

Month delay no dam problem

Installation set for November

By **TOM BENTON**
Messenger Staff Writer

SWANTON — The replacement rubber bag dam for the Orman Croft Hydro Facility is on track for delivery in the second week of November, village manager Reg Beliveau Jr. said.

But Beliveau used the term “on track” loosely. When the prior dam deflated in mid-June, Beliveau asked the replacement bag’s manufacturer, HTE, how soon the company could produce and deliver a replacement. HTE said the replacement could be delivered by the second week of October.

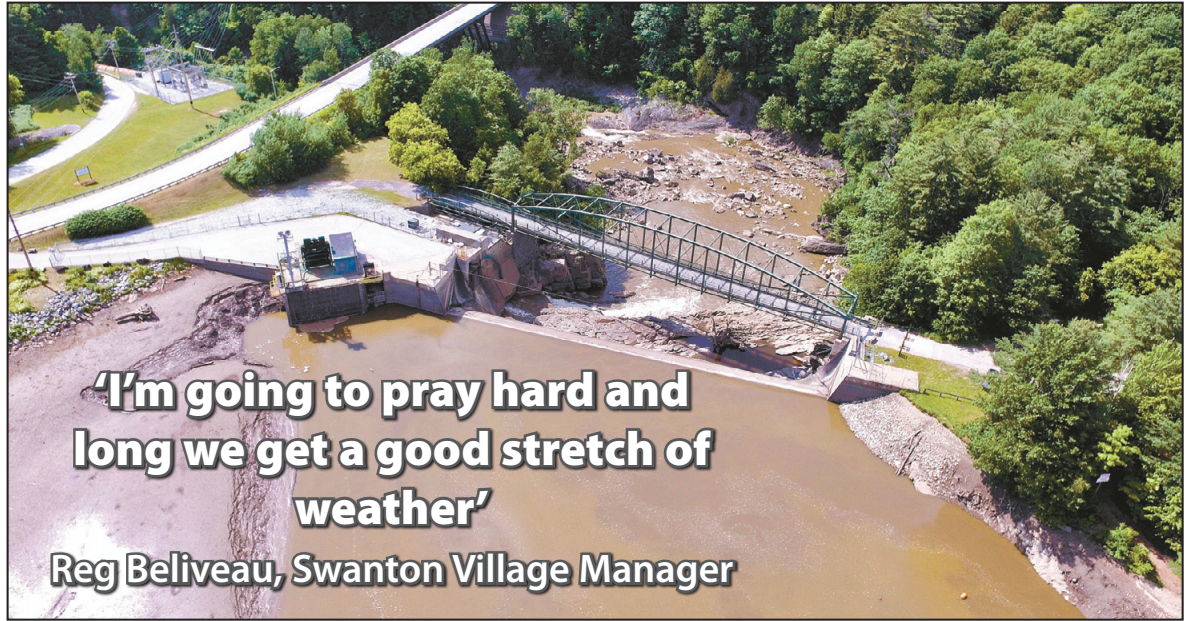
That’s half the usual production time for a rubber bag dam. The bag’s installation, by PC Construction and

Contractors Crane Service, would be done by early November, and the Orman Croft facility could resume operating at full capacity.

Then, in late September, HTE informed Beliveau that, while the company had produced the bag on schedule, its delivery would be delayed until the second week of November, one month after the agreed-upon delivery date.

Beliveau, in response, organized a conference call with HTE and the contractors installing the dam on Oct. 4, hoping to realign the delivery schedule. The later the new dam is installed, the greater the challenge of weather — rubber is less pliable in colder temperatures.

Beliveau told the *Messenger* ▶ See DAM on page 5



‘I’m going to pray hard and long we get a good stretch of weather’

Reg Beliveau, Swanton Village Manager

ARMAND MESSIER, Messenger Correspondent

This aerial shot shows the Swanton dam shortly after its collapse in June.

A pawsome day for homeless cats

FCAR reopens today

By **MARILYN TAGLIAVIA**
Messenger Staff

ST. ALBANS — Today, Franklin County Animal Rescue (FCAR) in St. Albans re-opens after closing in April due to financial distress. The shelter features an expanded area for cats, which FCAR will care for exclusively until mid-November when dogs will also be received and re-homed.

The former dog kennels have been transformed into updated and colorful spaces where cats can roam in and out of their individual cages. Other renovations include flooring, updated HVAC, and an improved space where ill cats can be isolated, as well as an improved intake scheduling system.

