



North Wolcott Road washed out as a result of flooding caused by ice jams. The road surface is at upper left; telephone poles lean precariously over the roadway. The view is from the river; the exposed dirt is where the flood undermined and collapsed part of the road.

Ice Jams Cause Flooding on North Wolcott Road

by Doug McClure

NORTH WOLCOTT — In a January that saw records shattered for both high and lows, ice jams became an early concern. Johnson got hit hard; Swanton and Plattsburgh, NY, were hit as hard that evacuations were required. In the North-east Kingdom, we saw dramatic events as well.

This reporter also delivers papers to the North Wolcott Country Store

and was surprised to see "Road Closed" signs while attempting to deliver on my January 17 run. I contacted another of the paper's delivery drivers to alert him that the road was passable from Craftsbury, but not from Wolcott.

An ice jam forced the adjacent river over its banks and obstructed the road. According to Wolcott Town Manager Linda and her staff, the flood of 1995 nearly undermined the road, but the damage twenty-

three years ago was not quite as serious as it was this year.

"A little further north, a section of the road came close to washing out in the flood of '95," she says.

The damage is severe. According to Martin, the tons spent between \$27,000 and \$30,000 to re-open the road, but the fix is just temporary. She says the town cannot build on those properties.

"Further south and adjoining the town property has river encroasements that allow it, 2,

geny work to make it somewhat passable," Martin said. "This area hasn't washed out before."

As a result of the '95 flood, the town bought out two flooded properties which are now a half field. That area is allowed to flood. She says the town cannot build on those properties.

"We are grateful to and supportive of our former trooper for doing so,"

Circus Smirkus Reaffirms Commitment to Safety of Young Performers

by June Pichel Cook

GREENSBORO Circus Smirkus Executive Director Jennifer Carlo issued a statement last week to clarify its former connections with world-renowned clown Barry Lubin of the Big Apple Circus. In a recent New York Times article, Lubin acknowledged and apologized to a young woman for having enticed her into a pornographic photo shoot. She was a serious socialist at the time. Lubin is known worldwide as "Grandma" in his clown performance.

The young woman had performed as a Big Top Trooper at one time with Circus Smirkus. Carlo stated that a communication had been received on Friday, January 19, from the former Circus Smirkus Big Top Trooper. The former trooper alleged that Lubin in 2004 had engaged in acts of sexual misconduct with her. In 2004, Lubin was not employed by Circus Smirkus. The trooper stated that she was longer on tour with Circus Smirkus. "We know that it takes tremendous courage for an accuser to come forward to protect others by exposing a difficult truth," Carlo stated.

Carlo stated, "We acted immediately on this information and severed all ties with Mr. Lubin, including removing him from our Honor Board of Directors. He will not be associated with the 2018 tour or any Circus Smirkus programs in the future."

Circus Smirkus runs three programs: Summer camp in Greensboro, Big Top Troop, and Ringmaster Residencies. In the summers of 2016 and 2017, the staff spent three weeks as a coach with the Big Top Troop in Greensboro. He did not travel with Circus Smirkus on either tour in 2016 or 2017, nor was he associated with Circus Smirkus Camp during that time.

"We actually have strict policies," Carlo said, "but I never to be alone with troopers or campers without other troopers or staff being present. We remind them of the time these kids are in our care and we are responsible for their safety and well-being of these children is our highest pri-

ority, and we have no tolerance for anything that endangers them in any way."

"We are very strict," she said. "We revisit our protocols and training every year."

She emphasized training and supervision of staff is ongoing. Circus Smirkus provides regular training and supervision of staff, counselors, and coaches to ensure their guidelines are met. Background checks are made on every seasonal and permanent employee. All employees are mandatory reporters, she stated, required to communicate any inappropriate behaviors immediately.

Carlo emphasized "We want to reaffirm our commitment to youth safety and the families who trust us to protect their children. Nothing is more important to us than the safety and security of our young people."

She urged that anyone with questions or concerns should contact her at Jennifer.carlo@smirkus.org.



Local Education Leaders Speak Out During School Choice Week

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — While hundreds of kids gathered at the Statehouse last Wednesday for School Choice Week, local education voices also weighed in on why they think giving children this choice is so valuable to education.

A local representative who attended was Rep. Vicki Strong, R-Greensboro, who last year proposed H.450 which would expand school choice to all 12 student districts to attend any public school in the state.

"It's basically saying that any student can attend any public school in the state and that the funding follows the student to that school," Strong said in an interview.

She said once schools are in competition with each other, it should create extra incentive for communities to embrace all its resources.

"Some of these schools have gotten very innovative and Craftsbury Sports Center and Sterling College,

with resources needed to offer programs, and quite a few kids coming to Craftsbury because of the programs they are offering."

Another example she cited was Greensboro School, noting how the school leverages the resources of the Circus Smirkus camp, the new Highland Arts Center, and local businesses as a Jasper Hill campus.

"They'd have to be a little more competitive, and if they can't be there they close eventually," she said. "And it's just by a natural market for schools, it would either get better and attract kids or find maybe they would have to be an alternative kind of school. There are so many creative things they can do now."

