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the Chronicle

THE WEEKLY JOURNAL OF ORLEANS COUNTY

TWO SECTIONS, 52 PAGES

VOLUME 43, NUMBER 50

DECEMBER 14, 2016

ONE DOLLAR

Coventry Select Board Audit report will go to law enforcement

by Elizabeth Trail

COVENTRY — Copies of Graham & Graham’s long-awaited forensic report were handed around the room at Monday night’s select board meeting here.

The report covered not only the town money that’s believed to be missing, but also detailed 14 months of efforts by Town Clerk, Treasurer, and Delinquent Tax Collector Cynthia Diaz to keep the auditors from getting the documents they needed to do their jobs.

Because of those efforts to thwart the auditor, Ms. Diaz is ineligible to run for town office again, the report says.

This week, copies of the report will be forwarded to law enforcement and to the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, which insures Coventry against financial loss.

“We have personally witnessed, and discussed with others who witnessed at various times, the removal of town documents, records, files, computer thumb drives, vendor invoices, etc. by Cynthia Diaz,” the report says. “Upon discussion (Continued on page twenty.)

Sweeneys buy C&C market

by Tena Starr

BARTON — Ray and Jessica Sweeney of Glover became the new owners of the C&C Supermarket here on Tuesday. A few hours after the closing, they were already, and enthusiastically, at work. In an interview before the sale, Mr. Sweeney said he was excited about the purchase and has lots of ideas about how to give the store a fresh look.

“My wife and I are ready to do something different,” he said. Mr. Sweeney has been head of the C&C’s meat department for 18 years. Before that, he worked at Currier’s Quality Market in Glover. Altogether, he’s had 25 years experience in retail, which he said he loves. The family also has a private butchering business and makes and sells granola, businesses they plan to keep. Ms. Sweeney is Glover’s assistant town clerk, a job she plans to keep at least for now.

Clearly, the couple has enough to do. But Mr. Sweeney said that owning a grocery store has been his dream for half his life, one he didn’t (Continued on page seventeen.)



Tending their flock in Island Pond



Shepherds Morgan Barrup (with staff) and Aiden Walsh, both of Brownington, tend to their flock at “A Night in Bethlehem,” an interactive nativity in Island Pond Saturday. For more photos, please see page sixteen. Photo by Brad Usatch

Downtown business is down

by Joseph Gresser

NEWPORT — Retailers are always anxious as the Christmas season, which can be make or break for a business, approaches. This year Newport’s merchants have had the arrival of Walmart in the area added to their normal concerns.

For some, business is somewhat slower, others say they are seeing a more drastic affect. No one is saying business is booming.

One business that appeared to be directly in Walmart’s crosshairs is the Vista Supermarket at Waterfront Plaza. The store’s landlord, Ernie Pomerleau, was in town in October working on plans to allow the supermarket to stay in town.

Tim Merrill, the general manager of markets

owned by Associated Grocers of New England, a category that includes Vista, said Mr. Pomerleau’s ideas are important to the future of the store. But, he said his company is “pleasantly surprised” at how well Vista has done in the face of competition from the retail giant’s food department.

Mr. Merrill said everyone expected to see a decline in sales after Walmart opened. “Everyone wants to go see the new shiny store,” he said, noting that he would be interested in a discount department store if he lived in the area.

So far, he said, the hit from Walmart has been a lot less than what he expected. Mr. Merrill did not want to discuss actual sales numbers, but was

(Continued on page twenty-three.)

Cost and shortage of childcare hinder employment

by Tena Starr

For as long as memory serves, the lack of jobs in the Northeast Kingdom, generally touted as the most economically depressed area of the state, has been considered the big hindrance to prosperity.

But by most measures, the Northeast Kingdom currently has more jobs than workers willing, or able, to fill them. Unemployment in the Derby labor market area for October was at 3.7 percent, which is generally considered full employment. In this sparsely populated labor market, that means only about 500 people are considered to be unemployed.

Nonetheless, few question the fact that people

who could work, and would work, are hindered by what state officials and others consider barriers to unemployment.

“I believe people want to work,” said Neil Morrisette at Creative Work Solutions. “It’s those barriers.”

And childcare is a big one, he said. Transportation is another, Mr. Morrisette said. It’s expensive to buy and maintain a car, and keep the gas tank filled. Affordable housing is a third.

And then there’s generational poverty, noted Jennifer Cote, who works at the Vocational Rehab office in Newport with young people.

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Barton Select Board

Approval expected for ATV use

The select board here expects to approve a new ordinance soon that will allow ATVs on two sections of Barton roads.

Selectman Bob Croteau said the board has looked at a number of ordinances in other towns to see what’s worked for them and to help craft an ordinance that will work for Barton, as well as ATV riders.

“We wanted to have an ordinance that was similar to other local communities so it wouldn’t make it hard for riders to know what the ground rules were,” Mr. Croteau said.

He said some communities didn’t give hours of operation, but Barton intends to. Those hours will be from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. And the allowed dates of operation will be from May 15 to November 1.

ATVs will be allowed on the West Glover Road from Irasburg. That road turns into the Stevens Road in Barton. It will also be open and goes directly to West Glover Village.

“That gives VASA (Vermont ATV Sportsman’s Association) a link from the Albany and Irasburg areas and out that way to Glover,” Mr. Croteau said.

The draft of the ordinance is currently with the town attorney, Mr. Croteau said. It could be approved as soon as Monday, December 19, at the select board’s next meeting.

Louise Bonvechio picked to lead RuralEdge

The board of the Northeast Kingdom’s affordable housing developer RuralEdge said goodbye to outgoing Chair Werner Heidemann and welcomed new Chair, Louise Bonvechio.

Ms. Bonvechio is the senior vice-president and CFO for Community National Bank. She had served as the board treasurer at RuralEdge since 2014, before being elected chair.

“I am looking forward to working with the board, and the management team, as we focus on the health of the organization to ensure that we can continue to play an important role in providing appropriate housing options for the communities in the Northeast Kingdom,” Ms. Bonvechio said.”

Other RuralEdge board members include Representative Vicki Strong of Albany; Seleem Choudhury of Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital; Tim O’Neill of Hickok and Boardman Insurance; Melissa Dopp, St. Johnsbury resident; Trish Sears, publisher of the *Newport Daily Express*; and Robert McMaster of Sheffield.

For more information about joining the RuralEdge board and making the commitment to affordable homes in the NEK, please contact Trisha Ingalls at trishai@ruraledge.org or (802) 473-3925. — from RuralEdge.

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by Elizabeth Trail



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Barton Village Trustees Level funded budgets expected

by Joseph Gresser

BARTON — The Barton Village Trustees anticipate level-funded budgets for the village and its water and sewer systems in 2017. The electric department budget will take more work before it is in shape, they acknowledged.

At their regular meeting Monday night, they and Evan Riordan, who manages the Barton Electric Department, began looking at possible ways to eliminate an expected \$154,000 shortfall. Mr. Riordan said that represents about 5 percent of his department’s overall budget.

Some of the cuts may come from changes in staffing levels or work hours, Mr. Riordan suggested, although such changes won’t be enough to fill the projected budget hole.

The village will have to discuss any proposed changes with the employees’ union, Mr. Riordan said.

Trustee Nate Sicard, who chairs the board, said he is loath to ask the Public Service Board (PSB) for a rate increase next year. Customers saw a bump in their electric rates this year, and Mr. Sicard said he would prefer raising prices every other year.

Trustee Justin Barton-Caplin suggested the problem should get better as the department pays off the bonds it has used for various capital projects. Trustee Cathy Swain put an end to that happy thought by reading out a list of expiration dates, none of which is imminent and the farthest of which is scheduled for 2050.

She suggested trying to cut 5 percent from each of the department’s budget lines.

Barton’s electric department has been a source of trouble since the trustees discovered two years ago that bond money meant to pay for a transmission line upgrade had been used to cover a variety of other village expenses. An audit found that the village had used some of the money to pay for company operations and should, instead, have raised rates.

Mr. Riordan was hired to help put the department on an even keel, and he told the trustees of his plans to institute job safety training. A record of losses caused the Vermont League of Cities and Town’s Property and Casualty Intermunicipal Fund to stop insuring the department, Mr. Riordan said.

Mr. Barton-Caplin was pleased to hear of those efforts and suggested that training be noted in employees’ employment records.

Mr. Riordan also said he is undertaking a systematic check of the department’s lines and equipment to make sure everything is in good operating order.

In other business, Mr. Barton-Caplin asked if the trustees intend to change the way the village raises funds to repay the capital costs of its water and sewer lines. The village issued general obligation bonds to pay for the cost of laying lines and should tax all residents to repay them.

The lines do not extend to all parts of the village, Mr. Sicard noted, so the village has always excluded from that portion of the tax those who are not served by the lines.

While it has been village policy to tax those who have access to lines but chose not to connect, it seems unfair to charge people who cannot make use of the amenity, he said.

Mr. Barton-Caplin said that way of doing business might look fair, but it does not accord with the requirements of a general obligation bond. It also does not deal with people who are served by the lines but whose homes are outside the village.

Those people now pay a service charge, he said.

Mr. Sicard suggested the question ought to be put to voters at the Barton Village Annual Meeting in March.

Someone will have to serve as moderator for that meeting, but there is no incumbent, and no obvious candidate, the trustees said. They considered putting out word that the job is open in hopes of finding someone interested in taking on the job. An alternative is asking the village lawyer to steer the meeting.

Jason Sicard, of J.P. Sicard Construction, asked the trustees to write a letter of support for his company’s proposal to start construction on two village bridges earlier than originally scheduled.

Jason Sicard said he would like to start work on the Glover Street Bridge this winter. He spoke with the school bus company and heard that the change in its route will not create a serious problem.

Workers will have to put up a walkway for children who go to school on foot, Jason Sicard said. He said he would also like to get started on preparatory work on the Roaring Brook Road bridge in February or March.

The trustees had no problem with Jason Sicard’s ideas, and Nate Sicard said he would write a letter of support to the state Agency of Transportation, which has final approval on projects affecting state highways.

Ms. Swain got approval for her proposal for a Memorial Building Advisory Committee. Ms. Swain has volunteered to chair the board and hopes to hear from representatives of community groups that use the building and are interested in discussing ways to upgrade its facilities.

Mr. Barton-Caplin suggested that Ms. Swain might want to distribute a questionnaire to those attending the Vermont Vaudeville performance on February 1.

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Orleans County is now the unhealthiest in state

(Continued from page seven.)

They're only a little worse than other adults about eating fresh foods and getting enough exercise.

But more older people are overweight or obese. And many are living with chronic disease.

"Orleans County has the dubious honor of being the unhealthiest county in the state," Ms. Moore de Ortiz said.

The question before the 30 or so professionals who filled a u-shaped group of tables at the Hunger Council meeting was: How can the situation be improved so that seniors have access to not only enough food, but better quality food?

Hunger should be treated as a vital sign when people see their primary care providers, Ms. Moore de Ortiz said.

Doctors can help overcome the stigma of getting food assistance by handling it as a medical issue, she said.

And in the same vein, bringing food distribution into hospitals takes away a lot of the stigma.

There's a very popular food program at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) in St. Johnsbury called Veggie Van Go.

The program combines handing out vegetables with food education and cooking tips.

"It's fun, it's easy, it's on RCT (Rural Community Transport)," Laurel Ruggles of NVRH said. "And it's open to all, no screening."

Community dining is another solution, Ms. Mambourg said.

That's officialese for eating at senior meal sites. There's a suggested donation of \$3 to \$3.50 per meal, but people who can't afford that can eat free.

