

Winnisquam Echo

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2026

FREE

SERVING TILTON, NORTHFIELD, BELMONT & SANBORNTON, N.H.

Sanbornton Central School hosts “Books and Breakfast” event to kick off NH School Breakfast Challenge



COURTESY

Pictured above are Tricia Labelle, NH Hunger Solutions Child Nutrition Manager with author, illustrator Marty Kelley; Marty Kelley engages the students with his creative process; Grade 1 Teacher Allyson Oliveira helps students Julianna Perkins, Liliana McCollum, Magnolia Cater, Easton Gilman, Lora Powell select a new book; Grade one students happily share their book selections.

Belmont Public Library announces February programs for all ages

BELMONT — Belmont Public Library invites the community to enjoy a full slate of programs this February, featuring book groups, creative activities for adults, story times for young children, and special events for teens and families.

Ongoing programs

Adult patrons can participate in ongoing creative

conversations on Mondays, including bring-your-own Fiber Arts at 10 a.m. and a Watercolor Workshop with supplies provided at 2 p.m. Both are self-guided gatherings designed to encourage creativity and connection.

Book Groups

There are also several book group discussions through the month, with

copies available at the library or through Library. The Afternoon Book Group will meet on Thursday, Feb. 5 at 4:30 p.m. to discuss “The French Braid” by Anne Tyler. The Mystery Book Group is scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 19 at 10 a.m. to discuss “Eight Perfect Mur-

SEE LIBRARY, PAGE A11

Northfield home fire prompts woodstove safety reminders

NORTHFIELD — Tilton-Northfield Fire & EMS and the Franklin Fire Department were dispatched to a reported building fire at 146 Hodgdon Rd. in Northfield after a neighbor observed smoke and flames. A first alarm was requested by

the responding captain.

Upon arrival, crews found a two-story residence with heavy fire showing from the front of the structure. Access to the home was challenging, as a narrow, approximately 200-foot path extended from the end of the driveway to the residence.

The Tilton-Northfield attack crew de-

SEE FIRE, PAGE A1



Raider boys win double-overtime classic over Gilford



Belmont's Evan Martinez goes to the basket against the defense of Gilford's Emmett Hughes in action last Tuesday.



Wyatt Bamford drives to the hoop during action against Gilford last Tuesday evening.

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING

Sports Editor

BELMONT — If you wanted a pretty game, last Tuesday evening's battle between the Belmont and Gilford boys' basketball teams wasn't for you.

But if you wanted a knock-down, drag out, double-overtime dogfight between Lakes Region rivals who have played some intense games over the last few years, then this was your kind of night.

Wyatt Carroll drained a three with 10 seconds left in regulation to pull the defending champs even with Gilford at the end of regulation and then Owen Hawkins drove to the basket for a layup in the final seconds of the first overtime, forcing a second overtime, where the Raiders out-scored the visiting Golden Eagles 8-2 for the 65-59 win.

Owen Harkins for Gilford and Owen Viar for Belmont got the scoring started for their respective teams while Mark Uicker for Gilford and Evan Martinez for Belmont kept the back and forth going. Uicker hit another shot and after Wyatt Divers drained a free throw for the Raiders, Emmett Hughes hit two for Gilford for the 8-5 lead.

Viar drained a hoop for the hosts and Martinez converted a three-point play to put the Raiders on top and after Ryan Folan hit a free throw for Gilford, Wyatt Bamford put back a rebound for Belmont and added two free throws after a Uicker hoop and Belmont had the 14-11 lead after one quarter.

Folan got the first hoop of the second quarter, Martinez answered with a free throw and then Harkins sunk a

SEE BOYS, PAGE A10

Winnisquam Regional High School receives TangerKids grant for radio studio upgrades

TILTON — The Winnisquam Regional High School radio studio is set for a major technological overhaul, thanks to funding from the TangerKids Grant program.

Music teacher Josh Carter, who submitted the grant application last fall, was recently notified that his proposal was selected to receive the award. In his application, Mr. Carter highlighted how the funding will bridge the gap between classroom learning and professional industry standards.

The grant will provide state-of-the-art technology including a high-performance computer capable of running professional-grade music production software. Students will gain experience in editing sound files, operating mixing boards, producing podcasts, and recording live performances. The studio environment will also foster positive peer interaction and profes-



sional communication.

The TangerKids Grant program is a national initiative by Tanger Outlets designed to support special projects and equipment needs in local schools.

"In alignment with Tanger Outlets' mission to be good corporate citizens, the TangerKids Grants program supports and serves the future generation by providing almost \$200,000 of total funding for schools nationwide. Tanger Outlets takes great pride in supporting the education of our future leaders," said Eric Proulx, General Manager and Marketing Director, Tanger Outlets, Tilton.

WRHS offers a dedicated Radio and Broadcasting class. The studio serves as a creative hub throughout the school year, providing students with technical training while building community engagement through high-quality music production.

Winnisquam Regional High School announces honor society inductions

TILTON — Winnisquam Regional High School recently celebrated the academic and artistic achievements of its students during a special multi-society induction ceremony. Students were recognized for their excellence across seven distinct honor societies.

Seniors Caidyn Carter, Anna Drinkwine, Alexis Mingolla, and Georgia Shartar-Howe were recognized for being existing members of the National Honor Society at WRHS. Eight new members, Katherine Allen, Carly Drew, Andrew Field, Carter Lloyd, Abigail Meunier, Dylan Plamondon, Kaito Tamaru, and Danica Weymouth were inducted into the Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Society).

Tri-M Music Honor Society welcomed new inductees Addison Bernier, Ava Dodge, Anna Drinkwine, Luke Larrabee, Pheobe Timmons, and Grace Trinka.

