

THE Hardwick Gaze

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Q&A with Vermont House Candidates



Chip Troiano

Representative Chip Troiano

Candidate Lawrence Hamel
by Michael Bielawski

HARDWICK — Rep. Joseph “Chip” Troiano, D-Stannard, is running for reelection against incumbent Rep. Joseph “Chip” Troiano, D-Stannard and local business owner Lawrence Hamel for the House Caledonia-2 seat. In both contests, the outcome was determined by fewer than 200 votes.

Hamel is a firearms instructor and runs Conservative Restoration, which revitalizes old buildings, including the Hardwick Inn and 574 Building.

Q: This is the third time you’ve run for House. Any thing different this time around?

A: “I swore last time that I’d never run again, but I’ve been involved with the legislation that went through, S.55, the tax increases. Chip now has a voting record. And if you follow that record, which I have, our taxes keep increasing. The budget keeps increasing. And the gun laws that they put through were not necessary. I couldn’t run.”

Q: How will you help make Vermont more affordable again?

A: “I think that the last two years under Governor Scott we have passed budgets that have been exceptional as far as being lean. This 2019 budget that we passed, has tax increases of half of one percent growth against revenue coming in up about two and a half percent now. Now that is the recipe for a good and strong economy for the town.”

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Hardwick Elementary students from left) Logan Case, Isaiah Pangwall and Hunter Martin enjoy the associates they received during a school-sponsored ice cream social celebrating the first week of school.

New Hires at Town Offices

by Doug McCure

HARDWICK — Over the past couple of months, Hardwick has taken on new hires in the roles of Assistant Town Clerk and Business Manager.

Tonia Gray started in her position as Assistant Town Clerk on July 2, 2018 after Sue Cross retired. Gray said she was a scheduler of specialty clinics at Copley before coming to work for Hardwick.

“I love it,” she said of her new role. “I was ready for a change of pace, and I love in Hardwick.”

Gray assists Town Clerk Alberta Miller and said she’s still learning her role. “Everything she does, she’s teaching me. I’m happy to be working for the town.”

In the Town Manager’s office, Casey Rowell started her new job with Hardwick as Business Manager on September 4. She previously worked at Passumpsic Savings for thirteen years, most recently as a branch manager.

“I’m used to overseeing a lot of people. This will be a change of pace,” she said.

Her new job deals largely with finances. A part of the job is a dual system with the Town Clerk

Marshfield Seeks Party Status Over Marshfield Dam

by Will Walters

MARSHFIELD — The select board agreed with the energy committee’s request to have the town request party status before the Public Utilities Commission on Green Mountain Power’s request for a certificate of public good for GMP’s planned work on the Marshfield Dam in Cabot.

The board approved party status, provided that if an attorney is to be hired, the select board will make that decision.

Nick Seifert of the energy committee said GMP intends to do matinee and night work on the service spillway and poutage and tows have the right to address what is planned as the application process for the certificate of public good. Seifert said that work on the service spillway requires it to be blocked off. That leaves the emergency spillway as the major method to address a water to dam emergency. Although the poutage could also be used to take water away from the dam, it is only able to draw down 40 percent of what the spillway could manage, according to Seifert.

See DAM, 7

State Charges Colby Costello in Fatal Crash

by Doug McCure

LYDLE PARK — State’s Attorney Paul Finney filed a charge in Hamouille County Superior Court of Gross Negligence/Death. Resulting against Colby Costello on August 29 in connection with the fatal accident Costello allegedly caused on July 20. In an affidavit, the state laid out a case against Costello for actions it said resulted in the death of 19-year-old Dexter Thurston, including impaired driving (DUI drugs) violation of the Basic Rule (traveling 31.82 mph over the speed limit) and driving to the right. Costello pleaded not guilty.

In its findings, the state said Costello initially told police he was going 60-65 mph, subsequent investigation found the actual speed Costello was traveling was 81.82 mph, which police found, for the affidavit, only to “speedometer” — when the speedometer underestimates physically locks up during a high velocity collision, and sudden loss of vehicular electronic power.

Thurston, left front tire rod made a gouge in the road, the affidavit stated, exclusively placing Thurston’s vehicle well within the correct lane of travel.

EMTs advised police that while working on Costello they saw evidence of a blood alcohol level denied impairment, according to the affidavit, before falling police had to be taken from Highway 7 at 7 a.m., a state trooper at Colby Hospital noted Costello was “falling asleep at the hospital” and a police drug recognition expert (DRE) suspected DUI-Drugs.

Costello resisted a blood sample initially and refused a public defender, according to separate affidavit by Trapper Brian Connor. Police obtained a warrant for a blood test and a lab found quantities of Alprazolam (known as Xanax), Bupropion (an opioid), and Nortriptyline, according to the affidavit.

Costello was issued traffic tickets for Failure to Drive to the Right and Basic Rule, and Connor will be submitting DUI Drug-Death Resulting charges, the original affidavit said.

Throughout the proceeding, Costello showed little emotion and barely spoke, except to acknowledge he understood the charges. His attorney for this arrangement petitioned for Costello to be a public defender, as Costello had neither a vehicle nor a job; the petition was granted in full. The agreement towards a public defender.

Hardwick Man Arrested on Multiple Sex Assault Charges

by Doug McCure

HARDWICK — Vermont State Police (VSP) arrested Hardwick resident Dustin Coia, 20, on August 30 for a number of charges relating to sexual assault on a vulnerable adult and on a 12-year-old male.

“The Vermont State Police conducted a search warrant to record information on an individual had with Coia, without his knowledge the call was being recorded. Coia admitted to level and lascivious conduct with the 12-year-old male, sexually assaulting the 18-year-old female, level and lascivious conduct with the same female one to two years prior, as well as mentioned other victims, with the State Police are still investigating. Coia also admitted to incidentally sexually assaulting the 12-year-old male. The State Police investigation revealed that both victims have cognitive and physical disabilities,” according to a VSP statement.

“On 8/30/18 Coia was taken into custody by the Vermont State Police and transported to the Middlesex State Police barracks for fingerprint and photographs. He was then transported to the Washington County Superior Court, Criminal Division where he was arraigned before the Honorable Judge VanDyusen and pleaded not guilty. Coia was released without bond and was transported to the Northwest Correctional Complex in St. Johnsbury, Vt.

Coia was parole for being a child of an November 2017 and is registered sex offender.

One Hardwick resident remembered Coia as a housing coach at the gym that used to be in the basement of the Hardwick Inn. Coia was a pretty normal guy — until he wasn’t. That’s all I’ve got to say about that.”

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