There are 13 meal sites where seniors can go for nutritious low cost meals in the Northeast Kingdom, Ms. Mambourg said. Some of the kitchens also cook for Meals on Wheels. And there are three other providers that only prepare Meals on Wheels.

Seniors who are able to get to the various sites can find meals and companionship five days a week, she said.

If people have less money to spend on food, local stores feel the effects as well.

Altogether, the Council on Aging oversaw 183,000 meals last year, Ms. Mambourg said. About 4,300 of those were served in community dining rooms; the rest were delivered to homes through Meals on Wheels.

"We're trying to find out how many people can't make it to a community dining room," Ms. Mambourg said.

There's the driving issue, of course. Some senior meal centers sporadically offer rides, but that depends on having volunteers who themselves can drive safely.

RCT will pick up seniors and take them to meal centers, but people with mobility issues may fear navigating on ice even from their own

doors to a waiting bus.

And transport time with RCT can make getting to and from a senior meal site for lunch a three- or four-hour proposition.

But for those who depend on having food brought to their doors, funding cuts threaten to reduce the number of days a week that some of the Meals on Wheels programs will be able to offer meals, Ms. Mambourg said.

And that leaves some seniors in a precarious situation.

To help provide a buffer, Passumpsic Savings Bank will be providing 457 emergency boxes for seniors who depend on Meals on Wheels. Seniors can store the boxes away so they can be sure of having food in case snow and ice make deliveries impossible this winter.

Funding cuts that reduce social services may affect more than the people who depend on agencies for help, said Jane Edwards of Upper Kingdom Food Access.

If people have less money to spend on food, stores feel the effects as well.

"If those programs are cut, a lot of retailers will suffer," she said.

"Economic stimulus isn't just for poor people," Ms. Turner agreed.

In Orleans County, small stores are already worried about the effect that the new Walmart is going to have on their business, Ms. Moore de Ortiz said.

The Walmart in Woodsville, New Hampshire, closed the walkable local food market within a year, Ms. Edwards said.

"We're talking to Vista Market in Newport about providing food delivery," Ms. Burmeister said.

(Continued on page nine.)

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There will be **NO PAPER** on Wednesday, December 28.

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Some seniors like the freedom at McDonald’s

(Continued from page eight.)

That would give Vista a niche that Walmart couldn’t move in on, she said. The White Market in St. Johnsbury already delivers.

So does the White Market in Lyndonville, but they don’t want to continue, said Gary Chester from Support and Services at Home (SASH.)

Mr. Chester suggested that the Council on Aging might want to find out what had soured the White Market on delivery in Lyndonville as the first step toward figuring out how to make it work in other places.

“There are home food delivery providers all around the state,” Dixie Burns said. “What you can’t remove from the equation in the NEK is that until you can get people to live closer together, the cost is going to be prohibitive.”

The church basement atmosphere of most senior meal sites is a drawback for attracting seniors, Ms. Kitchel said.

She’d been reading an article on why a lot of seniors like to get together for breakfast or lunch at McDonalds.

The food is inexpensive, people can make their own choices, and they have a bright, sunny place to meet with their friends, she said.

“A lot of people don’t want to eat day after day in the basement of a church.”

It could be that senior meal planning may eventually move in the direction of handing out vouchers that seniors could use at restaurants and coffee shops instead, she said.

Food pantries are another thorny issue. Although there are efforts afoot to get more fresh food and produce into the food pantry, most of the offerings are bread, cereal, pasta, and rice, along

with sauces and sometimes canned vegetables, which are often high in salt.

Part of what food pantries have depends on what stores have extra and choose to donate.

“It’s a combination of what’s donated, so there’s great variability,” Susan Ohlidal said.

Then there’s the Fruit Loops debate, which centers around whether food pantries should hand out healthy food or the food people want, Jenna Banning said.

Then there’s the Fruit Loops debate, which centers around whether food pantries should hand out healthy food or the food people want.

Food pantries have issues with storage space, and often don’t have freezer and refrigerator space to keep fresh and frozen food, Ms. Ohlidal said.

And there may be an unintended consequence of Act 148, Vermont’s Universal Recycling and Composting Law, which will ban food from the landfill within a few years.

Stores may try to lower their costs for food disposal by sending more low-quality food to the food banks.

“When are food banks food dumps?” Ms. Banning asked.

It’s going to be important for food banks to set up relationships with stores so that they are in line for higher quality donations, including fresh foods.

“But to do that, food banks will need freezer capacity,” she said.

On top of that, there were reports from around the room of people getting food from food pantries that doesn’t work with their allergies or medical needs.

Although people fill out that information on their original applications, there is seldom any way for food pantries to refer to the applications as they hand out boxes.

Allowing people to “shop” for foods they can or want to eat as they fill their own boxes usually doesn’t work because of tight space in food pantries’ storage facilities.

But at least one food pantry in St. Johnsbury now lets people make food choices from a list on the wall. And 3Squares benefits can be used at farmers markets around the state.

Food pantries were never meant to provide long-term nutrition, Ms. Turner said. They were meant to see people through emergencies.

But the growing reality is that for many seniors — and others, especially in the Northeast Kingdom — depending on some type of food assistance is the only way to make budgets stretch to cover food.

Contact Elizabeth Trail at elizabeth@bartonchronicle.com

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In Superior Court

Participant in meth ring gets three to six years

by Paul Lefebvre and Brad Usatch

NEWPORT — A minor player in a Newport methamphetamine ring that was active from April 1 to June 14 pled guilty here last week in Orleans County Superior Court.

In a case resolved through a plea agreement, Cory Carpenter Jr., 35, of Newport pled guilty to a felony charge of conspiring to sell a regulated drug and guilty to two charges of reckless endangerment and possessing a narcotic, each a misdemeanor.

As part of the negotiated deal, Mr. Carpenter will serve a three-to-six-year jail sentence, which will run concurrently with one he is presently serving. According to court records, Mr. Carpenter is presently serving a sentence of one to three years.

As a result of the conviction, his minimum time in jail will increase from one year to three years. In approving the sentence recommendation, Judge Howard VanBenthuyssen gave Mr. Carpenter credit for time served.

In exchange for the pleas, the state dismissed two other related felony drug charges of conspiracy.

On the felony conviction, Detective Aaron Lefebvre, a Newport officer assigned to the Vermont Drug Task Force, said in his affidavit that police began an investigation in May of distribution of methamphetamine in Orleans County.

At some point during the investigation, police learned from an informer that Mr. Carpenter participated in buying a jug of lantern fuel and used it in the manufacture of methamphetamine, also known as meth.

According to the affidavit, a Rite Aid reward card assigned to Mr. Carpenter was used on May 12 to purchase a “cold pack” product containing

ammonium nitrate, also used in the production of meth.

Mr. Carpenter was also convicted of recklessly endangering others by aiding in the volatile production of a drug like meth, which is combustible.

Edward Kane, 23, of Derby Lane pled no contest to an amended charge of domestic assault and received a one-year deferred sentence.

The charge arose out of a Derby Line altercation on February 7, which remained puzzling to both the prosecution and defense.

In defending the amended charge, which had originally had been brought as a felony, State’s Attorney Jennifer Barrett told the court that the facts surrounding the case are still unsettled.

When State Police Trooper Steven Fauteux responded to a disturbance at a Derby Line residence, a woman accused the defendant of strangling her, according to his affidavit.

But later the woman recanted, according to the prosecutor, who in court last week suggested there might have been mental health issues involved.

Defense attorney Joe Benning told the court that when police arrived, his client was pacing back and forth and there was no evidence of physical contact at the scene. Mr. Benning noticed further that the woman had been involved in a prior abusive relationship with another man.

Once satisfied that Mr. Kane understood and accepted the terms of the plea agreement, Judge VanBenthuyssen approved the deferred sentence, which includes a condition to participate in mental health treatment.

Seth Hoag, 33, of Westmore pled innocent to felony and misdemeanor charges of domestic assault.

The court ordered him to post a \$25,000 surety bond and ordered him to refrain from

drinking or using or possessing firearms while the charges are pending.

Trooper Fauteux said in his affidavit that Mr. Hoag was cited after police were called to a Westmore residence on December 3 to investigate an altercation.

A woman interviewed by police allegedly accused the defendant of trying strangle her, using both hands. She also accused the defendant, the affidavit continues, of pointing a handgun at her and threatening to kill her during an earlier fight, dating roughly a year ago.

According to the affidavit, the altercation grew out of argument over the defendant’s use of alcohol.

Kerissa Allen, 23, of Barton pled no contest to a felony charge of delivery of drugs in a detention center and will pay a \$1,000 fine and \$297 in surcharges. A companion misdemeanor charge of transportation of drugs into a detention center was dismissed by the state.

Detective Sergeant Darren Annis of the Vermont State Police stated in his affidavit that he was alerted by security personnel at the Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport that during a visit on April 4, 2015, they witnessed Ms. Allen trying to smuggle “two small slugs” to her husband, who was housed at the facility. Each slug contained two small orange strips of paper, which later tested positive for buprenorphine.

Among those defendants pleading innocent to misdemeanor charges were:

Bryan White, 29, of Newport to domestic assault on December 4 in Newport;

Alana Koloski, 21, of Derby Line to domestic assault on December 5 in Derby Line; and

Mark Lovejoy, 37, of Orleans to two charges of violating conditions of release on November 12 in Derby and December 5 in Coventry.



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OPEN DAILY

In Superior Court

Newport woman charged with possession of heroin

by Joseph Gresser

NEWPORT — Police say a Newport woman allowed them to search her car on three separate occasions, and each time they looked they found heroin.

Laura L. Brasseur, 29, appeared in the Criminal Division of Orleans County Superior Court Tuesday and pled innocent to three charges of possession of heroin, one of them a felony.

Judge Howard VanBenthuyssen released Ms. Brasseur on conditions.

An affidavit from State Police Trooper Callie Field says that on December 26, 2015, Border Patrol Agent John Marquissee was parked in a U-turn area on Interstate 91 in Derby. He saw Ms. Brasseur drive south in Derby and a few minutes later head back the other way.

He said his suspicions were aroused further when he saw her try to hide her face as she passed his car. She made a quick turn off the Interstate and onto the Access Road headed toward Newport.

Agent Marquissee followed and saw Ms. Brasseur make a sudden turn onto Citizens Road, cutting off an oncoming driver in the process. He said a passenger in the car repeatedly turned around to watch him as he followed.

Agent Marquissee pulled Ms. Brasseur over on the Crawford Road. He asked her to tell him the route she took to get there and got an answer that did not match his observation.

He checked her license and registration and told Ms. Brasseur she was free to go. Before she did, he again asked her where she had been.

Her answer differed from her earlier story, Agent Marquissee said. He asked if there were narcotics in her car and requested permission to conduct a search of the vehicle, he said.

Ms. Brasseur consented, Agent Marquissee said. As the passenger got out of the car, Agent Marquissee noticed he had a knife clipped to his pocket. He patted the man down and felt other objects in the pocket. They turned out to be hypodermic syringes and a bag of marijuana, Agent Marquissee said.

The agent says he asked for and got permission to put Sem, his drug sniffing dog, into the car. The dog signaled that he had found something near the car's glove compartment and under the driver's seat, he said.

A search turned up a wallet containing Ms. Brasseur's driver's license and five bags of heroin, Agent Marquissee said.

He called for help from the State Police and Trooper Field arrived and cited Ms. Brasseur and her passenger for possession of a controlled substance.