National Science Honor Society inductees include Katherine Allen, Anna Drinkwine, Hayden Hoey, and Georgia Shartar-Howe.

Rho Kappa (Social Studies) newest members include Katherine Allen, Addison Bernier, Ava Dodge, Carly Drew, Hayden Hoey, Pheobe Timmons, and Grace Trinka.

Congratulations to all the inductees for their hard work, dedication, and outstanding accomplishments!



COURTESY
Assistant Principal, Dr. Sarah Rollins addresses the inductees and their family and friends during the recent Honor Society Inductions.

Susan Poulin brings "Down to the A&P" to Franklin

FRANKLIN — Franklin Opera House presents Susan Poulin as Ida LeClair in "Down to the A&P" Feb. 7 at 7 p.m. at the Bernadine Herron Center. This venue is located at the Easterseals NH Military and Veterans

Campus in Franklin, 27 Holy Cross Rd.

Susan Poulin is a Maine actor and author whose stories have focused on her Franco-American heritage, including autobiographical works such as "Franco-Fry" and "Pardon My French." She is recognized as a leader in bringing a female voice to New England storytelling and humor. Portland Magazine has dubbed her alter ego, Ida LeClair, "the funniest woman in Maine." Her work blends humor with cultural reflection, and she writes the Maine humor blog and podcast "Just Ask Ida." Visit her Web site at <https://www.poulyle.com>.

Ida is just more than pleased to share her stories with us once again for a very special milestone!

The heart of Mahoosuc

Mills, Maine is beating a little louder this season as the community gathers to celebrate a remarkable milestone: Ida's 50 years as a cashier down to the A&P.

Beloved by locals and tourists alike, Ida has spent half a century greeting customers, sharing stories, and witnessing the everyday drama that unfolds in the town's only supermarket.

Expect an evening filled with laughter, heartfelt moments, and more intrigue than you'd ever imagine happening between the produce aisle and the checkout lane. With eccentric locals, wacky tourists, and decades of smalltown stories, Ida has truly seen it all — the good, the bad, and the unforgettable.

This special event invites attendees to join Ida as she reflects on her jour-

ney — from her very first day behind the register to the reasons she still loves showing up, year after year. She'll share what keeps her going, how she feels about that everlooming question of retirement, and why the A&P remains the beating heart of Mahoosuc Mills.

"Ida just loves the A&P, and you will, too."

Tickets are available online at www.FOHNH.org, and the box office is located at 321 Central St., Franklin, Tuesday-Friday from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Tickets will also be available at the door. This Event is General Admission

Veterans price \$17
Seniors and Students \$18
Adults \$20

In the event of bad weather, this celebration will be held on Feb. 21.



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Winnisquam Regional Middle School hosts 2026 Spelling Bee



Pictured above are the Spelling Bee contestants awaiting the beginning of the competition; Mr. Kirby and Mr. Olson prepare the students for the competition; Caroline Dubord successfully spells the word chignon; and the judges and emcee take a moment to congratulate the 2026 WRMS Spelling Bee winner Caroline Duford.

TILTON — As their peers filled the gymnasium, eight anxious Winnisquam Regional Middle School students awaited the start of the school-wide Spelling Bee. The WRMS 2026 finalists were Ella Barton, Elliot Greenwood, Aaron Fruci, Rose Larabee, Ava Bagley, Lucas Chase, Ashton Orr, and Caroline Dubord.

WRMS teacher Dan Kirby welcomed the audience and introduced the competitors, while teacher Craig Olson served as the event's emcee. The competition was overseen by a panel of judges, including teachers Cathleen White, Elaine Pottle, and Missy Duffey.

After 13 intense rounds of competition, Caroline

Dubord was declared the winner after correctly spelling the word "chignon." Following her victory, Judge Cathleen White praised the students' dedication, commenting "All of the finalists took time out of their days to practice and study together. Caroline has worked hard to prepare and has a real chance in the next highly competitive level of the contest."

Caroline's name will be added to the WRMS Spelling Bee winner Plaque, and she is entered in the state finalist round. This round will be completed via an online test. The top 25 spellers in the state will then be invited to Manchester to compete in the state championship.

Amanda Dunham named to the Champlain College President's List

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Amanda Dunham of Northfield was named to the Champlain College President's List for the Fall 2025 semester.

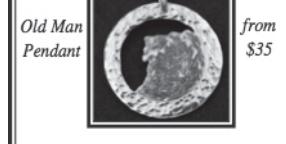
Students on the President's List have achieved a grade point average of 4.0 or higher during the semester. Dunham is majoring in Law.

Making the President's List is a tremendous achievement. Many of the high achievers balance their career-focused classes with jobs, internships, clubs, and volunteering. We congratulate them on this great accomplishment and honor.

Dunham was also named to the Trustees' List for maintaining a 4.0 grade point average for two or more consecutive semesters.

Founded in 1878, Champlain College is a small, not-for-profit, private college in Burlington, Vermont, with additional campuses in Montreal, Canada, and Dublin, Ireland. Champlain offers a residential undergraduate experience from its beautiful campus overlooking Lake Champlain. Additionally, Champlain College Online provides an expansive portfolio of online degrees and certificates, reaching students across all 50 states and U.S. territories, while fostering strategic partnerships with forward-thinking workforce organizations. The College is known for its distinctive and innovative approach to career-focused education and its Upside-Down Curriculum, which helps students be ready for work, ready for life, and ready to make a difference. Champlain is ranked as one of the "Best Colleges" by U.S. News & World Report for 2025, and was named one of the "Best 390 Colleges" by The Princeton Review for 2025, including among its "Best Northeastern colleges." For more information, visit www.champlain.edu.

