THE
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photo by Vanessa Fournier

Around 40 people attended the AVARE Candlelight Vigil held on October 11 at The Peace Park, in Hardwick. At night are AVARE's silent witnesses bearing the names of loved ones who have been killed by domestic violence.

Authorities Talk About Public Safety in Plainfield Tonight

by Will Walters

PLAINFIELD — A forum on public safety will be held tonight in the Town Hall Opera House at 7 p.m. The forum will have representatives of the Vermont State Police (VSP) Middlesex Barracks and the Washington County Sheriff's Department.

The meeting had been scheduled for an earlier date, but the trooper scheduled was promoted and unable to attend. The select board has been interested in several public safety topics, from speeding to the rise in crime in town. Andrea Gould is developing a neighborhood watch program in the community.

There is a bill in the legislature requiring every town to provide police coverage, either through a municipal police force, or some form of contract with a law enforcement agency. A bill under consideration is S.27, which will require all municipalities in Vermont to provide "primary police coverage" within their jurisdictions. The senate government operations committee is holding public meetings throughout the state to get public input on the proposal, one that has been introduced in the legislature over a long period of years.

Sen. Jeanette White, of the Windham district, sponsored the bill and said the committee is working making things more equitable. The committee wants to address the disparity in coverage, service, and payment by small towns that are under pressure to provide the best possible coverage while minimizing expenditures.

"Should small towns be able to rely on the VSP for coverage, shouldn't they have to provide for coverage? This does not mean having a police department, but perhaps contracting with the sheriff, or another town," said White.

White said "we heard one town spends $10 per person for basically what amounts to 1 hour a day of coverage from the sheriff, yet expects coverage when something happens. Another town spends $240 per person. Some towns spend nothing and simply rely on VSP."

Committee forums are set for Waterbury on October 24 from 1:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the State Office Complex, Fox Conference Center, Oak Room, 280 State Drive and in Montpelier on Nov. 7 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the Ethan Allen conference room in the state capitol.

See SAFETY, 9

Groups Continue to Battle Pollinator-Killing "Neo-nics"

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — Sierra Club member Judy Bellairs and Rep. Joseph "Chip" Troiano (D-Stannard) were at the Jeudevine Public Library on Monday evening for the "Mobilization for Pollinator Survival" public meeting.

Their primary goal was to raise awareness of neonicotinoids, or "neo-nics" — a dangerous pesticide which harms bees and other pollinators.

"The goal of this meeting is to help educate more people in the State of Vermont about the legislative agenda and support that they pass these items [to ban neonics]," local resident Emily Lanxner, who ran the meeting's agenda, said.

They all agreed it will take a lot of work.

"If we want to pass legislation, we need to have lots of people talking about it, we need lots of people getting educated about pollinators, and then eventually contacting their legislators," Bellairs said.

The next legislative session begins in January, which leaves a short window to mobilize activists and engage lawmakers.

Troiano cautioned that even with a bill drafted and introduced to the House, it must go to committee, get taken up, and work its way to the Senate for further consideration. This all needs to happen during a busy year, with numerous competing priorities.

He said that he would coordinate efforts with legislative council Michael O'Grady to bring legislation to fruition and start the process. The House Agricultural Committee, chaired by Rep. Carolyn Partridge (D-Windham), would likely be its first destination.

He said O'Grady is very familiar with this subject.

"He had concerns about trying to get distributors to offer non-treated seeds," Troiano said.

He added O'Grady feels there needs to be prohibition, so farmers wouldn't be tempted to use treated seeds, which they may prefer for fighting off pests.

If the bill were to make its way to the House Agriculture Committee, Partridge could call in experts for testimony and things could move forward. Alternatively, the bill could just stay in committee and no action would be taken this year.

Other countries have already banned neonics, though it is unclear how effective these moves have been. Canada is in its first year of prohibition. The European Union has banned them, as well, but exceptions are still allowed on a case-by-case basis, as farmers adapt.