On September 1 Newport Police received a report of a car stopped at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Coventry Street with a woman passed out behind the wheel. The caller had to knock on the window of the car to get the woman's attention. She woke and pulled away from the stop sign.

Patrolman Nicholas Rivers soon found the car, still running, with two people passed out in the front seat.

Ms. Brasseur was in the driver's seat. Patrolman Rivers said he saw fresh needle marks on her hands and asked if she had drugs in her car.

She allegedly said she had stopped using drugs and didn't think there was any heroin in the car. Newport Police Sergeant Travis Bingham walked his dog around the car. The dog signaled the presence of drugs, Patrolman Rivers said.

Ms. Brasseur gave permission for a search of the car, which turned up 36 bags of heroin, according to the affidavit.

Newport Patrolman Corey Marcoux said in a third affidavit that he was sent to Waterfront Plaza on September 27 to check out a report of a woman in a blue pickup truck who appeared to be suffering a drug overdose.

When he walked up to the pickup, Ms. Brasseur sat up and said she had been sleeping. Patrolman Marcoux asked Ms. Brasseur if she had any heroin in the truck and she said no.

He said Ms. Brasseur allowed him to search her purse and handbags, where he found nearly 200 empty heroin bags, 16 of which contained drug residue.

(Continued on page twelve.)

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Scott Greenwood, Arlington, VA, Dec. 16
Bernard Brasseur, Cornish, NH, Dec. 17
Anita Perkins, Newport, Dec. 17
Susan Squires, Glover, Dec. 18
Zoë Young, West Glover, Dec. 18
Bethany Dunbar, West Glover, Dec. 18
Darrin Tournea, Dec. 19
Cindy Royer, Barton, Dec. 19
Kim Haley, Derby, Dec. 21
Robert Reed, Orleans, Dec. 21
Paul Tetreault, North Troy, Dec. 21
Floyd Kelley, Newport, Dec. 21
Lise LaClair, Barton, Dec. 21
Tom McCarthy, Ludlow, MA, Dec. 23
David Sargent, Newport, Dec. 23
Bob Quirion, Dec. 24
David Gray, Morgan, Dec. 24

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Names are submitted by your family and friends, but if you'd like your name removed or your town changed, please let us know.

Florida woman charged with vandalism

(Continued from page eleven.)

A Coventry man woke up on July 3 to find his pickup had been vandalized. Patrick Bailey called the State Police, and Trooper Debra Munson showed up to investigate.

Her affidavit said the back and front windows of the truck were smashed and there were dents and scratches on the body. Chunks of pavement were lying on the lawn around the truck and inside the body along with a bottle.

There is no paving near Mr. Bailey’s house, and he was mystified about its origins.

He said he did not drink Mike’s Hard Lemonade and did not know where the bottle had come from.

On July 18 Mr. Bailey called police and said a man he works with had approached him about vandalism to his car. The man was under the impression that Mr. Bailey was responsible for the damage.

Mr. Bailey learned that Taylor Cote told the man that he had damaged the man’s car.

A friend of Mr. Bailey’s spoke with Ms. Cote about the vandalism, but was suspicious of her statements.

She found a second friend who spoke with Ms. Cote and, according to Trooper Munson, recorded a conversation during which Ms. Cote admitted

vandalizing Mr. Bailey’s truck.

Trooper Munson said the truck sustained about \$1,017 in damages.

Ms. Cote, 19, who gave her address only as Florida, was released on a \$5,000 unsecured appearance bond after pleading innocent to a felony charge of unlawful mischief.

Deer baiting results in \$600 fine

Alan P. Poirier, 58, of Westmore pled guilty to baiting deer and was fined \$600.

Game Warden Thomas Scott said a caller phoned him at home on October 31 and said there was deer bait in front of Mr. Poirier’s hunting shack in Glover.

On November 5, the opening morning of youth deer hunting weekend, Warden Scott and Warden Jenna Reed found Mr. Poirier at the shack along with a young hunter. About 35 yards from the shack they saw a pile of about 50 red apples although there were no apple trees in the vicinity.

A motion activated game camera was

mounted on a tree and pointed toward the heap of fruit.

New Jersey man nabbed for drugs at border

Joseph E. Stone, 49, of Mullica Hill, New Jersey, pled guilty to misdemeanor charges of possession of methamphetamine and possession of a narcotic. He was fined \$1,150.

Mr. Stone was pulled in for inspection when he crossed into Vermont at the I91 port of entry on July 28, says Trooper Calvin Burns’ affidavit.

He admitted having illegal drugs. Customs officials found seven tenths of a gram of methamphetamine and 29 OxyContin tablets.

Misdemeanor charge denied

Marshall Tournon, 20, of Somerset, Massachusetts, pled innocent to a misdemeanor charge of possession of marijuana and was released on conditions.

contact Joseph Gresser at
joseph@bartonchronicle.com

Brighton gets stormwater grant

The town of Brighton received a \$348,545 grant through the Agency of Natural Resources’ Department of Environmental Conservation for a stormwater retrofit to reduce the nutrients and sediment washing into Island Pond and Lake Memphremagog.

The town will make a 10 percent match contribution.

Currently, three stormwater culverts in Island Pond drain 6.5 acres of impervious area and an area of concentrated overland flow that contributes to gully erosion in the town pavilion park.

Three sub-watersheds in downtown Island Pond and its town parks will receive upgraded stormwater infrastructure, including a constructed wetlands and rain garden on the shoreline. The project will be completed in the spring of 2017.

The project will reduce phosphorus loading to the Lake Memphremagog watershed by an estimated 4,088 pounds of sediment and 8.52 pounds of phosphorus.

The Ecosystem Restoration Program is funded by the Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation. —
From the town of Brighton.

FINANCIAL FOCUS

Here’s Your Retirement “To Do” List

Article 8– Dec. 12, 2016

At this time of year, your life is probably more hectic than usual – so you may have assembled an impressive “to do” list. This can be a helpful tool for organizing your activities in the near future – but have you ever thought of developing a “to do” list for long-term goals, such as a comfortable retirement? If not, you may want to think about it – and here are a few list-worthy items to consider:

- *Examine – and re-examine – your planned retirement age.* You may have long counted on retiring at a certain age, but are you sure that this goal is the best one for your overall financial situation? Think about it: If you like your job, and you stayed at it for just a few more years, you could significantly boost the funds in your 401(k) or other retirement plan, and you might even be able to delay taking Social Security, which, in turn, would result in larger monthly payments.

- *Put a “price tag” on your retirement lifestyle.* When you retire, do you want to travel the world or stay at home pursuing your hobbies? Will you truly retire from all types of work, or will you do some consulting or take up part-time employment? Once you know what your retirement lifestyle might look like, you can better estimate your costs and expenses – and this knowledge will help you determine how much you need to withdraw each year from your various retirement accounts, such as your IRA, 401(k) or other employer-based plan.

- *Be aware of retirement plan withdrawal rules.* It isn’t enough just to recognize how much you need to withdraw from your retirement plans – you also must know how much you must withdraw. Once you turn 70 ½, you generally have to start taking money out of your traditional IRA and 401(k). These required minimum distributions, or RMDs, are based on your account balance, age and other factors, but the key word to remember is “required” – if you don’t withdraw the full amount of the RMD by the applicable deadline, the amount not withdrawn can be taxed at a 50% rate.

- *Review your health care situation.* When you turn 65, you will likely be eligible for Medicare, but you’ll want to become familiar with what it does – and doesn’t – cover, so you can establish an annual health care budget. And if you are planning to retire early, which might mean losing your employer-sponsored health insurance, you will need to be prepared for potentially large out-of-pocket costs.

- *Think about long-term care.* One service that Medicare doesn’t cover – or, at best, covers only minimally – is long-term care. If you faced an extended stay in a nursing home, the costs could be catastrophic. A financial professional may be able to help you find a way to reduce this risk.

- *Develop your estate plans.* Estate planning can be complex, involving many different documents – such as a will, a living trust, power of attorney, etc. – so you’ll want to work with a legal professional to ensure you’re making the right choices for yourself and your family.

By checking off these items, one by one, your retirement “to do” list will eventually get “done.” And when that happens, you may find yourself pretty well prepared to enjoy life as a retiree.

This article was written by Edward Jones for use by your local Edward Jones Financial Advisors, Jim Jarvis and Karen Ward.



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by Joseph Gresser

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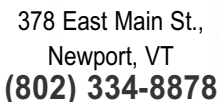
Mr. Quiros buttressed his argument for a quick decision by saying he faces “financial ruin” if his lawyers withdraw from the cases.

SEC officials said nothing about charging Mr. Quiros at either of the two interviews, nor did they at other such sessions involving Mr. Quiros'

The EB-5 visa program was designed to provide investment capital for projects in less prosperous areas of the U.S. A foreign investor who puts \$500,000 into a new business that creates or saves at least ten jobs per investor is eligible to receive permanent resident status and a path to U.S. citizenship.

1. Greenish-blue
2. Having sufficient skill, knowledge, etc.
3. Dirt
4. New Zealand mountain parrot
5. Back muscle
6. Supplement with difficulty
7. Kate and Rooney
8. How Amazon identifies its products (abbr.)
9. Emirati island
10. Contended
11. Pear-shaped fruit
12. Parks cars
14. Killing oneself
17. Austrian river
18. Older brothers
20. Home hemodialysis
23. One who is self-absorbed
24. Yellow fever mosquitos
25. Pepper or Oz
26. Soviet Socialist Republic
29. Tellurium
30. Pens are filled with it
31. Use this at dinner
32. Thin fibrous cartilage (pl.)
35. When you were born
36. Oohed and __
38. Small freshwater fishes
40. Religion in China
41. Twitches
42. Cape near Lisbon
43. Management software
44. Game for kids
45. Ed Murrow's home
46. They __
47. Part of the foot

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The Elks Lodge holds its annual hoop shoot



The annual Elks Hoop Shoot contest was held on November 18 at the North Country Union High School gymnasium. The top three boy and girl finishers in each age group will go on to compete at the district competition on Saturday, January 7, 2017, at 10 a.m., also at the North Country gym. Winners at the district level will compete at the state tournament in Barre for a chance to attend the national competition in Chicago. Pictured above are the eight- and nine-year-old winners, from left to right: Bronson Smith, Irasburg Village School, third place; Bryce McCormick, Coventry Village School, second place; Malachi Beckwith, Coventry Village School, first place; Sadie Bowman, Coventry Village School, first place; Brooke Therrien, Newport Town School, second place; Olivia Poutre, Irasburg Village School, third place. In back is Steve Edgerley, Newport Lodge #2155 hoops shoot chairman.

Photos courtesy of Ann Edgerley



Pictured above are the following ten- and 11-year-old winners: Levi Brewer, Troy School, third place; Graydon McCormick, Coventry Village School, second place; Jonathan Kocis, Island Pond, home schooled, first place; Mikayla Richardson, Lowell Elementary School, first place; Madison Bowman, Coventry Village School, second place; Ashlyn Columbia, Coventry Village School, third place. Newport Elks Lodge #2155 hoops shoot chairman Steve Edgerley is in back.



Pictured above are the following 12- and 13-year-old winners: Keira Butler, Irasburg Village School, first place; Destiny Sorrell, Lowell Elementary School, second place; and Hannah Poginy, St. Paul's School, third place, Ian Applegate, Charleston Village School, third place; Connor Delabruere, Newport Elementary School, second place; and Joshua Kocis, Island Pond, home schooled, first place. Newport Elks Lodge #2155 hoops shoot chairman Steve Edgerley is in back.