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Belmont fire claims life of homeowner's dog

BELMONT — On Thursday, Jan. 29 at approximately 9:27 a.m., the Belmont Fire Department was dispatched to a reported building fire at 9 Valley Dr. Laconia Chief-13C1, who was in the area at the time of the call, observed a large column of black smoke and immediately requested a first alarm assignment. Upon arrival, 13C1 reported fire throughout the structure. All occupants were ac-

counted for, with the exception of the homeowner's dog. Engine companies arrived shortly thereafter and immediately stretched two hoselines, initiating fire attack operations. Junior Firefighter Ethan Girard and retired police officer Bob Akerstrom worked hard assisting with stretching the LDH "large diameter hose" down the street to set up for rural water supply. Crews worked quickly and efficiently to bring the

fire under control. Mutual Aid departments provided critical assistance on scene. The Belmont Fire Department would like to extend sincere thanks to Laconia Fire Department, Gilford Fire Department, Tilton-Northfield Fire Department, Gilmanton Fire Department and Franklin Fire Department, as well as law enforcement and EMS partners, for their support and teamwork during this incident. Sadly, despite

extensive efforts, the dog was later located, and did not survive the fire. Our thoughts are with the property owner following this loss. The homeowner reported flames coming from a clothes dryer, and investigators are examining the area as a possible point of origin.

The incident remains under investigation.

Area residents named to Dean's List

at University of New England

BIDDEFORD/PORTLAND, Maine — Savannah Perkins of Belmont; Emma Griffin and Henry Osmer of Sanbornton; and Liv Arvidson of Tilton have been named to the University of New England's Dean's List for the fall semester 2025. Dean's List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a pos-

sible 4.0 at the end of the semester.

The University of New England is Maine's largest independent university, with two beautiful coastal campuses in Maine, a one-of-a-kind study-abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, and an array of flexible online offerings. In an un-

commonly welcoming and supportive community, we offer hands-on learning, empowering students to make a positive impact in a world full of challenges. We are the state's top provider of health professionals and home to Maine's only medical and dental

colleges, a variety of other interprofessionally aligned health care programs, and nationally recognized programs in the marine sciences, the natural and social sciences, business, the humanities, and the arts. Visit www.une.edu.

Roger Williams University announces Fall Dean's List

BRISTOL, R.I. — Select students have been named to the Fall 2025 Dean's List at Roger Williams University in Bristol, R.I. Full-time students who complete 12 or more credits per semester and earn a GPA of 3.4 or higher are placed on the Dean's List that semester.

Hunter Haht-Acres of Belmont
Collin Phelps of Northfield
Ashlee Roache of Belmont
About RWU

Roger Williams University offers professional studies and liberal arts programs, with campuses in Bristol and Providence, Rhode Island. We provide real-world learning that empowers students to become the changemakers and leaders our world needs next.

Community Calendar February 5-12

Thursday, Feb. 5

- Sanbornton Select Board — 6 p.m., Sanbornton Town Hall, 16 Town House Rd., Sanbornton
- Belmont Planning Board — 6:30 p.m., Belmont Town Offices, 172 Main St., Belmont

Monday, Feb. 9

- Winnisquam Regional School Board — 6 p.m., WRSD Administrative Offices, 433 West Main St., Tilton
- Tilton Planning Board — 7 p.m., Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main St., Tilton

Tuesday, Feb. 10

- Northfield Select Board — 6 p.m., Northfield Town Hall, 132 Park Street, Northfield
- Sanbornton Budget Committee — 6:30 p.m., Sanbornton Town Hall, 16 Town House Road, Sanbornton

Wednesday, Feb. 11

- Belmont Select Board — 6:30 p.m., Belmont Town Offices, 172 Main St., Belmont

Thursday, Feb. 12

- Tilton Budget Committee — 6:30 p.m., Tilton Town Hall, 257 Main St., Tilton

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Opinion

The value of staying local

In a world that moves faster every year, there is something quietly grounding about how life unfolds in small towns. News still travels by word of mouth as often as it does by screen. Problems are discussed face to face. Solutions are shaped by people who know the roads, the schools, and the history behind them.

In Tilton, Belmont, Northfield, and Sanbornton, staying local has never meant resisting change for the sake of it. Instead, it has meant understanding change before embracing it. When new ideas or proposals come forward, the first question is often not whether they look good on paper, but whether they make sense here. That distinction matters more than it sometimes gets credit for.

Local knowledge carries weight in ways that cannot always be measured. It shows up when a longtime resident explains why a certain intersection floods every spring, no matter how many times it has been patched. It shows up when a parent points out how a proposed school schedule affects working families, or when a volunteer speaks up for a program that may not seem essential in a budget spreadsheet but fills a real gap in the community.

These insights are not abstract. They are grounded in lived experience. And while they may not always be loud, they are often the difference between decisions that work and decisions that need to be revisited later.

There is also a level of accountability that comes with staying local. Decisions are not made for an anonymous audience. They are made with the understanding that the people involved will see the results every day. At the grocery store. At school events. At the post office. That reality encourages care, even when opinions differ and debates are spirited.

