

Local Resident Receives Citizen Scientist Award

by Eric Hanson

NORWICH — The Vermont Center for Ecostudies (VCE) presented the annual Julie Nicholson Citizen Scientist Award to Eleanor Osborn of Albany.

Osborn's primary project with VCE has been monitoring loon pairs and conducting the annual count for the Vermont Loon Conservation Project. She's also been highly involved with the Breeding Bird Atlas and atlas of the Hutterly and hush-hole. She has been photographing the natural world around her for over 50 years. "Photography taught me a lot, because after I photograph something, I have to check out the field guides, with and without to find out what I was," she said.

Osborn spent much of her life outside Rochester, N.Y., working as a music teacher. Her husband George passed away two years ago, but he joined her on most of her adventures. In 1987, they bought a house adjacent to a 100-acre wetland. She spent about 11 years there learning how wetlands work, exploring and pro-

tecting them as a member of the Fairfield Conservation Board. She created comprehensive inventories of mammals, birds and butterflies in those wetlands. Elton helped the Genesee Land Trust acquire it in 1991 and then volunteered to become the site monitor, maintaining trails, signage and oversight.

Her passion for educating and photography became all-encompassing and fun at the same time when she photographed the Trumpeter Swan Migration Project and then wrote a children's book about it, *Project Utrawran*.

These majestic birds were taught to fly behind ultralights in order to learn their forgotten migration routes to the Chesapeake Bay, and Elkanor had the good fortune to follow them there.

She and George started coming to Vermont to ski at the Craftsbury Outdoor Center in the 1990s, and when they retired, made the move. In the early 2000s, she started photographing loons and participating with VCE projects. Elton recalls some of

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Students, staff and parents carried their hoop antennas in the Hardwick Elementary River of Life pond on December 12. The volunteers were a Nordic group, as the temperature was only 7 degrees above zero.

FCC, Comcast Take Aim at Community Television

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has proposed a rule change for community public access television that would allow cable companies, in this case Comcast, to treat in-kind services as items that public access stations should expect to pay for. This is a complete reversal of the 1984 rule that mandated cable companies use five percent of the services from local cable television subscribers to pay for community television. For Hardwick Community Television (HCTV) to call the change untenable would be an understatement, according to Lefty Goldberg who runs the station.

HCTV provides a wide spectrum of free public television both on cable and via its Vimeo channel on the internet, ranging from an actual board meetings to basketball games. This proposed rule change comes on the heels of Comcast running the State Vermont earlier this fall to avoid adhering to commitments it made in the past to community television. Goldberg said that, for example, high-definition television was supposed to have been included for the station years ago. "Comcast has taken the public-licensure board to court over a bunch of stuff, including demanding the cable stations have made because they haven't been living up

to contracts that were in place like ten years ago. So we should have an HD (high-definition) channel. Our channel does not show up on the program guide, so if you have cable TV, it just says education channel, it doesn't say what's playing. Everybody uses the program guide. We're not on it. We haven't been on it, ever, and they were supposed to put us on it 15 years ago," Goldberg explains. "To put it into perspective, he said HCTV operates on a shoestring \$55,000 annual budget to produce and deliver its content. It gets \$5,750 from Hardwick and Woodbury towards that funding, and a small amount more, in the neighborhood of \$1,500-\$2,000."

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Eric Hanson, Craftsbury resident and biologist for the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, with VCE Julie Nicholson Citizen Scientist of the Year Eleanor Osborn of Albany.

Bomb Threats Made Against Area Schools

by Doug McClure

HARDWICK — Friday morning brought the sort of alert from the FBI, State and Local Police have deemed these threats not credible. We have received three such threats this morning at three of our schools — Craftsbury Elementary, Hardwick and Hazen. We have been in touch with Hardwick Police and the Derby Police. We have been informed that there is no viable threat, however, to ensure every precaution has been taken we are in the process of an evacuation, and will be conducting a sweep of the three schools. Upon completion of the sweep, and it is deemed safe, students will return to the school and resume normal activities. If you are a parent, you may pick up your child at the school.

Hardwick Police Department (HPD) Chief Aaron Cochran said, "We were made aware this



The East Christmas Pigeon Eve was performed at the Highland Center for the Arts on Friday, Dec. 16. (Clockwise from right) see violinists: Thomas Sklarik Jr. and Ethan Gair; violinist: Sara Swenney; organist: Cassidy Gair; Myra Rhoad and Joseph Collins; Loggans. Review: page 6

Spark Makerspace Prepares for January Debut

by Doug McClure

GREENSBORO — Taking up half of WonderArts' space in the Greensboro United Church of Christ's basement is a brand new "makerspace" known as "Spark". The concept is a creative, co-working space that can serve as a community hub.

The first thing visitors will notice is some very advanced equipment. Aside from two iMac and

200MB fiber internet, the space has a 3D printer, a large format printer and a laser cutter. But it isn't just a business service operation. It is intended to be a community hub, complete with classes, skills training and other services that people can use for a monthly fee.