VSO concert in Newport on December 16

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra's Brass Quintet and the vocal ensemble Counterpoint under the direction of Nathaniel G. Lew will present a concert at the United Church of Newport, 63 Third Street, Newport, on Friday, December 16, at 7:30 pm.

The program includes arrangements of traditional and

modern carols and holiday music. A singalong, and a brand-new student composition round out the performance.

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BBB warns of holiday scams

With all the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, scams are at an all-time high this time of year. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is warning of counterfeit products, phishing e-mails, and more scams to avoid this holiday season.

Counterfeit products are common at pop-up stores and markets — places where scammers can sell items that claim to be a certain brand without fear of getting caught. Products at these locations may be lower priced than they are at reputable websites or stores.

However, counterfeit products are only cheaper because they're manufactured cheaply, which could result in faulty products.

Consumers should search BBB's accredited business directory for shops that sell the brands they're looking for to ensure they're getting the best deals on quality items without buying fakes.

Shoppers are eager to track their shipment after ordering online, and scammers are aware of this. Scammers create fake e-mails asking the shopper to download an invoice or tracking information, or send fake alerts that orders can't be delivered.

Tracking and other phishing scams commonly ask the recipient to download an attachment or click a link that contains malware that steals information and passwords.

Some scammers use names similar to well-known shipping services. An easy way to tell the difference between a real site and a fake is to check for spelling and grammar mistakes, as well as looking at the URL.

The United States Postal Service and Federal Express websites both use "https" in their addresses, ensuring customers' security.

The BBB offers the following tips to avoid other holiday scams this season:

Because many retailers now have chip card readers, fraud at brick-and-mortar stores is down, so scammers have shifted their efforts online. Use a credit card online and only shop on secure websites. Look for https in the address (the extra "s" is for "secure"), and the lock symbol.

When shopping online, make sure to use only legitimate websites. Watch out for URLs that use the names of well-known brands along

with extra words.

Several trusted businesses offer personalized letters from Santa, but scammers mimic them to get personal information from unsuspecting parents. Check with bbb.org to find out which ones are legitimate.

Be cautious of calls from a family member or friend claiming to be in an accident, arrested, or hospitalized while traveling in another country. Never send money without confirming with another family member that it's true.

Retailers and delivery services need extra help at the holidays, but beware of solicitations that require sharing personal information online paying for a job lead. Apply in person or go to the retailer's main website to find out who is hiring.

Be wary of anyone asking payment for holiday purchases using prepaid debit cards, gift cards, wire transfers, etc. These payments cannot be traced and cannot be undone.

Pop-up ads or e-mails offering free gift cards are often a ploy to get personal information that can later be used for identity theft. — from the BBB.

Fred's Charity Challenge!

As a locally-owned company, we believe in giving back to our community and at this time we would like to challenge our friends and neighbors to help. We will match your financial donations – dollar for dollar – up to **\$5,000** to help five local charities: NEKCA, United Church of Newport, Lamaille Community Food Share, H.O.P.E. and Northeast Kingdom Youth Services.

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The Nativity comes alive in Island Pond



Where there are shepherds, there must be sheep. Woolly livestock lent an air of authenticity to the interactive nativity performance called “A Night in Bethlehem” orchestrated by the Green Mountain Bible Church in Island Pond on Saturday. Visitors to Bethlehem had to register with a Roman census taker. Shepherds, beggars, and craftspeople milled about, occasionally troubled by a Roman sentry asking for their papers. Photos by Brad Usatch



Four-year-old Aiden Morse of Charleston helps decorate the tree at the pavilion in Island Pond on Saturday. Dressed as a shepherd, Aiden was one of about 30 kids who took part in an interactive “Night in Bethlehem” presentation put on by the Green Mountain Bible Church.



Jim Cross and Christine Sykes, collectively called the JCH Duo, entertain at the Island Pond Pavilion with a rendition of “Oh Christmas Tree.” Mr. Cross and Ms. Sykes lent some Christmas cheer to a crowd of about 50 people who braved the cold for a tree lighting ceremony and interactive nativity performance.



After comingling in character for an hour or so, members of the Green Mountain Bible Church crowded around the manger for the culmination of the ceremony when it was announced that the Savior was born. About ten adults and 20 to 30 youth group members braved temperatures falling through the teens to mount the second annual interactive performance of “A Night in Bethlehem” in Island Pond on Saturday.

Amazing Photo Contest!

Did you take an amazing photo of something cool? **the Chronicle** wants to see it! Send us your amazing photos (funky vegetable, interesting wildlife, caught on camera, etc.) and we'll showcase them weekly in our paper. At the end of the month, we'll ask people to vote for their favorite photo. Winners receive a gift certificate and an additional winner will be chosen from all who voted!

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Watch for it weekly!



Photo by Diane Brown of Lyndonville.

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Changes will include new product lines

(Continued from page one.)

necessarily believe he would fulfill — until this week.

He said he started as meat manager at the C&C in May of 1998. In that role, he's been a friendly face, frequently greeting customers by name.

With a giant new Walmart grocery store 23 miles away, Mr. Sweeney said market research indicated the C&C could expect to see a noticeable dip in sales. But somewhat to his shock, the dip has turned out to be considerably less than anticipated. "I'm pleased," he said.



Ray and Jessica Sweeney of Glover bought the C&C Supermarket on Tuesday. Mr. Sweeney has been meat manager there for 18 years. Photo by Tena Starr

Walmart has been known to drive small businesses out, including grocery stores. Mr. Sweeney said he hopes people want to keep a grocery store in town and will continue to support the Barton market.

For his part, he's been thinking hard about what the C&C's niche will be and how to better serve the community's needs.

He plans to stock more gluten free, ethnic, and organic products, in all departments, as well as free range poultry, and more local products in general.

"Maybe a beer cave down the road," he mused.

He might carry more of the local and high end brews, and is contemplating putting in a liquor store. Barton hasn't had a liquor store in years.

"That would be a huge plus for Barton," Mr. Sweeney said.

And he expects to add more specialty items. "We can definitely improve on what we've got," he said. "This is going to be a huge undertaking."

"But the right people are working at the store," he said. "I think things are only going to improve once I actually take over."

He said they have had a lot of support from store employees, the community, and from Debra Newton, who owned the store until Tuesday afternoon with her husband, Luke.

"I tell every one of them I appreciate them," Mr. Sweeney said. "It's going to be a big change, but it's going to be good."

Tuesday evening he was already making plans for changes, largely additions, to the store and its lineup of products. He said he will begin making changes around the first of the year.

A letter to Santa...

Dear Santa,

When I was little, I asked my father each year what he wanted for Christmas. He always answered, "Peace and happiness for the whole wide world," and I would just laugh.

But now it's me asking for something as big as that.

So many people with hearing loss live in a fog of denial and anxiety. They lack information and financial resources. Could you give them – these friends I don't know yet – something they really need such as the courage to speak up and say, "I have hearing loss?"

In their stockings or mailbox, perhaps you could drop a pamphlet about support organizations such as HLAA, CHHA, ALDA, AG Bell, VOICE, and NAD or CAD?

And finally, maybe you could put your weight behind our drive for more accessibility and affordability in the world of hearing health?

Thank you, Santa. I know I'll always need technology to hear well and that's okay, although I still love waking up in the morning to the sound of birds, or coffee perking in the kitchen.

And who knows, this may yet happen. As a child, I was told that hearing aids would never help me, and now I have them and they connect me to the world. It's a modern miracle.

I'm sure you helped with that, Santa. This is why I'm asking again.

God bless you,
Teri

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Vermont among worst states for affordable childcare

(Continued from page one.)

But in the end, many people return to childcare, both its cost and lack of availability, as a major obstacle to employment for people with children.

If you're a single mother with two children, how can you work without childcare? Mr. Morrisette wondered. And how does a single parent, or a family, work, if childcare costs eat up their income?

"I know right now that daycare is such an issue," he said. "We need to figure out how to get more daycares open."

In fact, a report issued this week by the Blue Ribbon Commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care says, "Early care and learning or child care is commonly cited as one of the major barriers to work. Access to high quality care for young children can enable parents to work, and to work more hours. Investment in making child care more affordable is an investment in workforce support."

Although the state provides subsidies, based largely on need, Vermont families still pay 25 to 53 percent of their median income to access early care and learning programs, the report says.

It goes on to say that based on a 2015 study ranking all 50 states, "Vermont ranked thirteenth on the list for having the least affordable center-based infant care. Vermont ranked third on the list for having the least affordable center-based four-year-old care,"

Lauralee Sweeney is specialized childcare coordinator at NEKCA. She said that a single parent earning \$12 an hour would be eligible for a 100 percent subsidy.

"We find that a shortage of childcare seems to be the real problem," she said.

The Department for Children and Families website says that a family of three or fewer can get a 100 percent subsidy if its monthly gross

income is \$1,680, or about \$420 a week. A family of four can gross \$2,025.

The subsidy drops to 50 percent when gross income for a family of three rises to \$2,760, or a family of four to \$3,260.

A family of three making \$5,040 a month, or a little over \$1,000 a week, gets a 10 percent subsidy.

And the actual amount of the subsidy depends on more than income.

But that's at a state approved, registered daycare or licensed center, and there's a shortage of those.

A friend or neighbor could watch children, but it would not be legal to have children from more than two families, and no state subsidy goes with that kind of childcare, though it once did, Ms. Sweeney said.

A relative, such as a grandparent could watch the children, but would be paid only a small amount, rather than the more generous state subsidy that goes to registered caregivers.

Chris Nelson is a longtime childcare provider in North Troy who's seen it all and said the situation is complex. She said she does know people who don't join the workforce because of childcare issues. And she knows others who work part-time because they would end up with less money if they worked full-time.

"Taking a full-time job can turn out to be expensive," Ms. Nelson said.

Ms. Nelson said the subsidy is based on what kind of care the child has as well as the age of the child. If a child's caregiver is STARS qualified, the subsidy is higher. And the greater number of stars the provider has through that program, the higher the subsidy.

STARS stands for Step Ahead Recognition System. It's designed to recognize quality and applies to childcare, preschool, and afterschool programs.

Also, the rates the state pays are outdated,

Ms. Nelson said. If the provider charges \$150 a week for an infant, and the state pays only \$112 for infant care, the parents have to make up the difference.

And when a family brings in more money, the subsidy goes down.

Ms. Sweeney said that adjustment can't be made for a year. However, Ms. Nelson said it occurs on the child's birthday.

Those subsidy adjustments lead to what's called the "cliff" and is mentioned in the childcare report as a discouragement to employment, or at least to adding hours or getting a raise.

The report includes a chart demonstrating how the cliff can kick in in a big way.

A family making \$20,160 can see its income increase by 3.9 percent to \$20,940 and receive just a 1 percent cut in the childcare subsidy. That pattern continues, with the increase in income outweighing the decrease in benefit until a certain income level.

If a family making \$23,208 gets a 4.1 percent pay increase to \$24,168, their childcare subsidy will drop by 5.3 percent.

Another cliff occurs around the 45 percent subsidy mark "in which the incremental increase in income reduces the percent of subsidy received to the point where it is not beneficial to increase income (i.e., earning more money would cause a family's childcare costs to increase)," the report says.

Another frequently mentioned hindrance to a thriving childcare environment is regulation.

At this point the regulations are more than 100 pages, Ms. Nelson said. "And a lot of it has to do with paperwork. Most of the new regulations that adhere to safety are pretty much common sense. Other regulations are based on proven outcomes. Is it for the best? Sure. Is it doable for everyone? No."