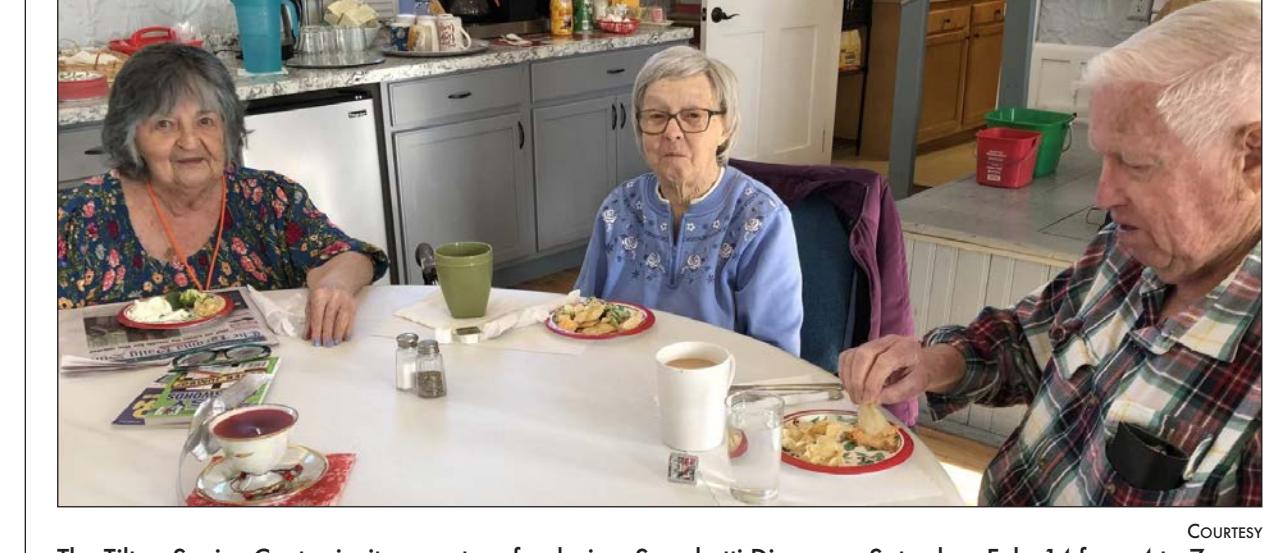
Small towns are not free from disagreement, nor should they be. Healthy communities question themselves. They wrestle with priorities. They reconsider past choices and adapt when circumstances change. Staying local does not mean everyone agrees. It means those disagreements remain rooted in shared experience rather than distant talking points.

As the year moves forward, conversations will continue about budgets, services, planning, and the direction of our towns. These discussions can feel routine, even repetitive. But they are where the character of a community is quietly reinforced. Each choice, taken on its own, may seem small. Together, they determine whether a town remains responsive, resilient, and recognizable to the people who call it home.

The strength of these communities has never come from trying to be something they are not. It has come from paying attention to what works here, and why. From listening before deciding. From respecting the past without being bound by it.

In the end, progress does not have to be loud to be real. Some of the most lasting improvements are the ones that grow steadily, guided by local voices and local priorities.

Staying local is not about looking inward. It is about staying connected. And in times of change, that connection remains one of the most valuable assets a community can have.



COURTESY
The Tilton Senior Center invites you to a fundraiser Spaghetti Dinner on Saturday, Feb. 14 from 4 to 7 p.m. The dinner will include spaghetti and meatballs served with salad and garlic bread, dessert, and coffee. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children ten and under. There will be live music and a 50/50 raffle. You may stop by the Senior Center at 11 Grange Rd. to purchase tickets prior to the dinner or purchase them at the door. Proceeds raised will go towards the Tilton Senior Center maintenance fund. The Tilton Senior Center, through Community Action Program Belknap-Merrimack Counties, Inc. and the Tilton Senior Center Executive Committee, offer many important ways for older adults to remain active. Tilton Senior Center provides community dining and take-out meals, exercise and wellness activities, education, health clinics, evidence-based classes, social activities, and transportation, designed to keep older adults healthy, independent, and connected to community life. Pictured, left to right, are Barbara Arnold, Genny Foote, and Tom Arnold enjoying time together at the Tilton Senior Center.

Finding value in life's unburied moments

**KIND FOLKS,
COLD WINTERS**

BY CHIPPIY

The other morning, I caught myself standing at the kitchen window, coffee in hand, watching the world wake up. Not for any important reason. No dramatic sunrise, no big moment. Just a few birds hopping around, a neighbor heading out early, and the quiet hum of another New Hampshire day beginning.

It struck me how rarely we give ourselves permission to be still. Everything these days seems built around motion. Get up, get going, keep moving. Even our free time is often scheduled, tracked, and measured. Somewhere along the line, being busy started to look like being successful.

When I was younger, there was more unplanned time. You sat on the porch because the weather was

nice. You talked with neighbors because they happened to walk by. You lingered after dinner because there was nowhere else you needed to be. It wasn't glamorous, but it was grounding.

Now, if there's a quiet moment, we rush to fill it. A phone comes out. A screen lights up. A notification demands attention. Silence feels awkward, as if it needs an explanation.

But here's the thing. Stillness has its own kind of value. It's in those slower moments that you notice how tired you really are, or how much you've been carrying around in your head. It's where gratitude sneaks in. You realize the coffee tastes good. The house is warm. The people you love are doing OK.

Living in New Hampshire teaches you this, whether you want the lesson or not. Winter has a way of slowing everything down. Roads get quieter. Even errands take more planning. You learn to move a little more carefully, a little more deliberately. And in that slower rhythm, there's space to think.

I've started making a small habit of doing nothing on purpose. Not scrolling. Not checking messages. Just sitting. Sometimes it's five minutes. Sometimes it's ten. It feels strange at first, like you're breaking some invisible rule. But after a while, it starts to feel like a small gift you give yourself.

My wife laughs when she catches me staring out the window again. She says I look like I'm waiting for something important to happen. Maybe I am. Or maybe I'm just reminding

myself that life doesn't always need to be rushed to be meaningful.

We don't need to turn our backs on modern life to reclaim these moments. We just need to be a little more intentional. Leave the phone in the other room. Take the long way through the grocery store. Sit in the car for an extra minute before going inside.

In a world that keeps getting louder and faster, choosing quiet feels almost rebellious. But it's a gentle rebellion. The kind that doesn't make headlines. The kind that simply makes life feel steadier.

