



A panoramic view from the laien south of the Green Mountain Monastery in Greensboro, as fall edges in.

photo by Doug McClure

Conservation Presentation at Green Mountain Monastery

by Doug McClure

GREENSBORO — It is a warm day for mid-September, with autumn tingling the leaves with just a bit of color. A crowd of two dozen is at the Green Mountain Monastery, gathered to hear the results of an eight-week project by graduate students from the University of Vermont (UVM) masters' program in Field Naturalism and Ecological Planning.

The students' presentation provides documentation for the masters of the Monastery, to help in obtaining a conservation easement to protect the land from development. The students also counts towards the research's Master's of Science

(M.S.) degree in Plant Biology. All the land surrounding the monastery is conserved. Two streams cross the land. The students have been researching the hypothesis that the streams serve as natural corridors for wildlife crossing through the area, acting as migratory or escape routes for nearby wildlife. If so, the students agree, the land should be protected.

The students adopted a "never cake" approach to analyzing the land — from bedrock up to the wildlife roaming the surface. The presentation covered a detailed analysis of their research results. Student Jason Marzowski began the discussion with "the story of

a place," as told through the bedrock. As part of the Waits River Formation, the area holds cindered red soil that is conducive to agriculture, he says.

Student Chris Archibald picked up the narrative, noting that "a big part of this landscape is hydrology." Soborn described the two streams, which create ground water seepage that encourages biodiversity in an unseasonal Northern White Cedar swamp, which thrives in the cold, as long as there is sufficient water seepage.

The students noted a beaver dam at the confluence of the two streams, which led them to some bore pine trunks. To further investi-

gate whether the two streams were travel corridors, the students set up camera traps.

Marzowski showed a photograph of a caribou bear from one camera corner. The bear is investigating the camera.

"It's a pretty big black bear," says Marzowski. The next photo is blurry, but the temperature reading jumped a few degrees. "I can only conclude he's licking the camera."

Just twenty minutes later, further upstream, another photo shows the same bear. His progress between the two camera locations supports the theory that the brook is a corridor that animals use to

cross the Monastery land.

"They're using these creeks as migration corridors," says Marzowski.

The next student to speak is Lauren Sopher. Her discussion focuses on cultural history, specifically the stories that the students identified in the course of their work on old foundations, and will farm machinery, a stretch of dilapidated cedar fencing. Further research revealed a sugar bush and a sugar bush, which explains the sudden presence of sugar maple in the area of the property.

"We want to interpret the landscape through the lens of human impact," says Sopher.

Student Hannah Litch discusses a final map that is not so much a final map that is not so much where the property is as "where it wants to be," taking into account the cumulative research the students did.

Student Carolyn Losh sums up the presentation by describing the students' experience.

"We felt that the Monastery is a place where people and nature can go forward. It is a shared and sacred place... It is amazing how much conserved land there is in Greensboro," she says.

In the follow-up discussion at the end of the formal presentation, the students discuss other interesting findings. They mentioned moose

tracks and a newly-designated type of foresting like of yellow birch, red spruce, hemlock, and haddock.

At the end of the presentation, several members of the audience thank the students for giving them an easy-to-understand presentation of why conserving the land is important.

Greensboro Land Trust chair Clay Grey attended the talk and described it as "inspiring."

The supporting documentation will be sent to the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB) this week. According to Grey, the hope is that the board will decide by 2019 to grant the easement.

Hazen Union Activists Give Presentation at United Nations Peace Conference

by Finn Watkins

NEW YORK, NY — Last Friday, two Hazen Union students, Zeynon Davinca and Audrey Grant, made their way to New York City to present their project, POC: Power of Color, at the United Nations Peace Conference. A group called United contacted Zeynon and Audrey saying they had heard about the project which the students presented it at the Clemmons Family Farm last June.

The organization felt that the girls' work was fit for the conference. The two started working on their presentation in 2016, in response to the racism that some of Hazen's students felt was prevalent

in the high school. With the help of members of Stand Up, a Hazen Union-based group, the two created their way to New York City to present their project, POC: Power of Color, at the United Nations Peace Conference. A group called United contacted Zeynon and Audrey saying they had heard about the project which the students presented it at the Clemmons Family Farm last June.