(Continued on page nineteen.)

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Report recommends universal childcare

(Continued from page eighteen.)

“I see the purpose for the regulations. However, it lengthens a 12-hour day to a 14-hour day. It’s taking time away from the provider.” Regulations have discouraged some from getting into the business and others from staying in it. Ms. Nelson said she got into childcare 20 years ago for the same reason many others do — she couldn’t find care for her own children. She said she doesn’t know if she’d get into the business today.

To meet demand, there’s something of an underground childcare network out there, Ms. Nelson said.

“They give them to grandparents, their neighbors.”

With a shortage of quality registered or licensed childcare, people have two options: Go underground and work, or stay home.

Ms. Nelson said she has nine on her waiting list at the moment.

The Blue Ribbon commission on Financing High Quality, Affordable Child Care is composed of childcare providers, business representatives, child advocates, and others. It has been working since September of 2015 on coming up with recommendations.

Childcare is more than babysitting, its report says. “The science is clear, high quality early care and learning matters.”

Disparities in vocabulary begin to appear as early as 18 months in children who are not exposed to high quality care, the report says.

It goes on to say that early care and learning is critical to Vermont’s economic well-being. “Every dollar spent in high quality early care and learning programs yields a return in investment that ranges from \$4-\$9.”

There are currently over 36,000 children five or younger in Vermont — 6,023 infants, 12,224 toddlers, and 18,360 preschoolers, it says.

And to illustrate the lack of quality care that the report’s authors says is so badly needed, they wrote: “Nearly half of all infants and toddlers likely to need care do not have access to any regulated early care program.”

The report also extensively addresses the need for affordability.

The Child Care Financial Assistance Program subsidizes 23 percent of families seeking regulated care, spending about \$130-million, it says. The remaining roughly 75 percent of families pay full tuition.

After defining high quality care, the commission estimates the cost of providing it. At a center, care for infants and toddlers was estimated to cost \$35,000 per child and \$15,000 per child for preschoolers.

For home-based care, the estimated cost was about \$41,000 per infant, \$21,000 per toddler, and \$14,000 per preschooler.

“...the Commission concluded that providing 100 percent benefit to families earning up to roughly \$60,000 and slowly tapering off that support until families earn \$180,000 would make accessing high-quality care and learning affordable.”

The goal it recommends is to move toward universal childcare.

The current model doesn’t work, the commission’s report says.

“Unfortunately, in the current delivery system, this level of quality would be unaffordable for 90 percent of Vermont families. Vermont’s current system does not have sufficient capacity or resources to meet the needs of young children and their families.”

The commission recommended that Vermont immediately begin to make annual investments in quality, affordable childcare and that the care system be redesigned. It goes on to suggest financing mechanisms.

Ms. Nelson has a more home-based idea.

In the Northeast Kingdom, businesses and community members should come together and figure out ways to support childcare sites, she said.

Pay for childcare providers, which is notoriously low, needs to come up, Ms. Nelson said, an assessment the Blue Ribbon Commission heartily agrees with, saying that the main reason childcare providers get out of the business is the low pay and lack of benefits.

And that low pay is not reliable. If a working parent gets injured or sick, the child is pulled from daycare so the provider’s income goes down.

“If you want to make Vermont, or the Northeast Kingdom, a place where people can work and want to work,” it’s vital to provide a safe place where they children can receive quality care, Ms. Nelson said.

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Diaz still believed to control missing documents

(Continued from page one.)

with Ms. Diaz, we believe she removed these items to one of the following locations: her residence, her residence/rental house, storage, lawyer’s office, and other unspecified locations.”

Mr. Graham wrote that he has prepared an affidavit covering his findings and conversations with Ms. Diaz for the select board’s attorney, Paul Gillies.

Mr. Graham also wrote in detail about the day back in September when he and Mr. Morley found a stack of documents in the furnace room at the community center.

“Slightly after 8 a.m., Scott Morley and I witnessed Cynthia Diaz pushing a large plastic bin out the front door of the town’s community center building,” the report says. “When Ms. Diaz realized we were outside of the building, she retreated to the gymnasium area of the building and placed the bin in the boiler room.”

The contents of the bin, which included a cardboard box, a stack of papers and folders, and a smaller plastic box of papers, were displayed at that night’s select board meeting.

The papers included dog and marriage license records, a signed and notarized landfill property deed amendment, and delinquent taxpayer receipts, including some that had penalties and interest written in manually, the report says.

“Since our numerous requests for information included some of these actual items found, I can only conclude Ms. Diaz had ill intentions with the removal of these documents,” Mr. Graham wrote.

He also believes that there are documents in

a locked closet on the second floor of the community center that he’s not being allowed to see. Ms. Diaz has the key to the closet and is the only person authorized to open it, he wrote in the forensic report.

“I believe,” he concluded, “and have been told by Ms. Diaz on several occasions, the missing documents requested for review by our firm are located in that locked location.”

Under Vermont law, a town official who withholds evidence or fails to provide materials requested during an audit, is disqualified from running for re-election.

“I believe and have been told by Ms. Diaz on several occasions, the missing documents requested for review by our firm are located in that locked location.”

Delinquent tax collectors serve a one-year term, so likely Ms. Diaz won’t be allowed to run for that office at Town Meeting in March. But she still has two years to go on her term as town clerk and treasurer.

The forensic report describes \$30,856 in cash property tax payments known to be missing based on replies received from taxpayers who were asked to prove when and how they paid their taxes.

Mr. Graham expects that amount to continue to rise.

About 60 of the confirmation requests that the accountant sent out two months ago still haven’t come back.

They represent about \$58,000 to \$59,000 in taxes that may not have been collected or may not have been deposited, Mr. Graham said at Monday night’s meeting.

“I believe that some of these people support Ms. Diaz and don’t want to send in information that might make things worse for her,” he said.

But the forensic report also raised the possibility that some of the people who haven’t returned the form simply didn’t pay their taxes, even though their bills are stamped “Paid” and their names never appeared on Ms. Diaz’ delinquent taxpayer lists.

At previous meetings, Mr. Graham has declined to comment on how or why that might have occurred.

“I’m not in the business of speculation,” he said earlier in December.

But whether people made payments that never got to the bank, or had their bills marked paid when in fact they were not paid, the town never got the money, Mr. Graham said.

All payments made by mortgage companies on behalf of property owners have now been accounted for.

Property owners who don’t respond to a final confirmation request could face having to pay their taxes again, or could even see their properties go to tax sale if they can’t come up with several years of back taxes.

And some part of the \$59,000 in tax money could be added to the amount that the town will eventually ask its insurance provider to cover.

“The \$30,856 is just a starting number,” Mr. Graham said.

He said he’s expecting to find that about \$5,000 collected for marriage licenses, dog licenses, fish and game licenses, filing fees, and community center rentals was never deposited in the town’s bank account.

And there’s another \$13,000 to \$14,000 in

(Continued on page twenty-one.)

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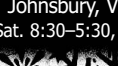












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Two-year losses may exceed \$100,000

(Continued from page twenty.)

statutory late penalties and interest that Ms. Diaz may or may not have collected from people each year. The final Graham & Graham report confirmed Mr. Graham’s suspicions discussed at previous meetings that the 8 percent penalty and 1 percent per month interest that’s supposed to be added to late tax payments was collected selectively.

The town is also short that money, Chair Mike Marcotte said.

The town’s losses may amount to more than \$100,000 just for the two years covered by the audit, Mr. Graham said under questioning from townspeople at the meeting.

The select board also plans to see whether it can get reimbursed for the \$176,337 cost of the forensic audit, attorney’s fees, and the many hours that NEMRC consultant Ernie Saunders and his employees have spent trying to help Mr. Graham untangle Coventry’s books.

And if there is a legal finding of fraud at some point, there would be no statute of limitations to stop the town from following up on the \$40,000 that accountant Gene Besaw couldn’t find in 2010, or the \$45,000 that state auditor Tom Salmon believed might be missing in 2012, Mr. Graham said.

Those amounts are described in written reports by the two previous auditors.

“These respective reports appear to depict situations very similar, if not exactly the same, as the findings from our work during 2015 and 2016,” the Graham & Graham report says. “All reports depict an inability to locate cash payments.”

There was also a forensic report issued for the 2005 to 2007 timeframe by another accountant, Mary Anne Mooney, which Mr. Graham said in his report that he’s not yet become privy to.

Coventry taxpayers will be on the hook for any money that can’t be reimbursed by the town’s insurance, Mr. Marcotte said.

In a poorer town, the missing money might not have gone unnoticed for as long as it has in Coventry, he said.

He noted that, in a lot of towns, if the town had to borrow money to cover missing taxes, people would have asked questions.

At Monday night’s meeting, the search for the missing 2012 Grand List appeared to be over, but a cat and mouse game over a laptop continued.

After it was discovered that there was no copy of the Grand List for that year in either the vault or on any of the town computers, Mr. Graham got a copy from the state. He also asked Lister Lyell Reed to ask Ms. Diaz for a copy — a request Mr. Graham said he had made

unsuccessfully many times.

Town clerks are required to keep hard copies of all past years’ Grand Lists in their vaults, as well as digital copies.

To everyone’s surprise, Ms. Diaz handed Mr. Reed what looked like a freshly printed copy of the Grand List in question.

And another copy showed up in a cabinet in the listers room that Mr. Graham said he had searched many times.

“It was nowhere, and now it’s everywhere,” Selectman Scott Morley said.

Mr. Graham will compare the new copies of the Grand List with the version he got from the state, looking for any discrepancies.

“If any deviations are found, you must investigate further,” he said in the report.

Mr. Reed was also supposed to ask Ms. Diaz for a laptop belonging to the listers that they had given

her to use. Ms. Diaz also worked part-time as an assistant to the listers.

“Don’t ask her, tell her,” Mr. Morley urged Mr. Reed at last week’s meeting. “It belongs to you.”

But when Mr. Reed asked for the laptop, Ms. Diaz told him that there was no such thing, and that all three of the laptops in the office were for the town clerk’s work, Mr. Morley said.

Amber Baker, a software expert who works for the New England Municipal Resource Center (NEMRC) matched the serial numbers on the laptops to memos and receipts. The select board had purchased all of them.

So the select board plans to take the laptops back, see what’s on them, and remove the NEMRC software from them.

Citing security concerns, the select board decided last month that

(Continued on page twenty-two.)

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Select board looks to implement reforms

(Continued from page twenty-one.)

Ms. Diaz should not have access to the town’s NEMRC software. NEMRC modules have already been removed from the town clerk’s desktop computer.

There would now be licensing concerns about the town clerk having unauthorized copies of the software, Mr. Marcotte said.

The select board is willing to buy other software for Ms. Diaz to use as town clerk and treasurer, and even to pay for any training she needs, Mr. Morley said. But further access to NEMRC is off the table.

The forensic report has a long list of the shortcomings of Ms. Diaz’ recordkeeping.

The summary cites no accounting controls over cash and collections, no quarterly or annual reporting, and “a lack of willingness of Cynthia Diaz, in any of her elected positions, to provide full, complete, and accurate source documents.”

The report found “no level of sufficient competent evidence to support the claims of Ms. Diaz or any willingness to discharge her elected duties by timely production of financial results.”

Ms. Diaz has not met state statutory requirements to issue required warrants between her various offices or to report tax information to the state, the report finds.

Those failures make her ineligible to run for office again under the statutes, Mr. Graham wrote.

Like all audit reports, Mr. Graham’s forensic report details changes the town needs to make in the future.