So if you find yourself with a few spare minutes today, don't rush to fill them. Stand by the window. Sit on the porch. Watch the snow fall or the clouds drift by. You might be surprised at how much peace fits into a small, quiet moment.

~ Comfort Keepers ~ Putting your loved one's affairs in order

**BY MARTHA SWATS
Owner/Administrator
Comfort Keepers**

There are several legal papers and documents that should be addressed by your loved one before a life-threatening situation arises. Once a healthcare emergency strikes, it may be too late to prepare these documents. That's why you should talk to your loved one about getting his or her affairs in order and to put their wishes regarding healthcare in writing while they are still healthy and able.

Selecting a healthcare proxy

If you have siblings or other relatives, you and your loved one should determine together who will be the proxy. Think about who shares the same views and values about life and medical decisions as your loved one. It can be a family member, a friend, a lawyer, or someone who shares the

same religious faith. It's a good idea to also name an alternate proxy. It is especially important to have a detailed living will if your loved one chooses not to name a proxy.

Your loved one can decide how much authority the proxy has over his or her medical care, and if he or she is entitled to make much of the crucial decisions, or only a few specific ones. Check with the chosen proxy and the alternate before they are officially named to make sure, they are comfortable with this responsibility.

Making it official

Your loved one should talk with the doctor and have an idea of the types of decisions that could come up in the future, especially if certain health problems are present. The next step is to fill out the legal forms detailing your loved one's wishes. A lawyer can help, but is not required. If your

senior wants one, don't depend on the lawyer to help him or her understand different medical treatments. That's why it is wise to start the planning process by talking with the doctor. If your loved one wants a lawyer, find an elder law attorney.

Not planning in advance means that you might not be able to gain access to the information you need, or act on your loved one's behalf if he or she is unable to do so. In a worst-case scenario, you might be forced to fight in court for guardianship, a time-consuming and costly process. You can avoid this scenario by working with your loved one to prepare these documents.

Important health care documents include:

A medical directive: Also known as a living will or advance health care directive, this document specifies the kind of

care your loved one wants to receive if and when he or she becomes ill or incapacitated. This must be handled while your loved one is able. It is crucial that the person who is named health care proxy knows the senior's wishes in the event that he or she needs life support, a feeding tube, or intravenous fluids to survive.

That is why this is a very important document for family caregivers to have. You can also have an Advance Directive Wallet Card for your loved one to carry in his or her wallet, indicating that an advance directive exists, and where it is kept.

A durable power of attorney for healthcare: This document allows you to make healthcare decisions for your loved one.

A durable power of attorney for finances and HIPAA release: This gives

SEE COMFORT, PAGE A5

CHHS training and education programs build skills, strengthen communities

CONCORD — From simulation-based learning to innovative college partnerships, Concord Hospital Health System (CHHS) is investing in healthcare professionals and in doing so, strengthening access to high-quality care for communities across New Hampshire.

Expanding skills through education and training centers

A year ago this month, Concord Hospital — Laconia (CHL) Education & Training Center welcomed its first class: the American Heart Association's (AHA) Pediatric Advanced Life Support course. Since then, the center has hosted additional AHA offerings, including basic dysrhythmia training and clinical orientation for new hires.

Designed to enhance clinical confidence and patient safety, the new facility features a spacious classroom, two rooms for low-fidelity simulation or clinical case training, a computer workspace for staff, and educator offices. It serves as a hands-on learning hub for CHHS employees to practice skills, learn specialized techniques, and prepare for real-world patient care scenarios.

Beyond supporting current employees through



COURTESY

Nurses from Concord, Franklin, and Laconia participated in the ED/OBS Fellowship, which ran from July 10 to Nov. 14 of last year. The students came together weekly to learn about emergency and observation medicine and nursing through didactic classes, followed by simulation laboratory time with scenario-based training and hands-on experience with equipment.

hands-on training in Laconia, CHHS is also focused on building the future healthcare workforce by introducing students to clinical careers early on. In Concord, students can sample a variety of hospital-based occupations.

"CHHS supports many shadows for the Concord Regional Technical Center in all departments, and they are great students," shared CHHS's Academic-Practice Partner and Student Placement Coordinator Emily Higgins, DNP, MSN, RN, ONC. "We also

have a lot of guest speakers that go to the school and talk about healthcare careers."

This collaboration gives students a frontline workforce perspective and the opportunity to speak with providers and staff about their careers.

"I love Concord Hospital and the support they provide to our future healthcare professionals. The partnership has been incredibly meaningful for our program," said Sharon Bean, a health science teacher at Concord High School. "This year, we are proud to serve 118 students who are excited, motivated, and eager to learn as they prepare for careers in health care."

Specialized life-saving training

Concord Hospital (CH) recently became a formal training center for Cardiac Surgical Unit Advanced Life Support (CSU-ALS) certification. This specialized program equips providers with unique skills to respond to cardiac arrests following open-heart surgery — a process that differs from standard Advanced Cardiovascular Life Support (ACLS).

Developed by Cardiac Advanced Resuscitation Education (CARE, LLC), and recognized globally by organizations like the AHA, CSU-ALS training will help CHHS achieve its goal of becoming a "Center of Excellence" within two years. Granted

by CARE, LLC, this designation would enable CH to expand training from internal candidates to other healthcare professionals statewide.

Immersive fellowship in emergency and observation (ED/OBS) Unit Medicine Last year's ED/OBS summer/fall fellowship launched on July 10, and graduated on November 14, 2025, welcoming CHHS's largest group of new graduate registered nurses to date. The 19-week comprehensive program brought together nurses from Concord, Franklin, and Laconia for weekly sessions combining didactic instruction with simulation-based training.