One idea is that members will become skilled and help teach newer members how to use the technology. Another is to provide a valuable resource for artists and craftspeople to gain new skills or have access to equipment they would have to drive dozens of miles to get to otherwise.

Celidix Gallaway-Kane, executive director of WonderArts, said it isn't simply a matter of disbanding that gets in the way in the case of large-format printing. "A lot of times people will send something off to Mottiplex and when they get there to pick it up, it doesn't quite look like they had expected. People like it that they can come right here and see what they're getting before it gets printed out."

"The space is what's new, operationally since July, but the formal launch date is in January according to Gallaway-Kane. She said a combination lunch party and dinner there to kick it off on January 23 at the Highland Center.

WonderArts' Jake Lester was running the operation Friday and he said it was quiet right then, but some of the people were very busy. He noted that even without much in the way of mar-

keting, the space gets at least 15-20 people per week and has several dozen members. This number has grown much faster with the opening's website now able to handle membership signups and book a space. He said classes are also gaining popularity, at most entirely based on word-of-mouth.

The concept of a makerspace had been bouncing around WonderArts since late 2017. It makerspace is generally a collaborative work space inside a school, library or separate non-profit facility for making, learning, exploring and sharing that uses high-tech to low-tech tools. A \$58,949 USDA Rural Development Initiative Grant and a \$5,000 grant from the Vermont Community Fund as well as business sponsorships helped make it a reality. Gallaway-Kane said the fact that Spark is utilizing some of WonderArts' own space helped control costs a bit.

"We've been able to do this a somewhat lower cost, so we can get our initiative Grant and we don't," she said. "We realized early on that we could not ask too much from the community (for free)." She said.

Woodbury resident Steven Murphy said he is excited to see the new makerspace open similar space in Bradford Springs \$100 or more per month for memberships, but he said he would be interested in monthly depending on what equipment someone needs to work on and the space.

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New Farm Bill to Provide Additional Aid

by Michael Bielawski

MONTPELIER — The new Farm Bill which passed Congress last week is supposed to provide additional aid to the dairy industry, which has been struggling with low milk prices over the past few years. The bill is considered a step in the right direction by Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt.

"As dairy farmers continued to face difficulties this year, Senator Leahy sought additional improvements to the dairy safety net and fought hard to ensure that the final 2018 Farm Bill includes four other enhancements: broader coverage of the federal milk price support and other USDA supervised insurance programs. These improvements should make the newly named Dairy Margin Coverage program better and more affordable for Vermont's family farmers," a press release stated. Farmers can sign up starting for the program next Spring.

Diane Bothfield of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture Food Markets said there have been certainly been some tangible improve-

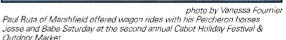
ments to what was formally known as the Margin Protection Program. The new Dairy Farmer Coverage program calculates the difference between the nationally calculated milk price and the nationally calculated feed price.

The difference in these costs is critical to managing an economical dairy operation. "It's the most expensive cost in operating a dairy," Bothfield said. The new farm bill provides for an improved range of margins and lower premiums for farmers producing five-million pounds or more.

The overlap of the former program into this program is a big deal. "The previous program had not paid out very much money, and for the most part, farmers who paid into it had told the Gazette it was a lousy deal. Now those farmers can either redeem 50 percent of those premiums for a cash rebate or they can claim a 75 percent rebate if they opt into the new program. If farmers choose to sign up for all five years, they can get an additional 25 percent rebate."

Another improvement is that there will be less bureaucracy with the new Agriculture Food Markets said there have been certainly been some tangible improve-

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Phil Ruts of Marshall-Hill offered wagon rides with his children and wife at the second annual Cabot Holiday Festival & Outdoor Market.

Woodbury School Board Assesses Forced Merger

by Michael Bielawski

WOODBURY — All the schools of the newly formed Orleans Southwestern Union Elementary School District are having their meetings to address the sudden and unexpected forced administrative merger and that time was Woodbury's turn.

The Woodbury Town School Board, the Orleans Southwestern Supervisory Union (OSU) administration and about a dozen members of the public met on Dec. 12 at the elementary school to go over what can and cannot be changed regarding the Act 46 agreement of agreement.

Hardwick, Woodbury, Greensboro and Stannard have been instructed by the State Board of Education to merge elementary schools in a bi-county agreement to the 2015 school merger law, Act 46.

Stannard does not have a school, so students from there will be attending Woodbury Elementary in Greensboro. For at least two years, the existing three elemen-

tary schools will remain open as K-6 institutions. If an individual community wishes to close a school before then, the voters of that town can do so. After two years, the total electorate of the four communities will vote to close a school.

Special committees have been appointed to work on the template to modify the proposed articles of agreement, which is due in 90 days or by Feb. 28. There are extensive multi-article provisions if no action is taken.

Some aspects of the articles go over what can and cannot be changed. There are further amendments after the Feb. 28 deadline, but the process will require more work to complete.

Woodbury resident Steven Murphy gave a presentation on the various rules to follow in modifying the articles. He was quick to note that preservation of can be changed, and others can't be a priority.

"If I want to preserve the operation of this school in the town, we

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IN NORDIC SPRINTS

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