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Advantage Cabot And School District Reach A Working Agreement

by Will Walters

CABOT — An agreement has been reached between Advantage Cabot, Incorporated (ACI) and the Cabot School Board establishing a relationship concerning the recruitment and retention of students and their attendance at Cabot School. The agreement was reached and signed on February 19.

Advantage Cabot was formed to recruit students interested in attending Cabot High School, while boarding in the community. The organization has its sights set on the greater Boston and New York areas. The benefits of Advantage Cabot program are also available to students of Cabot and its surrounding area.

ACI purpose is to stabilize and increase the student population of Cabot School and also to create the long-term support of Cabot School on an additional cost to the taxpayers and deepen the links between Cabot School and the community. The educational side plans to provide an enrichment program of academic and extra-curricular activities including new intern and work study opportunities that will

be available to all students attending Cabot School.

The other students that will be sought are suburban and semi-rural students whose families are willing to pay for a quality education that has aspects of independent living and provides interests in diverse areas of knowledge such as farming, animal management, blacksmithing, forestry and similar activities common to the area.

Karen Larsen of ACI said well-regarded boarding schools are looking to follow similar programs and said Chaste, a private boarding and day co-educational school in Connecticut, recently bought a 200-acre farm near Randolph to start a similar program of its own.

Larsen said the first year has a total of two pilot students that will be high school to be hired September, 2018 and have an additional four students in 2019. She said the goal is to have 20 students per year school grade.

The agreement contains several conditions regarding the responsibility of each party. ACI will provide

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photo by Vanessa Fournier
Gary Bellevance of Bellevance Constructors, Inc. opens up a channel at the end of Christies Street in Hardwick, Vermont. The curved pipe cut at the water back to the Cottage Street Bridge so the water could flow more freely.

School Dispute Update

by Will Walters

PLAINFIELD — The fact finder entered a make recommendations on the collective bargaining dispute between Washington, Vermont Supervisory Union (WVNSU), the Plainfield Education Association and the Cabot Teachers' Association has issued a report which is a step in the collective bargaining process. Fact finding takes place in the mediation files to have the parties reach an agreement on their contract.

ira B. Lobel, Esq., of Albany, N.Y. was jointly appointed by the associations and the supervisory union to act as fact finder. A hearing was held on January 8 where the parties through their attorneys, presented written and oral testimony during the hearing. Lobel wrote that the teachers'

statute does not have specific language for guidelines, but he drew upon the municipal employees statute, state employee statute and binding arbitration interest arbitration guidelines.

He cited the guides used, based on statute, in determining his recommendations. They include the stipulations of the parties, the interest and welfare of the public and the financial ability of the incumbent union to pay for increased cost of public services, including the cost of labor.

He also cited the importance of wages, hours and conditions of other employees, the availability of similar services in public employment in comparable communities, the average consumer prices for goods and services, and other compensation presently received by employees, and prior negotiations and existing contracts.

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Ice Jam Almost Leads to Flooding on Lamoille River

by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — The town narrowly missed another major ice jam last week. The close call has prompted concerns that the town needs to do more to manage ice jams — but options are limited.

"They have to come up with something to avoid this from happening a lot of businesses, homeowners, people are getting frustrated with this danger every year."

Vasiladis said finger-pointing is not the answer, but if more doesn't get done, he and others may have to wait with the solution.

Bill Richardson, the owner of Lamoille County Park, said the dealership already has already moved its vehicles to the highest elevation possible.

"There's nothing really we can do, but we prepare as best we can, he said.

He noted that the area is very flat, which contributes to the flood. Two years ago, there was an ice

jam which damaged several cars at Littleville Valley Park, causing tens of thousands of dollars in losses.

"The river was really clear at that time, we didn't expect it," Jewett said.

He said the town might make modifications to the floodplain on the other side of the Lamoille River to lower the elevation a bit so rising waters will flow away from Westbrook Street.

It may also be possible to put special one-way valves on the street drains to prevent water from flowing back out into the streets. Jewett said it is not uncommon for streets to flood even before water pours over the river banks if the one-way valves are not installed.

The town may ask the state's 270 or engineers to see if it is possible to dredge some of the sand that has built up behind the railroad trestle.

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See JAM, 8

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See JAM, 8



photo by Michael Bielawski
Six lawmakers came to Cabot on Monday evening to talk about education matters including Act 46, education funding, special education, and more.

Six State Representatives Visit Cabot, Talk Education Spending

by Michael Bielawski

CABOT — Six lawmakers from Montpelier took time Monday evening to gather in Cabot and discuss issues that affect rural life in north-central Vermont, mostly regarding education and the shaky status of Cabot School. About 40 people attended.

The school has reached pressure from lawmakers and Act 46, the state's controversial education funding statute, to merge the small school with other nearby schools. Over the summer of last year, Cabot and Thwaites residents (including a public school merger proposal that included Twinfield).

Senator Anthony Pollina (D-Washington) garnered loud applause when he stated that he was

one of the few senators at the time to vote against Act 46.

"I thought it had false hope for people that it was going to result in a lot of savings, which I don't think is true, (the savings) would not materialize," he said. "But it was also concerned at the time that it would lead to the closure of small schools and I think that's wrong. In smaller communities, the school is the heart and soul of the community."