Core topics included medication safety, triage, cardiac dysrhythmia and emergencies, respiratory emergencies, trauma, pediatrics, behavioral health crises, diabetic ketoacidosis and sepsis, and OB/GYN emergencies. By the end of the program, fellows are prepared with the critical-thinking skills, procedural expertise, and clinical confidence needed to excel in fast-paced, high-acuity care environments.

Building the workforce through college partnerships

CHHS's commitment to workforce development extends well beyond its walls. The health system maintains close partnerships with local colleges, creating career pathways

that address staffing shortages and improve patient access to care.

One standout collaboration with New England College earned CHHS the

Presidents' Community Partner Award.

The Cooperative Bachelor of Sci-

ence in Nursing program

offers an accelerated three-

year degree that blends

classroom learning with

nine months of clinical

training. Students work as

licensed nursing assistants

while completing rotations

across CHHS, guided by

experienced mentors.

For participants like

Baillargeon, beginning a

healthcare career by serv-

ing patients in their com-

munity provides additional

value.

"Working with patients during my training prepared me better because instead of just doing book work and stuff in class, I got to get the hang of doing things and talking with them, even if they just needed to talk to us," said Baillargeon.

Investing in community health

These initiatives, along with CHHS's medical assistant residency, nursing residencies, pharmacy technician training, behavioral health education programs, and other professional development opportunities, are supported in part by Community Benefits funding.

For participants like Baillargeon, beginning a healthcare career by serving patients in their community

means everything to me. Helping people has always been something I wanted to do, and it has inspired me to go for my registered nurse license," Baillargeon said.

By developing a highly trained, locally rooted workforce, CHHS strengthens the health system's mission of delivering care close to home — ensuring that patients receive expert, compassionate treatment from providers who understand their community.

"Throughout these programs, students and staff gain invaluable experience that advances their education while deepening their commitment to the nursing and healthcare professions," said Erin Collins, RN, CHHS vice president of nursing professional practice and development. "These opportunities not only prepare individuals for successful careers but also improve access to care for our patients."

With nearly 5,000 employees serving more than 250,000 residents statewide, CHHS continues to build a strong foundation for the future of health care in New Hampshire.

Vermont State University congratulates Ryan Vachon-Sacrey for earning Dean's List honors!

RANDOLPH CENTER, Vt. — Vermont State University is pleased to recognize Ryan Vachon-Sacrey, of Belmont, for earning a place on the Dean's List for Fall 2025.

Dean's List designation is reserved for students who maintain full-time status and a semester grade point average of 3.5 or higher.

Vermont State University provides a high-quality, flexible, and affordable education for students seeking associate, bachelor's, and master's degrees, certificates, and in-demand professional credentials. The university builds upon a history of public higher education in Vermont dating back to 1787. More information about Vermont State University can be found at: VermontState.edu.

COMFORT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A4

you permission to manage your loved one's financial affairs, pay bills, sell property, and so on. A HIPAA release gives you access to his or her health records and physicians.

A revocable living trust: This allows your loved one to retain control over his or her estate while making transfers of assets to beneficiaries. They designate what property (home, investments, jewelry, and so on) goes into the trust and to whom it will be granted. During their lifetimes, they act as executors of their own living trust. The most important advantage: it allows the estate to avoid probate at the time of death.

A will: A will makes clear who will receive your loved one's assets and personal property. A properly written will helps to avoid disagreements over the estate after his or her death.

Additional documents: These can include life insurance and long-term care policies; an end-of-life instructions letter (regarding wishes or items not covered in the will); or an existing organ donor card.

It's not enough to merely have these documents — they must be accessible. Experts recommend that seniors or their loved ones keep all of these important documents in one master folder or box. It should be placed in a safe place at home such as a safe deposit box or fire safe.

Nobody can predict the future. Your loved ones may never face a medical situation where they are unable to speak and make their wishes known. But having an advance directive may give your loved one and those close to you some added peace of mind.

Comfort Keepers® also provides peace of mind. Our trained and carefully screened caregivers will provide quality, in-home care for your loved one, so you can relax and not have to worry. Caregivers can perform household tasks, prepare meals, make sure your loved one is safe and taking his or her medications, get him or her to appointments, and more. Call your local office today!

About Comfort Keepers Comfort Keepers is a leader in providing in-home care consisting of such services as companionship, transportation, housekeeping, meal preparation, bathing, mobility assistance, nursing services, and a host of additional items all meant to keep seniors living independently worry free in the comfort of their homes. Comfort Keepers have been serving New Hampshire residents since 2005. Let us help you stay independent. Please call 603-536-6060 or visit our Web site at NHComfortKeepers.com for more information.

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MVSB branch offices collect more than 1,700 winter essentials for local families

REGION — With the support and generosity of local community mem-

bers, MVSB (Meredith Village Savings Bank) collected 1,712 mittens,

hats, gloves and scarves during their 2025 Mitten Tree Drive. The Bank has

matched the contribution with \$2 per item — a total of \$3,424 that will be split between 11 local nonprofits addressing childhood food insufficiency.

Each year since 1979, between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, the Bank collects donations that are displayed on "Mitten Trees" at every MVSB branch office. At the end of the drive, the items are distributed by the branches to local schools, early learning centers and other organizations that support families in need in their local communities.

The recipients for this year's matching donation included 11 organizations working to mitigate childhood food insufficiency. These include the End 68 Hours of Hunger programs in Alton, Exeter, North Conway, Portsmouth, Rochester and Wolfeboro, along with local Got Lunch! programs in Gilford, Ashland & Holderness, Inter-Lakes, Laconia and Plymouth.

Each MVSB branch selected local organizations to receive warm winter items collected. This year's

donations supported a wide range of schools, daycares, and community resource centers across the region. Receiving organizations, included:

Schools and childcare programs

Ashland Elementary School, Holderness Central School, Imaginations A Children's Place, Inter-Lakes Day Care Center & Nursery School, Inter-Lakes Elementary School, Inter-Lakes Middle High School, Kenneth A. Brett Elementary School, Kidworks Learning Center, Moultonborough Central School, Sandwich Central School, and Sandwich Children's Center.