According to Strong, H.450 competition will be in consideration of the House Education Committee, chaired by Rep. David Sharpe, D-Hardwick.

Rabeca Ventrice is vice-chair of the Wolcott Elementary School. ■

Deva Link of Craftsbury gave a presentation on soldiers in the Revolutionary War to Craftsbury Community Care Center residents on Jan. 28. From left: Arne Donovan, Ron Gustin and Clea Garcia listen attentively to Link, a war re-enactor for 42 years, portray an officer of Hanger's Vikings. He also showed the many items that a soldier would carry in his soldier's kit.

Six Craftsbury Skiers Make U.S. Olympic Team

by Eric Hanson

CRAFTSBURY — Three of the five women U.S. Bihlsteins and three of nine women Nordic skiers headed to the Olympics in South Korea next month are part of the Craftsbury Green Racing Program (GRP), coached by Papa Mirocheva and Sam Dougherty. Susan Dunklee (Barton) had an IHLH place finish in the Sochi games in 2014 and last year placed 2nd in the U.S. National Ski Races a few weeks ago. And the surprise of the week was the naming of Kaitlynn Milovanovic. She knew she had skied for the GRP for many years

developing her shooting skills, and her training has paid off. Emily Dreissgaugler (Marville) has only been doing biathlon for two years, but she's a natural at shooting. She skied in high school but switched to rowing in college and is now back to skiing in the Nordic side, which is the Aki Sargent's (Orleans) second Olympic games. Caitlin Patterson (Andover), AKJ (Vermont) all four U.S. National Ski Races a few weeks ago. And the surprise of the week was the naming of Kaitlynn Milovanovic. She knew she had skied for the GRP for many years

Vermont State Trooper Resigns After Burning Down Own House

by STANNARD

After over a month, the Vermont State Police (VSP) has concluded their investigation into the intentional burning of a structure on Stannard Mountain Road.

That structure, which was assessed at \$100,000 in 2015, was set afire by State Trooper Stephen McGranaghan and Jason Haley. A witness who declined to be identified told The Gazette that the troopers on the scene told those residents that setting fire to their house was not against the law.

In a release, the VSP states: "The Vermont Attorney General's Office has completed their review of the investigation into a fire that occurred on the property of Vermont State Trooper Stephen McGranaghan on December 4, 2017. As a result of the review, it was concluded that Trooper McGranaghan and Trooper Jason Haley burned an A-frame structure owned by Trooper McGranaghan in violation of Vermont's Intentional Burning Act, which is a criminal offense."

The Vermont Attorney General's Office has announced that the most direct and expedient way of resolving this matter is through an administrative process through an arbitrator.

enforcement action under 10 V.S.A. §21. The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is responsible for representing the State in Chapter 201 proceedings. Consequently, the Attorney General's Office has forwarded a copy of the investigation to the Agency of Natural Resources for review.

Effective January 26, 2018, Trooper McGranaghan resigned from the Vermont State Police. Trooper Haley has been reinstated to full duty pending an internal affairs investigation."

School District Treasurer's Salary Cut Dramatically

by June Pichel Cook

CRAFTSBURY — Town Clerk Yvette Brown received the Craftsbury School District Warning on January 23, at 9 a.m., from assessor Charles Egan for the district warning. She says Article 3 is a shock.

The night before she had received a call from Bruce Eyr, chair of the Select Board. He had received the warning and her salary had been reduced to \$2,000.

"It was extremely upset," Brown said. "I thought the call was short."

It was the first time that Brown, who serves as assessor.

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photo by Vanessa Fournier

Workers for RCMA Inc. of Hardwick, covered by Red Miles, erect the steel frame of the new municipal cold storage 2500 square foot building Jan 24. Located on Cowdrey Road in Hardwick, the facility replaces a storage building that burned in November, 2016 due to an arson fire.

Local Business Owners, Statehouse Committee Engage in Minimum Wage Discussion

by Michael Bielawski and Doug McClure

HARDWICK — The Senate Economic Development Committee heard economists and business owners share the pros and cons of raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour. Some local business owners joined in the debate.

"I think it would be impractical for the State of Vermont," Hardwick Village Market owner Pam Trug said. "We're already having a fiscal time making ends meet."

She said the big corporate competitors will have an easier time absorbing the cost without raising prices as much.

Sandy Stockwell, owner of the Gallop Bookshop, also weighed in.

"I think it's only going to lead to inflation" she said. "And people don't want to pay more for their testimony and discuss the issue."

The current proposal for 15/ hour cost would raise the minimum wage \$1.35 and now to \$14.65. She said she would raise it to \$14.40 in 2019, so she should know we are at least contemplating a raise in the future. She said she was already actively discussing how

they would phase in a \$15 minimum wage for their five employees.

"I don't see local business owners," Richard Brochu of Brochu Cigo, said that for 35 years he has had just one employee, his brother, Larry Brochu, so he's fortunate to operate with a lean staff. Still, he sympathizes with other small operations in town when it comes to higher wages.

"Changes impact the cost of business, no matter how we look at it," he said. "It's going to hurt a lot of small businesses."

On Friday morning in Montpelier, the Senate Economic Development Committee continued to take testimony and discuss the issue.

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