The 55-page financial audit report coming out next week will include over 130 points that the town needs to improve on.

But the select board doesn’t have to be told

twice.

On Monday night, the board adopted five new financial policies designed to see to it that Coventry doesn’t find itself in hot water again in a few years.

The policies are adapted from model policies offered by the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. They cover investments; fraud prevention; cash receipts, petty cash and returned checks; purchasing; and accounting, auditing and financial reporting.

For policies to be binding on a town clerk and treasurer, she has to sign them. It doesn’t look as though Ms. Diaz plans to do that.

“I’ve talked to the treasurer several times and she’s very no,” Mr. Morley said.

The new policies are about securing the town’s money, following best practices, and moving the town toward a more transparent financial system, Mr. Marcotte said.

“I’m flabbergasted, actually, that she would refuse to sign them,” he said.

It will be noted on the signature line intended for Ms. Diaz that the treasurer has refused to sign, Mr. Morley said.

And the selectmen are paring the jobs Ms. Diaz is allowed to do back to the bare minimum mandated by Vermont statutes.

They’ve already hired their own clerk and bookkeeper in the form of Amanda Carlson, who is also assistant town clerk in Lowell.

They bought their own computer and hired Amber Baker from NEMRC to bring a new set of town books up to date.

And they’re hiring or appointing people to do all of the jobs not specifically reserved by statute for the town clerk and treasurer.

Starting this week, all bills that come into the

town office are to be put on the table in the new select board office across the hall no later than Friday.

The select board’s clerk will prepare warrants to pay the bills, print checks in the NEMRC software, and have them ready for signing at the Monday night select board meeting, Mr. Marcotte said.

Checks in Coventry now require two signatures — one from a select board member and one from the treasurer — so on Tuesday morning, the checks will go to the treasurer to be signed and mailed.

Vendors will be asked to send electronic copies of their invoices to the select board so that incoming bills can be double-checked.

And if that system doesn’t work, the select board may get its own post office box for bills.

“The treasurer was not receptive. At all,” Mr. Morley said.

But attorney Gillies has assured them that the new way of doing things is in line with state law.

A preliminary Graham & Graham report earlier in the fall found major inaccuracies in annual financial reports written up by Ms. Diaz.




The town will have to reissue those reports, Mr. Graham said at the time.

But in the meantime, the select board is taking back the responsibility for producing this year’s annual report.

“We’ve taken over the duty, and she doesn’t have to worry about it,” Mr. Marcotte said.

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Walmart factor maybe not as bad as feared

(Continued from page one.)

willing to say the drop in sales was about 60 percent of what was predicted.

Mr. Merrill cautioned that it is

early days, noting the new store has only been open for a few weeks, but said everyone in his company is happy with the results.

He credited loyal shoppers who



A Christmas tree surrounded by books and toys sets the holiday mood at Wider Than The Sky on Newport's Main Street. Photo by Joseph Gresser

have been going to Vista for years and are familiar with the store and its employees. Many of the store's workers have been with Vista for many years, Mr. Merrill said, adding that he was very happy to see that only one or two employees decided to take jobs at Walmart.

Mr. Merrill said he intends to keep Vista open. Part of making that intention reality is cooperation with Mr. Pomerleau, including renegotiating and extending the store lease, and exterior renovations paid for by the landlord. Mr. Pomerleau has expressed willingness to accept those conditions.

Vista will put money into making interior improvements and will extend its marketing and advertising efforts, Mr. Merrill said.

Another of Newport's anchor businesses, The Pick and Shovel, is having a harder time of it, according to owner Greg Hamblett.

Mr. Hamblett said business is down significantly since Walmart opened. He said late Christmas shopping may improve his outlook, but if not, he plans to consider adjustments to his mix of products and staffing.

Walmart may not be the only factor in the fall-off in Pick and Shovel's business, Mr. Hamblett said. Last year's warmer than normal weather meant contractors were able to work much longer into the winter than is usually the case in Orleans County, he said.

Pick and Shovel isn't seeing that boost this year. Mr. Hamblett said he thinks it is too early to tell how Walmart will affect his business over the long haul, but he admitted being concerned.

While Pick and Shovel and Vista compete directly with Walmart, most of the other stores on Newport's Main Street don't.

Diane Jameson of Wider Than The Sky, a store that features children's toys and books, said she hasn't visited Walmart, but doesn't think the two stores have any merchandise in common.

Ms. Jameson said business has been slow, but she has many loyal customers and she often sees a lot of last minute shoppers in the days just before Christmas.

Irene Degasse, one of those loyal

(Continued on page twenty-four.)

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Retailers anticipate the final rush

(Continued from page twenty-three.)

customers, stopped in while a visitor was speaking with Ms. Jameson. She shared an unusual piece of information about the new Walmart.

“A lot of older people miss IROC,” she said speaking of Indoor Recreation of Orleans County, a fitness and health complex that shut down a few years ago.

“They liked the walking track, and find that Walmart is a good replacement,” Ms. Degasse said.

She same some older people have discovered that a stroll around the perimeter of the store combined with trips down every aisle add up to a seven-mile walk. They are enjoying a heated indoor walking space for the first time since IROC shut its doors, Ms. Degasse said.

Eleanor Leger, one of the directors of the Northeast Kingdom Tasting Center, made a downward gesture with her arms when asked about business.

“No one is coming downtown,” she said. Ms. Leger’s stock surely does not duplicate the wares carried by Walmart. The tasting center features fresh baked goods and maple products along with an array of locally produced wines and

spirits, including the full line from Eden Specialty Ciders, the company she runs with Albert Leger.

Just up the street at the Memphremagog Arts Collaborative (MAC) Center, business is not bad, according to Isobel Marks and Lynn Flint who serve on the board of the nonprofit.

The MAC Center offers a wide selection of art and crafts produced by local craftspeople.

Ms. Marks acknowledged the competition from the new Walmart and said the MAC Center has had to work to get customers in the door this year.

Steve Breault, the proprietor of Newport Natural Market and Café said he thinks business has been down, but is in “wait and see mode.”

He said he will have to wait until January to decide what, if anything, needs to be done to deal with the competition from the discount retailer.

One possibility, he acknowledged, is reducing staff. He said that would not be a first choice as it would mean that he would have to work harder.

The news from Main Street stores may not be as bright as might be hoped for, but there is a silver lining for last minute shoppers. By all accounts, those who procrastinate will still find a good selection to choose from on Christmas Eve.



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Wish List

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2. Gift Certificates
3. Stocking Stuffers
4. Luxury Facials
5. Ear Piercing
6. Keyano Makeup & Skin Care
7. Eyelash & Eyebrow Tint
8. Gel Polish Manicure
9. Manicure & Luxury Pedicure
10. 1-Hour Massage

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1 Main Street, Newport, Vermont
 Mon. 8 a.m.–7 p.m., Tues. 8 a.m.–5 p.m., Wed.–Thurs.–Fri. 8 a.m.–8 p.m., Sat. 8 a.m.–2 p.m.
WALK-INS WELCOME

Wool insulation may make sheep farming profitable

On Monday, November 28, the UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture launched a new research project to assess the feasibility of using wool from Vermont sheep as an insulation material and for other building and household products.

This exploration of a value-added product hopes to provide sheep farmers with new sources of revenue, and to add to the availability of environmentally friendly products for the building trade.

The launch event was hosted by collaborator Open View Farm in New Haven, home to a flock of Tunis Dorset ewes.

The project has been made possible by a Value-Added Producer Grant from United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and support from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets.

From 2007 to 2012 the number of sheep farms in Vermont increased 27 percent, and the number of sheep increased by 35 percent. However, for a variety of reasons, many sheep farmers have struggled to turn a profit. At the same time, growing interest in natural non-toxic materials as insulation for buildings could provide a market for raw wool. Insulation made from wool is

already produced in Europe and in locations in the western United States.

“The plan is to identify possible wins all around — for consumers interested in using a locally produced item to make their houses more comfortable and energy-efficient, for environmentally conscious builders, and, especially, for sheep farmers in Vermont and the region. This could be an answer to the wool collected from Vermont’s sheep which is currently lacking such a value-added market channel,” says Suzy Hodgson of the Center for Sustainable Agriculture.

Kimberly Hagen, grazing specialist at the Center for Sustainable Agriculture, says that shearing sheep regularly is part of maintaining a healthy flock but much of the wool collected does not have a ready market. This additional revenue stream for sheep farmers could provide a more viable business for them.

“Anytime the agency of agriculture can help farmers find a market for a low-value product, it’s a good day,” says Alex DePillis of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. “In this case, the minimally processed wool would become insulation that keeps Vermonters warm in their homes. We look forward to working

collaboratively with farmers, builders, and organizations that serve the building industry, such as Efficiency Vermont and the Vermont Technical College, to create strategies for getting wool-based insulation to market.”

The research project team includes Kimberly Hagen and Suzy Hodgson, UVM Extension Center for Sustainable Agriculture; Anna Freund, Open View Farm; Alex DePillis, Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets; Deb and Ed Bratton, Vermont Fiber Mill; David Ritchie, Green Mountain Spinnery; Alex Wilson, Building Green; Andrea Murray, Vermont Integrated Architecture; Ben Graham, New Frameworks; and Dave Martin, Settlement Farm.

The work will culminate in a feasibility report, which will be made available to the public on the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture site at http://www.uvm.edu/~susagctr/?Page=whatwedo/projectsresearch/wool_project.html.

For more information about this wool research project, please contact Kimberly Hagen at (802) 522-6729 or by e-mailing kimberly.hagen@uvm.edu. — from UVM Extension.

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- **Pope-Memorial Frontier Animal Shelter – Feline Spay/Neuter Clinic:** Monthly/bi-monthly spay/neuter clinic for cats. The \$45 fee includes rabies and distemper vaccinations. Call 334-8197 for appointment.
- **Northeast Kingdom Spay-Neuter Program:** Provides a voucher for a spay/neuter procedure at a reduced fee for either a cat or a dog in Orleans or Essex counties, for use at participating local veterinarians. For more info, call 334-7393.
- **Vermont Spay Neuter Incentive Program** is available to help Vermonters unable to afford the cost of spaying/neutering cats & dogs for which they provide care. Send a SASE (self addressed stamped envelope) to: VSNI, P.O. Box 104, Bridgewater, VT 05034 for an application.
- **Felines & Friends Foundation:** Provides spay/neuter assistance for barn cats, unowned, or loosely owned cats. More info at FFVT.org or call 323-4793.
- **VT-CAN!** is a stationary, reduced-cost, high-quality, high-volume spay/neuter clinic located in Middlesex, Vermont. More info at <http://vt-can.org>. You can also e-mail info@vt-can.org or call 223-0034.
- **Providing Ethical Treatment for Strays (P.E.T.S.) of the Kingdom:** Focuses on animal cruelty investigation and other animal welfare issues. More info at petsofthekingdom.weebly.com or 673-3791.





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Our tack shop is full service and has something for everyone. There is a large consignment area, that has lots of good deals. We have English, Western, and Australian boots. We carry well-known lines like Toklat, Myler bits, Cavallo simple boots and saddles from Big Horn, Simco, Longhorn and Silver Royal. We have belts, hats, boots, shirts, jewelry, stable supplies, and Wendal herbs. We pride ourselves in trying to have a little bit of most everything. If we don't have what you want we can probably get it for you.