The complexity of the issue was emphasized throughout the evening. Audience member Margaret Laggis said that she works extensively with farmers on these issues. She cautioned that neonics are generally not a standalone product, but come with a mix of other ingredients, all which serve a purpose.

"When you buy corn or soybean at a commercial level, it's coated with a recipe [of chemicals]," she said. "It's not neonics alone, it's a recipe of items and it might be an anti-fungal, it might be for corn rootworms … there's a variety of things that corn seed comes

See POLLINATORS, 9

Students, WonderArts Work Together on New Craftsbury School Sign

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Craftsbury Elementary School students display their new sign last week. First-through fourth-grade students planned the layout of the sign, which was then painted under the guidance of teaching artist Iara Goreau, WonderArts Executive Director Ceilidh Galloway-Kane (back left) is pictured with some of the students.

Cabot Voters: Keep the High School

by Will Walters

CABOT — Results returned to the school board at its Monday night meeting showed community members prefer keeping the high school open rather than joining the Walden, Barnet and Waterford new unified district. The vote of 155 to 129, in favor. The 600 surveys mailed during the past week yielded 284 responses.

The board voted 5-0 to side with the community's preference.

It mailed six hundred surveys to which each adult in every household could indicate their preference of the two options presented. There are about 1,129 voters on the checklist. With the potential for two responses per survey, the mailing may have reached all of the town's voters. The 284 responses returned equal approximately 25 percent of the voters.

Board members Jackie Folsom and Sharon O'Connor said comments that were returned support both sides of the question and that some of them helped to the board determine how to reach the public and what is important to them.

Folsom read some of the comments, ranging from: "why don't you build a wood chip burner?" to "not enough information was provided," questions about transportation for extracurricular activities, and questions on how students would get to choice schools with no transportation.

O'Connor said people would have to bring their children to their school of choice, unless the receiving school provided the transportation.

The school directors discussed their preferences before taking a vote. Some favored keeping the high school not only because that is the way the survey went, but also because they had reasons to feel it was the better choice.

Folsom said she would go with the results, which she felt were evenly split, but felt it would be a disservice to low-income students to make it more difficult to go to school without transportation.

See SCHOOL, 9

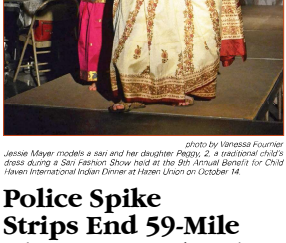


photo by Vanessa Fournier

Jessie Mayer models a sari and her daughter Pegay, 2, a medieval child's dress during a Sari Fashion Show held at the 9th Annual Benefit for Child Haven International Indian Dinner at Hazen Union on October 14.

Police Spike Strips End 59-Mile Chase in Hardwick

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — Hardwick resident Kaitlin Davis, 22, faces a slew of charges after a 59-mile-long low-speed pursuit on October 14, according to Vermont State Police Trooper Jason Haley.

Davis was initially signaled to stop in Fairlee for a moving violation, but did not comply and instead led State Police on a chase north on Interstate 91. According to a Vermont State Police statement, police deployed spike strips "effectively" in St. Johnsbury, but Davis pulled onto US 2 and headed west.

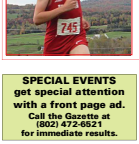
Owing to the damage done by the first spike strips, the pursuit was "low-speed," according to State Police. Davis then turned onto Route 15. An hour into the pursuit, at 12:25 a.m., Lamoille dispatch alerted Hardwick Police that Vermont State Police were inbound with a 10-80 ("Chase In Progress"), according to Hardwick Police Chief Aaron Cochran. Shortly after, Hardwick Police joined the State Police in the pursuit with Officers Molleur and Leboe in two police cruisers. Spike strips were deployed twice more.

The first attempt on Route 15 was unsuccessful, according to Cochran; the second attempt, on Route 15 near the Moose Horn Cafe, was successful.

