails August 4. Thirty-three children and 10 adults attended the Building a Fairy House program, sponsored by the Jeudevine Memorial Library.