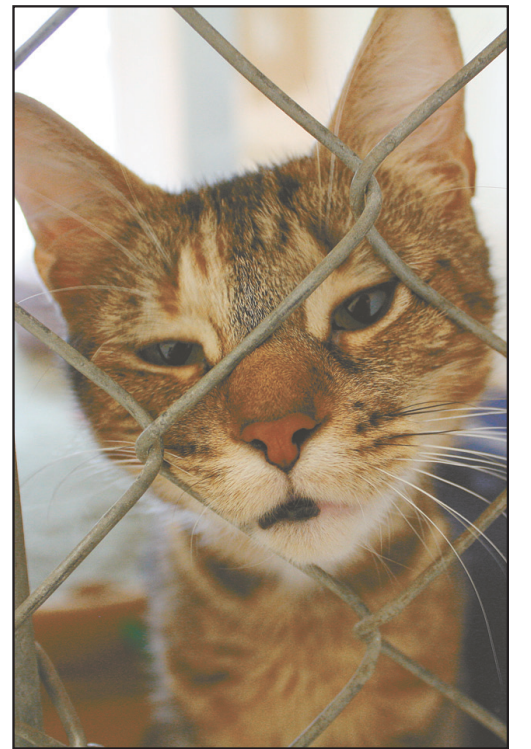
FCAR will be holding both an adoption event and a calcutta night this Saturday. Please contact FCAR at (802) 524-9650 for more information regarding these events.

More photos and information about FCAR’s current adoptable cats and the re-opening will be included on the Paws & Claws page in tomorrow’s edition.



MARILYN TAGLIAVIA, Messenger Staff

The adult female cat above is currently un-named and arrived with an adult male cat on Monday. Honeysuckle, right, is an adult domestic short-hair female cat, who was abandoned at the shelter in July with her four kittens (One which looks exactly like her!). Her kittens will be re-homed during an adoption event this Saturday.



TODAY’S OBITUARIES

• **DANIEL D. PELKEY**
(OTTIS)
Bakersfield/Ellsworth, Maine

See obituaries, page 5, or subscribe to our digital edition at www.samesessenger.com

WEATHER:



Tonight: Clear, 39.
Tomorrow: Mostly sunny, 65.
FORECAST, PAGE 7

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Cold Hollow to Canada fights forest loss

Regional conservation group gets funding

By **ELAINE EZERINS**
Messenger Staff Writer

MONTGOMERY — Vermont is losing 1,500 acres of forest to development every year, according to a new report by Harvard Forest, a research institute of Harvard University.

The Wildlands and Woodlands, Farmlands and Communities report finds the state’s annual land conservation rates have fallen back to early 1990s levels as well, even as groups report that private landowners’ interest in conserving their land remains high.

“I think for us, that just makes our work so much more relevant right now,” said Bridget Butler, the program director for Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC).

CHC is a conservation partnership operating in seven towns along



CHARLIE HANCOCK, Contributed Photo

Cold Hollow to Canada, named after the Cold Hollow region pictured here, is working to keep Vermont’s northern forest healthy and intact through stewardship. The conservation partnership is active in Fletcher, Bakersfield, Enosburg, Montgomery and Richford.

the northern Green Mountains, including Fletcher, Bakersfield, Enosburg, Montgomery and Richford.

One of the CHC’s missions is to permanently

protect 40 percent of the non-fragmented Priority Forest Blocks, large contiguous blocks of forest providing critical habitats for wildlife, in the region by 2030.

The CHC was recently awarded grant funding to develop a conservation fund to financially support landowners interested in donating a conservation easement.

▶ See COLD HOLLOW on page 5

MVU

‘devastated’ by student death

By **MICHELLE MONROE**
Messenger Staff

SWANTON — A student at Missisquoi Valley Union (MVU) has taken her own life.

Superintendent Winton Goodrich confirmed this morning that sophomore Summer Dashno died Wednesday.

“We are absolutely devastated here at MVU,” he said. “We express our heartfelt condolences to her family and friends.”

Northwest Counseling and Support Services (NCSS) were at MVU this morning to provide support to students and staff.

Dashno was on the cross-country team, a very good student and active in the afterschool program for years, he said.

Dashno’s death has been a topic of discussion on social media since yesterday and the *Messenger* received calls from the public.

An initial look into her records during her time at MVU did not show any evidence of bullying, according to Goodrich, but he said the school will be investigating further.

This morning, Rep. Brian Savage shared the number for the National Suicide Prevention Hotline, which is 1-800-273-8255. The crisis number for NCSS is (802) 524-6554 or (800) 834-7793 toll free.

UVM Medical Center slips in national quality rankings

By ERIN MANSFIELD
VTDigger.org

The University of Vermont Medical Center has slipped in national rankings on quality and patient safety of academic medical centers.

In a 2017 survey, the hospital placed 26 out of 107 academic medical centers nationwide for quality and patient safety, according to Eileen Whalen, the president of the UVM Medical Center, who announced the ranking in an email to hospital employees.