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Newport, VT 05855

334-5044

COVENTRY VILLAGE SCHOOL
COVENTRY, VT

MATH AND/OR LITERACY INTERVENTIONIST – 50%

IMMEDIATE VACANCY
2016-2017 School Year

Coventry Village School is looking for someone with a heart for students, who is knowledgeable in mathematical and/or literacy concepts, to work collaboratively with the teaching staff to offer additional support to the student population. We welcome team players who want to work hard and contribute positively to the lives of young people. Schedule is 4 hours a day, school session.

Salary & Benefits: As per Teacher’s Negotiated Agreement. Must have or be eligible for appropriate Vermont Elementary Education or Middle Grades licensure.

Interested candidates must submit letter of interest, resumé listing three current references (or current letters of reference), copies of transcripts, and a copy of appropriate Vermont licensure & HQT paperwork, via: www.Schoolspring.com (preferred), or to:

Matthew Baughman, Principal
Coventry Village School
P.O. Box 92
Coventry, VT 05825
Matthew.baughman@ncsuvt.org

Deadline: Screening will begin immediately & continue until positions are filled.
Criminal Background & Child Abuse/Neglect Registry Checks are required.
Equal Opportunity Employer.

North Country Union High School
Newport , VT
PRINCIPAL VACANCY
2017-2018 School Year

The North Country Union High School seeks an energetic and passionate educator with exceptional leadership capacity to serve as principal of their school-community with approximately 725 students.

The preferred candidate must demonstrate an understanding of current practices that advance holistic outcomes for student learning. Individuals must have experience in effectively leading and managing personnel, support systems, complex change and effectively engaging a school-community. Candidates are expected to show evidence of successful collaboration, strong communication skills, continuous personal learning and a learner-centered approach.

Qualifications:

1. Hold a Master’s degree and Vermont Principal’s Certification
2. Minimum of six years’ experience in secondary public education, with at least three years of classroom experience. Administrative experience preferred.
3. Demonstrated knowledge of educational policies, practices and standards; and federal and state requirements; familiarity with curriculum, instruction and assessment practices; and demonstrated experience with budgetary and supervisory responsibilities.
4. Strong written, inter-personal, communication, technology and collaboration skills.
5. Experience in developing and implementing successful strategies for a supportive school environment and a multi-tiered system of supports for diverse learners.
6. Experience with current best practices including but not limited to: proficiency based learning, personalized learning, multiple pathways, and work/community based learning.
7. Such alternatives to the above qualifications as deemed acceptable by the North Country Union High School Board.

Position Goal: *The mission of the North Country Union High School is achievement through perseverance.* The NCUHS Principal will provide the leadership to establish the necessary culture and practices in order to meet the educational needs of each learner in accordance with the school mission.

Salary based on experience. Excellent benefit package provided. This is a 260 day contract.

Application Process: Please submit a letter of interest, a resumé listing three current references (or current letters of reference), transcripts, and copy of appropriate Vermont license via: www.Schoolspring.com (preferred), or to: Nancy Griffith: Human Resources Coordinator
North Country Supervisory Union
121 Duchess Avenue, Suite A
Newport, VT 05855
or via e-mail: nancy.griffith@ncsuvt.org.

The screening process will begin January 9, 2017, and continue until the position is filled. Criminal Background Check and Child Abuse/Neglect Registry Check required. E.O.E.

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Service Technician

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ASE or manufacturer certifications a plus.

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Mike Rowell, Service Manager.

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- Millwright – 2nd Shift
- Electronic Technician – 2nd Shift
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- General Laborers – 3rd Shift

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- Gainsharing
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CHARLESTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
West Charleston, VT

Food Service Manager
Immediate Vacancy

The Charleston Elementary School is seeking a food service manager. The food service manager is responsible for providing and maintaining a healthy and successful food program within the school while abiding by all federal, state and local regulations and policies.

Qualifications:

- Minimum of Associate’s degree or equivalent educational experience with academic major in specific areas; and at least one year’s experience in school nutrition programs.
- Computer literate with competencies in spreadsheets and databases.
- Clear written, oral, inter-personal and communication skills.
- Self-motivated to function efficiently by prioritizing independently with strong organizational and problem solving skills.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality is essential as well as having basic math skills to calculate figures and amounts.

Salary & Benefits: Salary based on experience and benefits per Support Staff policy.

A detailed job description is available upon request.

Submit letter of interest, and resumé listing 3 references (or 3 current letters of reference), via: www.Schoolspring.com (preferred), or to: Jessica Applegate, Principal
255 Center School Road
West Charleston, VT 05872
Jessica.applegate@ncsuvt.org

Deadline: The application screening process will begin immediately and continue until position is filled.

Criminal Record Background and Child Abuse/Neglect Registry Checks are required.

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Receptionist/Office Assistant

Full-time position available for an organized and dependable person with good phone and customer service skills, to answer phones, schedule appointments, receive and maintain inventory, and some sales. Experience preferred, with knowledge of multi-line phone system, Internet and e-mail applications, and data entry.

Send resumé to:
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Newport, VT 05855

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Send resumé to:
SALESPERSON, Drawer K, c/o *the Chronicle*
P.O. Box 660, Barton, VT 05822, or
e-mail to: ads@bartonchronicle.com
(Attn.: Auto salesperson job)



Line Cook Needed!

Do you cook a burger that is the talk of every backyard grilling get-together? Do you have the perfect winter stew recipe? If your good cooking is your greatest talent, we want to meet you!

Please contact 723-9888 or e-mail your resumé to essexhouseandtavern@gmail.com.

This newly revived historic hotel in Island Pond is looking for a Line Cook to join our team.

The ideal candidate must have enthusiasm, determination to succeed and creative flair in the kitchen. Ideally, we are looking for someone who is excited to cook, inspired by flavor, and available to start December 16. The role will involve maintaining standards of hygiene and consistently assisting to improve standards of food quality.

Requirements:
36-40 hours/week;
Good knowledge of cooking techniques and styles;
Good understanding of food, hygiene, and safety; and
Good verbal and written English.

NORTH COUNTRY UNION HIGH SCHOOL
Newport, VT

IMMEDIATE VACANCIES
PART-TIME MAINTENANCE / GROUNDS ASSISTANTS (2)

NCUHS has immediate openings for two year-round, part-time, maintenance/grounds assistants to work 20 hours per week. Hours may vary slightly, such as evenings and weekends as needed.

Requirements include: demonstrate reliability and dependability, be detail-oriented and able to follow instructions, ability to lift up to 50 pounds, ability to stand for long periods of time, and carry a vacuum back pack. Must be a team player that works well with others.

A full job description is available upon request.

Interested persons must complete a job application, including prior employment references, available at the NCUHS main office, or at NCSU Central Office, and forward it to:
Daniel Pickering
Custodial / Maintenance Supervisor
NCUHS
209 Veterans Avenue
Newport, VT 05855

Salary & Benefits. Salary based on experience. No benefits as this is a part-time position.

Application Deadline: Application screening process will begin immediately and continue until position is filled.

Criminal Record Check & Child Abuse/Neglect Registry Check Required.

Equal Opportunity Employer.

Birders encouraged to join Christmas Bird Count

This holiday season marks the one hundred seventeenth annual Audubon Christmas Bird Count, a tradition among Vermont’s birding community. Birders in Vermont are encouraged to participate in the count, which is happening from December 15 to January 2.

Even novice birdwatchers can participate because every event is led by an experienced birder. Organizers and participants include birders and biologists from Audubon Vermont, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department, and many other groups.

“The Christmas Bird Count is a great way to join with friends and family to be part of an historic national bird monitoring project that helps provide a snapshot of where birds are wintering from year to year,” said John Buck, wildlife biologist for Vermont Fish and Wildlife. “Participating in the count can be especially rewarding during years when there are irruptions, or mass migrations of an unusual species to Vermont, such as redpolls or snowy owls.”

In Vermont, more than a dozen count areas

and dates are available where birders gather together to conduct the Christmas Bird Count. The dates and contact information for each event are listed at vt.audubon.org/audubon-christmas-bird-count-0.

“The Christmas Bird Count is one of the longest-running citizen science projects in the country and possibly in the world,” said Mark LaBarr, conservation program manager for Audubon Vermont. “Not only does it provide important data for scientists, but it’s also a great time for folks who participate.”

The Christmas Bird Count originated in 1900 with ornithologist Frank Chapman, an officer in the Audubon Society, who updated what had been a traditional Christmas morning bird hunt to include a census of the wintering locations of various bird species. The count started with just 27 observers and has grown into one of the largest birding events in the world, with tens of thousands of people participating every year.

“This is an enjoyable way to spend a winter day and it’s also a great opportunity to see different birds and learn more about them,” said

Mr. Buck. “It’s also a great opportunity to enjoy the company of fellow birders, and for birders of all levels to learn something new.”

An event will be held in Island Pond on Thursday, December 15. Contact Jayson Benoit at jayson@northwoodscenter.org. — from Vermont Fish and Wildlife.

Goodrich forgives fines during Christmas

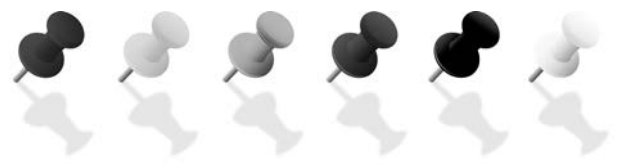
All overdue books or other materials that are returned to the library from December 12 through January 7 will be exempt from fines. Now is the time to return any library materials you may have overlooked around the house, without a penalty. This is a gift to everyone from the library.

Please save us the expense of replacing books, CDs, DVDs, or magazines, by bringing them back to the library. — from the Goodrich Memorial Library.

Rug hooking group to meet in Troy

People who hook rugs, or who want to learn the traditional craft, are invited to gather on second Wednesdays of the month at the Vermont Quilter’s Schoolhouse, 6529 Route 100 in Troy. The group will meet from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., beginning December 14. For details or more information, telephone Carolyn Buttolph of Vermont Hooked Rugs, at (802) 888-8432 or 730-3559.

An open sewing circle also meets at the schoolhouse on Thursdays and Fridays, between 9:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. To learn about the sewing group or quilting classes, telephone Tina de la Bruere, owner of Vermont Quilter’s Schoolhouse, at (802) 744-4023. — submitted by Carolyn Buttolph.



NOTICE:

Town of Irasburg

There is an open position on the Select Board.

Persons interested in the open position should submit a letter of interest to the Select Board, either through e-mail at: irasburgtc@comcast.net, or by mail to: P.O. Box 51, Irasburg, VT 05845, or it can be dropped off at the Town Clerk’s Office.

STATE OF VERMONT
SUPERIOR COURT, ORLEANS UNIT
IN RE: ESTATE OF: Margaret Kearney
LATE OF: Westfield, Vermont

PROBATE DIVISION
DOCKET NO.: 279-8-16 Ospr

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the creditors of the estate of Margaret Kearney, late of Westfield. I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**

Dated: 12/13/2016.
Name of Publication: *the Chronicle*
Publication Date: 12/14/16.

