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GETTING READY

JENNIFER HAUCK / Valley News

To prepare for the next day's voting, Seeth Samaluk of the Newport Buildings and Grounds crew helps to install carpet sections on the gym floor at the LaValley Family Community Center in Newport on Monday. Elections were held in the building last year, but this will be the first time the polls are in the gym.

LEBANON

Developer pitches plan for 600 units

Etna Road proposal includes athletic fields that would be transferred to city

By CLARE SHANAHAN
Valley News Staff Writer

LEBANON — A longtime Upper Valley developer is seeking city support to build a 600-unit residential development off of Etna Road that would include public athletic fields, a child care center and office space.

The project, called Signal Park, has yet to undergo Planning Board review, but as proposed, it would be split into three phases with 216 condominiums built in the first phase.

The initial phase also would include two soccer fields, basketball, tennis and pickleball courts, a pavilion, and playground that would all be transferred to the city.

In later phases, Etna-based developer Jay Campion hopes to build about 400 more units of housing, including a mix of condominiums, townhouses, apartments and single-family homes on the vacant 230-acre lot that abuts Signal Hill conservation area.

The whole project would also include about 1.5 miles of new roads. Other recreational amenities such as a baseball field, bicycle pump track, climbing wall and ropes course would come later.

Campion hopes the development will meet unmet demand in Lebanon for larger housing units and more owner-occupied properties.

"In 2026, ownership I think is an important piece that the apartment complexes that have been erected haven't addressed," Campion told the City Council at a meeting last week.

Campion is seeking City Council's approval to establish a tax incremental financing, or TIF, district around the development to generate revenue specifically for some of the public infrastructure improvements and amenities.

The council would set the exact terms of a TIF district, but Campion proposed that 60% of tax revenue generated from the complex go towards the construction of infrastructure such

SEE **DEVELOPMENT** A5

WINDSOR

Artist named Vt.'s 6th cartoonist laureate

By ALEX HANSON
Valley News Staff Writer

Windsor artist Stephen R. Bissette has been named Vermont's sixth cartoonist laureate.

The Vermont Arts Council and the White River Junction-based Center for Cartoon Studies announced Monday that Bissette will be named laureate on April 9 at a ceremony in the Statehouse in Montpelier.

A Waterbury, Vt. native, Bissette has perhaps the longest and most glowing resume of any cartoonist with Vermont roots. He co-created, with Alan Moore, and drew "The Saga of the Swamp Thing" in the 1980s, which brought new life to horror comics.

He also was a participant in the 1988 "Northampton Summit," a meeting of cartoonists that led to the Creator's Bill of Rights, which gave independent comics artists greater control of their work.

Bissette was a member of the faculty of the Center for Cartoon Studies from the school's first year until his retirement in June 2020. Around the same time he retired, he published a flurry of new and collected work. He is also the author of "Green Mountain Cinema," a book on Vermont films and filmmakers.

His appointment means the laureateship will remain in the Upper Valley. Bissette will replace Tillie Walden, of Norwich. It also coincides with the 20th anniversary of the founding of the Center for Cartoon Studies. Vermont is the only state that names a cartoonist laureate.

SEE **WINDSOR** A5

CANAAN

Town admin steps down

Selectboard contracts interim administrator, begins search

By SOFIA LANGLOIS
Valley News Staff Writer

CANAAN — The town administrator has resigned his post effective March 4.

Chet Hagenbarth submitted a resignation notice to the Selectboard about two weeks ago, Selectboard member Stephen Freese said Monday by phone.

Freese declined to provide Hagenbarth's letter of resignation, but said Hagenbarth did not provide a reason for leaving and his departure was not anticipated.

While Freese declined by phone to comment on Hagenbarth's specific accomplishments in office, he spoke highly of his overall efforts at the Selectboard meeting on March 3.

"I want to take the opportunity to thank you for the last couple years of your service to the town. It is appreciated. When you came in, it was kind of a mess and you know, I think we've come a long way in the two years you've been here," Freese said in a recording of the meeting.

In response, Hagenbarth spoke of his time as town administrator in a positive light.

"It's been interesting and in many ways enjoyable. It's been a whirlwind of a couple years and we've covered a lot of ground and there's still a lot to go," Hagenbarth said during the meeting.

Hagenbarth had held the position for a little more than two years after Ned Connell departed the position after less than a year. Connell replaced longtime town administrator Mike Samson, who served for over 10 years before retiring in 2022.

Before coming to Canaan, Hagenbarth worked for the town of Killington, Vt., as public works director and later town manager.

In 2025, Hagenbarth made $124,800, according to the Town Report. The town administrator salary included in the proposed budget for 2026 is $111,800.

Jack Wozmak is now serving as Canaan's interim town administrator, a role that he held before Hagenbarth's hiring.

"My job is basically to keep the town running," Wozmak said Monday by phone.

Two to three days a week, Wozmak, who resides in Walpole, N.H., will commute over an hour to Canaan to be available in the office. Additionally, Wozmak can be reached by the town administrator phone number, 603-523-4501 Ext. 1050, or by email at townadmin@canaannh.gov.

SEE **ADMINISTRATOR** A5

Fairlee hires administrator

By LIZ SAUCHELLI
Valley News Staff Writer

FAIRLEE — The former Vershire town clerk is Fairlee's new town administrator.

Gene Craft, who served as Vershire town clerk for more than 15 years, began his new role in Fairlee on March 2, said Peter Berger, who chairs the Fairlee's Selectboard.

Craft replaces Ryan Lockwood, who held the role for two years before leaving last December to become town manager in Williamstown, Vt.

SEE **FAIRLEE** A5

RICHARD DREW / AP

WORLD & NATION, B4

STARTING A NEW HOBBY

A throng of young people are turning to analog hobbies and activities as a means of escaping technology and reconnecting with childlike creativity and exploration.

INSIDE

SPORTS

BACK ON THE COURT

Celtics power forward Jayson Tatum was grateful that he made his comeback from a ruptured right Achilles tendon at home in Boston, scoring 20 points Friday night.

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WORLD & NATION

COMBAT SHAPED THESE LAWMAKERS

As Congress responds to Trump's attack on Iran, lawmakers who served on the front lines of Iraq and Afghanistan are making their voices heard. **Page B3**

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