Community resource centers and nonprofits

Alton Community Services, Belknap House, The Carey House, Bridge House, Crossroads, Hope on Haven Hill, Isaiah 61 Café, LIFE Ministries Food Pantry, Pemi Youth Center, Seacoast Family Promise, SHARE Fund, Voices Against Violence, and Waypoint Family Resource Center.

Each branch's selections reflect the unique

needs of their local area and MVSB's ongoing commitment to supporting neighbors throughout the communities it serves.

MVSB has been serving the essential banking needs of people, businesses, nonprofits and municipalities for more than 150 years. As a mutual savings bank, MVSB has no stockholders but rather operates for the benefit of its customers, employees and community. Since our founding, one thing has always remained true: caring is at the heart of everything we do. By building and nurturing relationships, we believe that we can cultivate a community where we all thrive. It all starts with caring about our customers and neighbors. To learn more, visit any of the local branch offices located in New Hampshire in Alton, Ashland, Center Harbor, Exeter, Gilford, Laconia, Melvin Village, Meredith, Moultonborough, North Conway, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rochester or Wolfeboro, call 800-922-6872 or visit mvsb.com



COURTESY

Susannah Perron, MVSB Branch & Business Development Manager at the Meredith Route 104 Branch Office, poses with members of the Wicwas Lake Grange #292 during their drop off of Mitten Tree items.

Tanger Outlets Tilton awards TangerKids grants, celebrates with TangerKids Day

TILTON — As part of its ongoing dedication to education and community impact, Tanger Outlets Tilton has announced the recipients of its 2025 TangerKids Grants. Winners include Merrimack Valley Middle School, benefitting their Mini Golf STEM Challenge; Hillside Middle School, benefitting their Fuel the Fire Grant, and Winnisquam Regional High School, benefitting their Radio and Broadcasting Curriculum.

Through its TangerKids 2025 Grants program, Tanger is donating more than \$200,000 to fund 176 grants on behalf of 37

Tanger shopping centers. These funds will be used to support schools and educational programs in local communities across the U.S. and Canada.

"Tanger Tilton remains committed to helping students succeed across our community," said Tanger Tilton General Manager/Marketing Director Eric Proulx. "By listening closely to local schools and educators, we're able to support projects that respond to real, on-the-ground needs. TangerKids Grants help create inclusive, engaging learning environments and give students the resources they

need to thrive — both in the classroom and beyond."

Throughout the program's history spanning nearly 30 years, Tanger has contributed more than \$3.9 million to school-focused initiatives in the communities it serves. The annual program is eligible for public and private schools from pre-K to grade 12. Applications were open from Aug. 11 – Oct. 18, 2025, and grant recipients were chosen from numerous applicants within the Lakes Region area.

Tanger Tilton planned to celebrate TangerKids Day on Jan. 30 with check

presentations at each winning school.

To learn more about TangerKids Grants, please visit grants.tanger.com.

About Tanger Tilton

Tanger Tilton is Lakes Region's upscale, open-air outlet shopping destination, featuring a coveted collection of top brands and local shops. The 250,000-square-foot center features more than 50 premier outlet stores offering real style and real savings every day. Shopper-favorite brands at Tanger Tilton include American Eagle, Bath & Body Works, Coach, Kate Spade New York, Old Navy Outlet and

Under Armour. For a full store listing and map, as well as directions, events and scoop on the latest sales, visit tanger.com/tilton, download the Tanger App or connect on Facebook and Instagram.

Guests can also access the ultimate shopping experience by joining TangerClub, Tanger's exclusive loyalty program, for curated offers and rewards.

HIGH SCHOOL SLATE

Friday, Feb. 6

BELMONT

Alpine Skiing at Gunstock; 10

Boys' Hoops vs. Berlin; 6

Girls' Hoops at Berlin; 6

GILFORD

Alpine Skiing at Gunstock; 10

Boys' Hoops vs. Conant; 6

Girls' Hoops at Conant; 6:30

WINNISQUAM

Boys' Hoops at Stevens; 7

Girls' Hoops vs. Stevens; 7

Saturday, Feb. 7

BELMONT-GILFORD

Hockey vs. Kearsarge-Plymouth; 5

WINNISQUAM

Hockey vs. Berlin-Gorham; 3

Wrestling at Exeter; 10

Sunday, Feb. 8

BELMONT

Indoor Track at Plymouth State; 9

GILFORD

Indoor Track at Plymouth State; 9

WINNISQUAM

Indoor Track at Plymouth State; 9

Monday, Feb. 9

BELMONT

Alpine Skiing at Sunapee (Girls' State Meet); 10

Boys' Hoops vs. Berlin; 6

Girls' Hoops at Berlin; 6

GILFORD

Alpine Skiing at Sunapee (Girls' State Meet); 10

Tuesday, Feb. 10

BELMONT

Alpine Skiing at Pat's Peak (Boys' State Meet); 10

GILFORD

Alpine Skiing at Pat's Peak (Boys' State Meet); 10

Boys' Hoops vs. Newfound; 6

Girls' Hoops at Newfound; 6

Wednesday, Feb. 11

BELMONT

Boys' Hoops at Winnisquam; 7

Girls' Hoops vs. Winnisquam; 6

BELMONT-GILFORD

Hockey at Pembroke-Campbell; 7:30

WINNISQUAM

Boys' Hoops vs. Belmont; 7

Girls' Hoops at Belmont; 6

Hockey at John Stark-Hopkinton; 8

Thursday, Feb. 12

WINNISQUAM

Wrestling vs. ConVal, Franklin; 6

All schedules are subject to change.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

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Wash your hands!