State of Vermont
Superior Court
Orleans Probate Division
247 Main Street #1
Newport, VT 05855

Executor/Administrator:
Jason P. Morrissey, Esq.
Attorney for John Kearney,
Administrator
P.O. Box 14
217 Union St.
Bennington, VT 05201
(802) 442-0400
(802) 442-0404 (fax)
Jason@morrisseywilsonlaw.com

NOTICE OF TAX SALE

The resident and non-resident owners, lien holders and mortgagees of lands in the Village of Barton, in the County of Orleans and State of Vermont, are hereby notified that the taxes assessed by Barton Village, Inc. for the year 2015, and delinquent electric and water and sewer charges in favor of Barton Village, Inc. remain either in whole or in part unpaid on the following described land and premises in said town, to wit:

PARCEL NO. 1:
Name of Taxpayer: CHRISTINE BEASLEY
Description of Property
It being all and the whole of the same land and premises conveyed by Warranty Deed dated May 13, 2004 and recorded in Book 126, Page 537 of the Town of Barton Land Records from Michael J. Hunt and Kimberly A. Hunt to James Beasley and Christine M. Beasley, the interest therein of the said James Beasley having been decreed unto Christine M. Beasley by virtue of a Final Order Ancillary to Foreign Divorce issued by the Vermont Superior Court, Family Division in the matter entitled Christine Beasley vs. James Beasley, said Order being dated August 14, 2012 and recorded in Book 164, Pages 205-206 of the Town of Barton Land Records.

AMOUNT OF TAXES

COLLECTOR’S FEES, INTEREST AND COSTS

YEAR 2015: \$ 1,112.58

PARCEL NO. 2:
Name of Taxpayer: MICHAEL HEALY and JULIE HEALY
Description of Property
It being all and the same land and premises as conveyed by Warranty Deed dated November 8, 1989 and recorded in Book 80, Pages 90-91 of the Town of Barton Land Records from Earl LaClair and Margaret LaClair to Michael Healy and Julie Bean.

AMOUNT OF TAXES

COLLECTOR’S FEES, INTEREST AND COSTS

YEAR 2015 \$1,074.45

2015 - Water CHARGES, COLLECTOR’S FEES, INTEREST AND COSTS: \$ 73.51

PARCEL NO. 3:
Name of Taxpayer: SCOTT PRAY and KENDALL OGDEN
Description of Property

It being all and the whole of the same land and premises conveyed by Warranty Deed dated August 23, 2012 and recorded in Book 163, Pages 755-756 of the Town of Barton Land Records from Bruce H. Conley and Janice C. Conley to Scott A. Pray and Kendell Ogden.

AMOUNT OF TAXES

COLLECTOR’S FEES, INTEREST AND COSTS

YEAR 2015 \$ 356.26

And such lands and premises will be sold at public auction at the Barton Town Clerk’s Office in the Village of Barton, Vermont, a public place within said municipality, on the 18th day of January, 2017, as per the following schedule:

PARCEL NO. 1 - 10:00 A.M., PARCEL NO. 2 - 10:03 A.M., PARCEL NO. 3 - 10:06 A.M.
unless such taxes respectively assessed against the aforesaid properties, together with costs, interest and fees, shall have been previously paid.

Pursuant to Title 32, Section 5254 (b), Vermont Statutes Annotated, an owner of property being sold for taxes may request in writing, not less than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the tax sale, that only a portion of the property be sold. Such request must clearly identify the portion of the property to be sold, and must be accompanied by a certification from the district environmental commission and the Village of Barton zoning administrative officer that the portion identified may be subdivided and meets the minimum lot size requirements. In the event that the portion so identified by the taxpayer cannot be sold for the amount of the unpaid tax and costs, then the entire property will be sold to pay such unpaid tax and costs.

Taxpayers are further advised of their right to have a hearing before the Village of Barton Board for the Abatement of Taxes in accordance with the provisions of Title 24, Section 1535, Vermont Statutes Annotated. Taxpayers wishing to have such a hearing must contact the Clerk of the Village of Barton to request such a hearing.

Dated at the Village of Barton, Vermont, this 6th day of December, 2016.

ATTEST: s/a Shelia Martin
Shelia Martin, Tax Collector for the Village of Barton, Vermont

PROPOSED STATE RULES

By law, public notice of proposed rules must be given by publication in newspapers of record. The purpose of these notices is to give the public a chance to respond to the proposals. The public notices for administrative rules are now also available online at <https://secure.vermont.gov/SOS/rules/>. The law requires an agency to hold a public hearing on a proposed rule, if requested to do so in writing by 25 persons or an association having at least 25 members.

To make special arrangements for individuals with disabilities or special needs please call or write the contact person listed below as soon as possible.

To obtain further information concerning any scheduled hearing(s), obtain copies of proposed rule(s) or submit comments regarding proposed rule(s), please call or write the contact person listed below. You may also submit comments in writing to the Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules, State House, Montpelier, Vermont 05602. (802-828-2231).

NOTE: The seven rules below have been promulgated by the Agency of Human Services who has requested the notices be combined to facilitate a savings for the agency. When contacting the agency about these rules please note the title and rule number of the rule(s) you are interested in.

Dental Services for Beneficiaries Age 21 and Older – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P078
Dental Services for Beneficiaries Under Age 21, and Pregnant and Postpartum Women – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P079
Orthodontic Treatment – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P080
Pharmaceutical Manufacturer Fee – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P081
Chiropractic Services – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P082
Augmentative Communication Devices and Systems – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P083
Medical and Surgical Services of a Dentist – Vermont Proposed Rule: 16P084

AGENCY: Agency of Human Services

CONCISE SUMMARY: The proposed rules set forth the criteria for coverage and service delivery for Health Care Administrative Rules (HCAR). These are amended rules for services under Vermont’s Medicaid program. The revisions replace Medicaid covered services rules 7313, 7312, 7701, 7304, 7507, and 7311, as part of the sequential adoption of Health Care Administrative Rules designed to improve public accessibility and comprehension of the rules concerning the operation of Vermont’s Medicaid program.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Ashley Berliner, Agency of Human Services, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT 05671-1000. Tel: 802-578-9305. Fax: 802-241-0450. E-mail: ashley.berliner@vermont.gov. URL: <http://dvha.vermont.gov/budget-legislative>.

Jam session for Charleston school

There will be a jam session to benefit the Charleston Elementary School music program on Friday, December 16, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Musicians, singers, and members of the community are welcome. There is a \$3 suggested donation, and snacks will be available.

The event will be held at the school on the Center Road in East Charleston. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. In the event of a cancellation, it will be announced on *WMOO* radio and *NEKTV*.

More information is available online at www.ces.ncsuvt.org, or by calling 895-2915, 723-6271, or 723-6038. — submitted by Linda Studer.

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MOTORCYCLE INSPECTIONS
133 Coventry Street, Newport, VT
334-7832
Pager: 742-3363
Steve Ellis Dale Mosher

Auto

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Saturday 9-1,
Closed Sunday.

Remembrance: A local tree heads to Rockefeller Plaza

The lighting of the Rockefeller Plaza Christmas tree during Thanksgiving week attracted widespread media attention. However, it also brought back memories of the tree cut and transported to New York City from the Northeast Kingdom 59 years ago. The 67 foot white spruce located on the Maurice Plante farm, six miles east of Island Pond, was cut down November 27, 1957. The branches of the tree had been tied, a huge crane held it upright while Mr. Plante sawed through the trunk, which was eight feet in circumference. Lieutenant Governor Robert Stafford was among the dignitaries on hand. The Dave Garraway morning TV show filmed the occasion and followed the truck daily on its route through Vergennes and down the New York throughway. It took 20 men a week to decorate the tree.

The boys at a local summer camp actually helped to select the tree. During the summer of 1957 a project for the Camp Winape boys at Seymour Lake was to search for a Christmas tree that would meet the specifications for the Rockefeller Center site. Some of these campers were on hand at the tree lighting on December 12, 1957, along with Chief Ed Kolar and family, and the Plante family, when Vermont Governor Joseph Johnson threw the switch. — submitted by Pat Hunt.



Photo courtesy of Pat Hunt

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The advertisement features a logo on the left consisting of a stylized letter 'L' inside a circle, which is flanked by horizontal lines suggesting wings. To the right of the logo, the text 'Yeah, we do that.' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, a paragraph of text in a smaller font states: 'You know we repair/rebuild transmissions, but we also do most regular auto and truck repair as well. Engines to brakes, radiator to tail pipe, we're here to help. Call us.' At the bottom of the advertisement, the company name 'Leroux Brothers Transmissions' is underlined, followed by the tagline 'Transmission Specialists • Complete Auto Repair • Used Cars • Free Quotes' in a smaller font. The contact information, including the address '1369 Glover Road • Barton, VT 05822' and two phone numbers ('toll-free 1.800.420.4330' and 'local 1.802.525.4330'), is listed at the bottom.

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Derby church welcomes Pastor Haddad

Mike Haddad is the new pastor of Derby Community Church and his first Sunday as pastor will be December 18.

Pastor Haddad is married to Norma, and together they have two children — Isabelle who is 19 months old, and a new baby on the way who could be born any day now.

Pastor Haddad grew up in Foxboro, Massachusetts, the home of the Patriots, and yes, he is a Patriots fan. Mrs. Haddad grew up in Sheldon, and so the pastor has grown to love Vermont as he has spent much time here with his wife. Both attended undergraduate school at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago before moving back to Massachusetts to do ministry in New England. Pastor Haddad has spent the past two years as a youth pastor at a church north of Boston while working towards a master's degree

at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

Now he and his family are eager to move up to Derby and to do ministry with the Derby Community Church. Pastor Haddad looks forward to getting out and about and becoming a part of the local community. He and his family love the outdoors, hiking, cross-country skiing, and fishing. The family can often be found at the library flipping through books or going for long walks. The Derby Community Church encourages people to stop by any Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m. and say hi to the new pastor, his family, and their new baby.

For more information on the church, visit its newly renovated website at <http://www.derbycommunitychurch.com/>. — from the Derby Community Church.

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Prepare animals for winter

by M. Kathleen Shaw, DVM
Vermont Veterinary Medical Association

It's time to think about things you can do to help outside animals be prepared for winter. If large animals are kept outside, check fencing to make sure posts and boards are secure, especially where snow drifts form. The animals must have the ability to get out of the wind, rain, and snow. A run-in shed with the open end facing away from the winter wind is best. Make sure that mineral and salt blocks are not covered in snow.

Keep paths free of slippery mud, snow, and ice; a broken leg in a large animal can have disastrous consequences. Have a plan to provide fresh water to your outside animals and to keep it from freezing. Livestock drink less when it is cold out. You can increase the amount of water that your animals drink in cold weather by heating the water and this effect is particularly notable in goats.

It is critical to address nutritional needs in the winter. Talk to a veterinarian who can help formulate a feeding plan for outside animals. They have training in nutrition and are familiar with the health and nutritional needs of livestock. In general, using high-quality hay is the best way to keep most farm animals warm in the winter. Hay keeps horses and ruminants warm: heat is produced

as the bacteria in their intestinal tract ferment it. (Grains are more efficient feeds and affect less heat loss from the gut which means less heat for the animal.)

One of the important things in winter is to regularly put hands on the animals. It is impossible to tell how they are doing just by looking at them. By rubbing hands on a horse's ribs, and on top lines for small ruminants and camelids one can check for prominent ribs or vertebrae that signal weight loss. Also, make sure the animals' coats are free of manure and mud. Mud and manure in the fur prevent the longer, coarser winter coats from retaining heat.

Talk to a veterinarian about deworming the animals before winter. They should check a horse's teeth for hooks or points. These can cause pain, dropping food, and weight loss. Make sure the animals are up to date on vaccines, too.

Don't forget barn cats and dogs. They need fresh water, too. A place for them to sleep that is enclosed (even in the barn) will help them to retain body heat. Bigger is not better — at least when it comes to doghouses. A smaller house is better, as it helps keep the heat in. The barn may keep the wind and snow out, but it's still cold in there for smaller barn animals.

For advice on keeping animals healthy and warm this winter, talk to a veterinarian. Vets can offer advice on how to prevent trouble.

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