"What we are talking about here is breaking free from internalized racism and oppression. Finding the beauty and strength within ourselves and each other to help the wounds of hundreds of years of being conditioned to feel inferior," says Rachel Stevens, one of the leaders of Stand Up. "My hope is through this and all the work I do to see UN, Peace Day



Love signs adorn the utility pole at the intersection of Mill Street and Main Street in Plainfield village, but who placed the sign, says no one. Photo by Will Walters

Questions Raised Over Act 46 Impact

by June Pichal Cook

GREENSBORO — In the push to consolidate school districts, the efficiency, equity, and quality of Act 46 is being questioned by Hazen Union school clerk David Kelley. Kelley wants accountability from the resulting merger under Act 46 in achieving academic outcomes and educational cost savings.

Greenboro select board chair Wood made a letter Kelley wrote to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), seeking the board's support in signing onto the document. Although individual board members agreed with points in the letter, the consensus was the select board wasn't an appropriate venue.

Without an elementary school, Kelley feels young families would lose quality care into small, rural towns; children would be busied longer distances; property values and property taxes would shrink, and the social and civic heartbeat of some towns may begin to flatline.

In an interview, Kelley said all school districts are going through Act 46's difficult and expensive exercises because they represent a good thing to increase efficiency and quality.

"It's going to have a monumental effect getting rid of local boards and getting power vested in regional boards. Its impact will be felt by See IMPACT, Page Four

for mergers to be dissolved where they do not achieve the intended goal.

The legislative goal of Act 46 was enhancing educational quality, equity, and efficiency through merged school districts, Kelley said. He questioned the efficacy of doing away with local boards in favor of unified regional boards, based on the consolidation initiatives that took place in Maine, West Virginia, and Nebraska.

Kelley noted that centralization moves school governance further away from local involvement. Larger towns would dominate and control regional boards. More community engagement with schools is a positive, universal sentiment, and Act 46 does the opposite, Kelley said.

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Community Allies' Second Annual Block Party at Atkins Field is 'A Success'

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — Just days after vandals marred West Glover with racist, neo-Nazi graffiti, the Community Allies for Safety, Trust, and Respect put on their second annual block party at Atkins Field. The only point markers were all over a finger-painting table, where several kids were either creating art or making a contained mess, depending on one's perspective.

Hair of the Dog played classic rock covers and a table served fresh vegetables for salad, food and six screens, all of it donated. Three tables were set up with activities, all open to the Allies' hosts that afternoon.

"The Community Allies are invested in making this a safe community more so. For anyone regardless of age, race, gender identity, class, ability, or religion. As long as there are no people in this community that don't feel safe, we have work to do," said Tara Reynolds of the Allies.

A good-sized crowd turned out for the event. People of all ages were socializing, enjoying the food, and listening to music.

"What we are hoping to do is to create spaces for people to come together across lines of difference and listen and learn from one another," says Reynolds. "We were very happy with the turnout. We were trying to get people to come out that otherwise wouldn't have." According to Reynolds, attendees reached at least one hundred fifty. A pin-waiting contest earlier resulted in a lot of fun and messy faces, a face-painting table got the attention of children like Sawyer Holmes, 7, who looked very much like a tiger.

Another booth had a poster board with over three dozen photos under the heading "What I Love About Hardwick." Throughout summer the Allies have been in all Friday days with a small whiteboard, encouraging people to write some-



Community members take part in a messy pin-waiting contest at the second annual Community Allies' block party on Saturday, September 16.

thing they love about Hardwick in it. The Allies then took a photo of the person holding the whiteboard to display the reasons they wrote. Responses ranged from "general feeling" to "I'll be there there is eat" and "the Memorial Park."

The Allies originally grew as a response to a 2013 murder resulting from domestic violence. Since then, the group has worked with other community organizations and agencies to raise awareness and start conversations in the community.

How can we lift up the stories of safety, trust, and respect to make the children like Sawyer Holmes, 7, who looked very much like a tiger. Another booth had a poster board with over three dozen photos under the heading "What I Love About Hardwick." Throughout summer the Allies have been in all Friday days with a small whiteboard, encouraging people to write some-



Hardwick Town Manager Jon Jewett (left) watches as Tom Badkins (right) and Percy Allen (center) of the Public Works Dept. crew paint parallel parking spaces in front of the Hardwick Elementary School. The select board voted to change the parking from angle parking for safety reasons.

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