"I believe the car had one tire left," said Cochran.

See SPIKES, 9

In Sports



Leahy Siblings Earn Wins for Wildcats

Charger Boys Find Their Stride

Lady Cats Snap Winless Streak

photo by Vanessa Fournier

Ron Wiesen of the Hardwick Trails Committee fills his car with pumpkins for the 14th Annual Pumpkin Walk held October 15 on the Trails. Wiesen made many trips to get approximately 425 carved pumpkins up to the trails.

Deficit To Hit Tight School Budgets

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — The state is expecting an $47 million shortfall in its education fund for the next school year. Sources indicate that the deficit could be significantly larger, but there is no confirmation of a higher number at the moment. As a result, this upcoming budget process will likely be more challenging than in years past.

This year, the budget process is just getting started. Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) Superintendent Joanne LeBlanc said that the OSSU has started informing individual school boards about the deficit.

"They are already projecting anywhere up to an additional 8 cents on the Homestead Tax Rate, starting with this next budget."

She said the increase is something boards have to keep in mind throughout the budget process, which can be intensive, with extra meetings and longer hours.

"There are some challenges ahead of us," she said.

Last year, Hardwick Elementary, Hazen Union, and Wolcott all required multiple votes to get their budgets approved by voters. In 2014, it took Hazen Union four tries to get voters to pass a budget.

LeBlanc said they suspected there could be a state education fund deficit, but few were prepared for how large it actually is. She said that it is still too early to say what this means in terms of policy or program changes at the schools.

"There are a lot of variables… [we] won't know until we get to the end of the budget process," she said.

Hardwick Elementary School school board chair and OSSU board chair Jennifer Fliegelman also said they have just received the OSSU budget, which is to be finalized by December. The individual school budgets are due by January, so that they can be warned a month ahead of Town Meeting Day, in March.

Last year, Hardwick Elementary's final budget proposal passed with no tax increase, but the prior two years were more challenging, she said.

"The previous two budgets, which didn't have very big increases, had trouble getting passed," she said. "I think from what people have said, people are struggling to pay the taxes they have.

"Enough people care about the

See DEFICIT, 9

Halloween Goal: No Tricks, Only Treats

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — On October 5, the Hardwick Select Board discussed how the town should prepare for another safe and fun Halloween. For years, the town has taken a precautionary policy of encouraging Halloween trick-or-treaters to stay in the neighborhood south of Wolcott Street, around Atkins Field. Police Chief Aaron Cochran expects "between one hundred and two hundred" trick-or-treaters during the peak, if the weather is good. This allows the police to better mitigate any mischief.

"What we've done is concentrate [trick or treating] into a certain neighborhood; part of the community's responsibility (is) to help those folks who live on those three streets out," board member Danny Hale said, referring to the extra candy and decorations residents of that neighborhood are putting out.

Before there was a concentration zone for trick-or-treating, it was more dispersed and harder to control.

"People wanted to create a safer environment [for the kids], which we've done," said Cochran. "But there is a cost to that safer environment."

Those looking to help out can donate candy at the United Church

See HALLOWEEN, 9

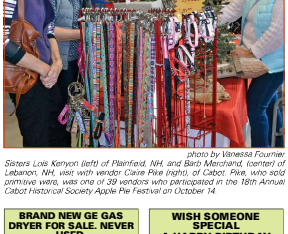


photo by Vanessa Fournier

Sisters Lois Kenyon (left) of Plainfield, NH, and Barb Merchand, (center) of Lebanon, NH, visit with vendor Claire Pike (right), of Cabot. Pike, who sold primitive wares, was one of 39 vendors who participated in the 18th Annual Cabot Historical Society Apple Pie Festival on October 14.

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TONIGHT (OCT 18) Healthcare Forum at Hazen Union High School at 7 p.m. Panelists include Sen. Jane Kitchel, Rep. Chip Troiano

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