The rankings are by Vizient, Inc., formerly the United HealthSystem Consortium, which has conducted annual surveys on hospital quality and patient safety since 2005. Historically, the evaluated criteria have been collaboration, a shared sense of purpose, a hands-on leadership style, vertical and horizontal accountability, and a focus on results.

The 2017 ranking marks the first time in seven years that the UVM Medical Center has not ranked in the top 20 academic medical centers nationwide. In 2016, the hospital ranked 13th, the sixth consecutive year in the top 20. The hospital ranked 16th in 2015 and 7th in 2013.

"This change in ranking is to some degree a reflection of the fact that each

year Vizient updates and increases the rigor of the criteria used to determine rankings, and in 2017, a new, more precise methodology for scoring was introduced," Whalen wrote in an email.

"This is good news nationally as our patients and families benefit when all of us in the health care industry continue to raise the bar on patient quality and safety," Whalen wrote. "It also means that we need to continue to look for opportunities to improve."

Whalen wrote that the hospital has a "roadmap for improvement" that includes working with the UVM Medical Center's Jeffords Institute for Quality and Operational Effectiveness, which focuses on the hospital's strategic goals for quality and patient safety. "I am confident we will continue to improve," she wrote.

Donna Ledbetter, a spokesperson for Vizient, said in an email that the company does not give out information about the quality and patient safety survey beyond the annual press release naming the top-ranking hospitals in the country.

In an interview Wednesday, Whalen called the Vizient survey "proprietary" and declined to comment on the reasons the UVM Medical Center

has slipped from the top 20 academic medical centers in the country.

Whalen did call the annual survey "one of the single most important things across our nation to really improve the quality of care rendered in academic medical centers." She said the survey encourages competitive health professionals to "compete in a very, very healthy way."

Whalen said the hospital is consistently working with the 50 employees at the Jeffords Institute to improve the quality of care. "They transform this work that we're doing in quality and safety into research and publication, so that we share our really good best practices with other states," she said.

Dr. Steve Leffler, the chief population health and quality officer for the UVM Health Network, said he is fully confident in the quality of care at the hospital. He said the hospital tries to tailor quality to each individual patient.

"What's important to you when you go to seek medical care?" Leffler said. "You're trying to accomplish (something specific). If we can accomplish that for you, that's probably the most important measure."

"At the end of the day, patient results are what we're really trying to strive for," he said.

OBITUARIES



Daniel D. Pelkey (Ottis)

BAKERSFIELD / BELLSWORTH, Maine — Daniel D. Pelkey (Ottis) passed away peacefully with his daughter Danielle by his bedside after battling a long illness in Ellsworth, Maine on Sept. 25, 2017.

Daniel was born the fourth child of Doris Kittell Pelkey and Howard Pelkey Sr. of East Fairfield, Vt. on Jan. 29, 1954.

Dan attended grade school in Fairfield, Vt. and graduated from Enosburg Falls High School in June of 1972.

Danny worked five years on the line crew for the St. J. LC Railroad in Vermont right after high school. He then worked for St. Albans Electric Appliance

Co. Danny left St. Albans Electric Appliance Co. after 12 years and went to work for Lane Press in South Burlington, Vt. for the next 17 years.

Danny lived the first half of his life in Fairfield, Vt. and in 1980 he moved to Bakersfield where he purchased a home and would live for the next 34 years. This is where his life's "pride and joy" daughter Danielle was born.

Danny had many good friends that he lived and enjoyed his years with. Danny spent his leisure time in the spring and summer months working with his flowers, and working with his several baseball teams that he organized and coached in Franklin County.

During the nights and cold winter days Ottis opened up the "card palace" at his house for card games and gossip sessions with several friends such as David O'Connell, Russel Stone, Roger Stone, Gary Reed, Kim Edwards, Tom Britch, and Tim Gervais to name a few. One thing everyone could count on no matter what time of year it was, Dan was always with his side kick and best friend, his white German

Shepard, Demon.

In 2013, Danny decided he wanted to be closer to his daughter Danielle and son-in-law Robert Williams in Ellsworth, Maine where he lived in an apartment right next door to them. When Dan first got to Maine he immediately started helping out Danielle to get Rob to his cancer treatments in Bangor, Maine. Later on Danielle and Rob were able to look after Dan till his death.

Dan was survived by his sister Lynda Pelkey Westcom and her husband Harold Westcom of East Fairfield, Vt., a brother Rodney Pelkey of St. Albans, Vt., and several nieces, nephews, cousins, and his special card playing friends.

Danny was predeceased by his parents, his brother Howard Pelkey Jr. and his wife Madeline Fields Pelkey, sister-in-law Susan Frechette Pelkey as well as several aunts and uncles.

A celebration of life will be in the late spring or early summer of 2018. The date will be announced in the St. Albans Messenger at a later time for anyone that wishes to attend.