"A recurring theme from attendees was that determining school boards have little control of their local budgets, as all the mandates come from Montpelier. Sen. Ann Cummings (D-Washington) emphasized with this notion and asserted the same thing applied to the lawmakers.

"I was really hearing you say, 'we have no control,' she said. "In a lot of ways, we don't have any control. Schools set their school budgets and then we raise the money. It also raises the money to pay for income sensitivity and then a whole lot of people get angry and then they yell at us to cut their taxes. But, in fact, you raise the taxes when you vote the budgets,

Drug Bust in Hardwick

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — On the night of February 25, Hardwick Police Department (HPD) officer Chris Treteanu noticed a tan truck headed east on Mapleville Road. Officer Treteanu believed he recognized the truck as one belonging to individuals known to police for selling and use of opi. So he turned around and pulled over the plates. The plates came back belonging to the individuals he suspected. The van also had a brake light out.

According to Treteanu's statement, the van had turned onto Nichols Road. He believed there to be a high probability of a firearm in the vehicle. The front section of Nichols Road Road was impassable. One back-up arrived, the officers followed the van's tire tracks and found it had gotten stuck.

While interviewing the driver, Treteanu discovered that Peggy Patone was also in the vehicle. According to the affidavit for the case, Officer Treteanu had raised suspicion to ask about Patone's conditions of release when he first spotted the van.

See BUST, 8



photo by Vanessa Fournier
Green Mountain Technology and Career Center student Eugene Carretero grasses some things under the excavator in the school's newly-built greenhouse. The supervisor should be fully operational this week.

Top's Markets Files For Bankruptcy, Expects to Continue to Operate Normally

by Doug McClure

WILLIAMSVILLE, N.Y. — Top's Family Markets filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Tuesday, Feb. 27, 2018. In a press release, the company said the filing is "to eliminate a substantial portion of debt from the company's balance sheet and position Top's for long-term success."

The company says operations are expected to continue as normal and without interruption of customers and vendors. The company has \$200 million in new financing toward that goal.

"Top's Markets has taken an important step to better position our company for long-term success. We are pursuing a voluntary financial restructuring with creditors," said CEO

Gov. Scott Introduces a Shift on Guns in Montpelier

by Doug McClure

MONTPELIER — On February 22, Governor Phil Scott sent a memo to legislators with a focus on gun safety. His self-described "evolution" came just over a week after Vermont State Police arrested 18-year-old Jack Sawyer of Poulintry for his alleged plans to shoot up Fair Haven High School in southern Vermont. That same week, Hysteroid "Kiss" Crew entered Stowe High School in Stowe in Florida and killed seven.

In the memo, Scott writes "Vermont is not immune to the risk of extreme violence in our schools, or our communities... This memo outlines a range of next steps that can help make communities safer and our children safer, with an emphasis on improving school safety and reducing violence. I want to acknowledge that, we are aware, no single solution or combination of actions will eliminate 100% of the risk. I remain fully committed to working with you to establish a comprehensive approach to reduce the risk of violence in our communities... while preserving our Constitutional rights as Vermonters and Americans."

The first priority in the memo is auditing and strengthening school safety, with immediate security reviews, security grants, and engaging the media by promoting a "see something, say something" campaign. The memo also describes protecting those who speak up about concerning behavior with shield laws.

The next section describes legislation for action on preventing a person that the Family Division of Superior Court deems a risk to themselves or others from possessing a firearm. It calls for a bill to allow police to remove firearms from a home where a domestic assault report is received (H.422); evaluating improvements to the ground rules checks system; a Vermont bill limiting gun purchases to 21.

Renee Kelley, executive director of the Out Fishing Hole Gun Shop in Montpelier, and shop employees

Eric Halperin, disagree that new legislation will accomplish anything. (Elite Way Sports in Hardwick conducted an interview request for this article).

"None of these things that are being proposed will solve the problems that are causing these horrible things to happen. I don't know anybody that doesn't think that this stuff is horrible, but just mulling laws because of emotions is really poor policy," says Kelley. "Wearing bloody shirts and standing on castles makes poor policy."

According to Francesca Britannica, "wearing the bloody shirt" was a post-Civil War political strategy of appealing to voters by recalling the passions and hardships of the recent war.

Kelley and Halperin believe the main issue is that current laws, especially those involving mental health reporting, are not being enforced. "After the Florida shooting, Kelley says "They listed three different things that precluded Cruz from buying a firearm. He had been properly reported by the people that were required by federal law to report it." Cruz would not have been able to buy a firearm.

Halperin added, "It is the same issue with the church shooting in Texas. The guy should never have been able to buy a gun, but nothing was reported. If they're (the existing laws) followed and enforced, [it] would have solved a lot of these problems before they were problems."

Making new laws just for the sake of making new laws isn't going to fix that problem. The problems are still there.

According to multiple news outlets, a failure to share information between the military and law enforcement allowed the Texas church shooter to legally obtain a firearm. And multiple news outlets reported that a law enforcement officer from local to federal, was alerted to Cruz's mental health status but he posed to others and himself long before the shootings, yet none took action.

As introduced, S.221, known as the "Extreme Risk Protection Order," states "The state shall

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In Sports

Wildcats Survive Tough Week

Lady Huskies Secure Home Playoff Game

Twinfield Boys Starting to Find Their Groove

photo by Doug McClure
The Tops Family Markets' Hardwick Store. The company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, but says it does not expect store closings, or changes in operations.