Cold Hollow

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"The hard thing to think about is if you want to donate your land to the Vermont Land Trust, you want to have a conservation easement on your land that protects that land from development moving forward, you have to pay to have that done," said Butler.

"It can cost tens of thousands of dollars to do the right thing," she said.

With the Cold Hollow Land Conservation Fund, up to \$10,000 can be used to offset costs for each project, including the procurement of surveys, appraisals and appraisal reviews, attorney services, title searches, deed preparation, and more.

To be eligible, the project needs to be 50 acres or greater, with 60 percent of the land covered by forest, and fall within the core forest or connectivity areas identified by the CHC.

"Our first round of applicants are just coming in and we're really excited at the potential to be able to start to help folks make that leap toward conserving their property," said Butler.

She said the conservation fund decreases the financial barrier for people, "making it easier for landowners to do something that's going to be good for the health of the forest and for wildlife."

Applications for the funding can be submitted to the CHC at any time, but will be batched on a quar-

terly basis for review.

This year, the CHC also received grant money from the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Regional Conservation Partnership Program, in the amount of \$640,000, to expand the work of the Cold Hollow Woodlots Program.

Butler said the woodlots program is "all about bringing more landowners together and helping them look at forest management on a landscape scale rather than in their own little bubbles."

CHC invites neighbors with 50 acres or more of land in the core forest habitat to join a woodlot group. The groups meet four times a year for dinner and presentations from experts in best forest management practices for wildlife, timber, maple production, songbirds and more.

"And now we can bring money to the table to actually help pay for some of the management practices that we'll be recommending to them," said Butler. "Over the next two weekends, we're meeting with our two newest woodlot groups for the first time."

The woodlot group in Montgomery consists of 12 landowners; in Richford, eight have joined the program. "It's got to be close to 2500 acres total all together, if not more," Butler estimated.

Landowners in these two and the pilot woodlot group in Enosburg will all be eligible for the funding

designated to help them implement best practices. "Again, one of Cold Hollow's biggest things is decreasing those barriers to participation, decreasing the barriers to good stewardship," said Butler.

"We're going to learn a lot from these next two woodlot groups," she said. "Richford and Montgomery are very different towns." Butler said Montgomery is focused on outdoor recreation and wildlife protection, whereas Richford is interested in hunting and sugaring.

"So it'll be really interesting to see how CHC can rise to meet their needs," she said.

Butler added that CHC received \$50,000 from the U.S. Forest Service's Landscape Scale Restoration Competitive Grant Program to financially support staffing and coordination of the woodlots program.

To learn more about Cold Hollow to Canada, attend its annual gathering at Montgomery Grange Hall on Oct. 26. For a \$15 donation, one can learn more about the conservation partnership's work in the community and hear from writer and outdoor adventurer Willem Lange over dinner.

Visit www.coldhollowtocanada.org for event details.



CHARLIE HANCOCK, Contributed Photo
Bridget Butler, the program director for Cold Hollow to Canada (CHC), is the conservation partnership's sole paid staffer. CHC is governed by a volunteer board.

Dam

continued from page 1

Wednesday afternoon that the conference call did not unveil a reason for the later delivery date, nor was the call effective in changing that date. "For reasons unbeknownst to me, they can't deliver until the second week of November," he said.

But Beliveau said that's okay. "It is what it is at this point," he said. "Everything else is on schedule."

Contractors remain concerned about the potential for cold weather during a November installation, Beliveau said, but their main concern is river flow.

"If they have to put in staging, and they're dealing with high water — what does that mean?" Beliveau

said. It's a question of cost, both financially — Beliveau said he believes the contractor's traditional contingency would cover that — and, mainly, time-wise.

These concerns are the same as when the last dam was installed, in the early 1990s, Beliveau said, based on comments from a member of this installation team who also worked on the prior dam's installation.

"These are the same damn things," the man told Beliveau, who told the *Messenger* he did not believe the pun was intended.

Beliveau said he does not expect the installation will need the dreaded 220-

foot heated tent mentioned at an informational meeting concerning the dam in mid-September. But the installation may require area heaters, he said, if temperatures drop too low, particularly toward the top of the dam, to ensure the rubber is workable for a tight fold.

PC Construction will mobilize on-site the last week of October, Beliveau said, and remove the old dam. HTE representatives will stress test the existing bolts, and, if necessary, repair the bolts then to avoid trouble down the road.

HTE will manufacture the replacement rubber bag in China, then ship



ARMAND MESSIER, Messenger Correspondent

the bag to New Jersey, not Louisiana, as originally planned. New Jersey offers a larger dock with stronger crane capabilities, Beliveau said.

"I'm going to pray hard and long we get a good stretch of weather," Beliveau said.

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