Happy Valentine's Day!

Bears grapple to first-ever dual meet win over Plymouth



Andrew Field works for a pin in action against Plymouth last Wednesday evening.



Anna Drinkwine pins her opponent during Winnisquam's dual meet win over Plymouth last week.

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING

Sports Editor

TILTON — They've been at or near the top of the Division III standings for many years and over that time, have engaged in some pretty solid wrestling matches.

Wednesday, Jan. 28, was no different in that re-

gard, but for the first time in a dual meet match, the Winnisquam Bears defeated the Plymouth Bobcats, getting the 48-30 win in Tilton as the two teams grapple toward the Division III State Meet.

The meet started at 165 pounds, where Plymouth's Simeon Crane got a 15-8

decision win over Jameson Dunn of Winnisquam. Plymouth's Braxton Beebe came up with a 12-5 win over Isaac Timmons of Winnisquam at 175 pounds and the Bobcats. Had the 6-0 lead out of the gate.

Winnisquam's Noah Bassett got a pin of Plymouth's Charles McBrearty

at 190 pounds to tie the match and the Bears took the lead when Andrew Field got a pin of Plymouth's Chris Nedea at 215 pounds. Plymouth's Hussein Osseiran pulled his team even with a pin of Hunter Mulinski at 285 pounds.

Winnisquam's Anna Drinkwine came from behind to get a pin of Plymouth's Piper Babbitt at 106 pounds but Plymouth's Mason Morrison answered with a pin of Winnisquam's Lucas Durphey at 113 pounds to tie the match at 18.

At 120 pounds, Winnisquam's Dayton Brigante got the pin of Plymouth's Ellis Pietroniro and Winnisquam's Aiden Sufert got a pin of Plymouth's Casey Pietroniro at 126 pounds for the 30-18 lead for the Bears.

Winnisquam's Dylan Griffin got a pin of Plymouth's Jason Monroe at 132 pounds before Plymouth's Kody Sawyer got his team six points with a pin of Lucas Fournier at 138 pounds. Romain Berghmans of Winnisquam pinned Colin Lane of Plymouth at 144 pounds and Winnisquam had the 42-24 lead with two matches to go.

Plymouth's Aidan Patridge got a pin of Winnisquam's Nate Tassey at 150 pounds but Winnisquam finished up the day with a pin from Colin Paranteau at 157 pounds over Plymouth's Dom Ciotti to close out the 48-30 win for the Bears.

Winnisquam is sched-

uled to be in action again on Saturday, Feb. 7, at Exeter High School and will be hosting ConVal and Franklin on Thursday, Feb. 12, at 6 p.m.

Sports Editor Joshua Spaulding can be reached at 279-4516, ext. 155 or josh@salmonpress.news.

Winnisquam get wins over Lakers, Hilltoppers

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING

Sports Editor

MEREDITH — The Winnisquam hoop girls rallied from a second quarter deficit to take a halftime lead and went on to beat Inter-Lakes on Wednesday, Jan. 28, 50-43.

The Bears were down 22-10 early in the second quarter and then got their press working and changed the game, going on a 22-2 run to take a 34-24 lead at the halftime break on the way to the 50-43 win over the host Lakers.

"The kids have been really working hard all year and to get a win on the road was a big step forward," said coach Mark Dawalga. The Bear coach noted that Mia Wolfe and Abby Meunier gave the team valuable minutes off the bench.

Caidyn Carter, fresh off scoring her 1,000th point the previous week, scored 23 points to lead the Bears while Alissa Jean had 21 points. Bella Soucy pulled down 14 rebounds, Claire Hart had 11 rebounds and

Winnisquam is sched-

uled to be in action on Friday, Feb. 6, at home against Stevens at 7 p.m. and will be at Belmont for a 6 p.m. game on Wednesday, Feb. 11.

Winnisquam is sched-

uled to be in action on Friday, Feb. 6, at home against Raymond, will be hosting Berlin on Monday, Feb. 9, both at 6 p.m. and will be at Winnisquam on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 7 p.m.

Newfound will be in action on Friday, Feb. 6, at home against Prospect Mountain, and will be at

Gilford on Tuesday, Feb. 7, at 7 p.m.

Belmont is back in action on Friday, Feb. 6, at home against Raymond, will be hosting Berlin on Monday, Feb. 9, both at 6 p.m. and will be at Winnisquam on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 7 p.m.

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Powerhouse announces cast list for “Magician’s Elephant”



Carson Curtis



Charlotte Van Ledtje

=LACONIA — Powerhouse Theatre Collaborative, the resident theatre company of the Colonial Theatre in Laconia has completed casting for the NH Premiere of a brand new musical “The Magician’s Elephant” by Nancy Harris and Marc Teitler. The musical is an adaptation of Kate DiCamillo’s award-winning novel, which was also recently adapted into an animated film on Netflix. People from all over New Hampshire came out to audition for the show and have a chance to perform on the beautiful Colonial Theatre stage.

Says Director Bryan Halperin, “We searched statewide for performers for this challenging and fun new musical, especially for talented teens to play the pivotal leading roles of Peter and Adele. We were thrilled by the turnout and ecstatic to work with this cast.”

The role of Peter Duchene, the musical’s main protagonist, will be played by Carson Curtis from Brentwood. Curtis is an almost 16 year old with tons of onstage experience in the professional, community and youth theatre scene in New Hampshire. Professional appearances include Prescott Park Arts Festival, Palace Theatre, and Rochester Opera

House and he’s worked with Ogunquit, the Palace Teen Company and attended Interlochen Arts Camp among other theatre groups.

Says Curtis, “I am so excited to be working with Powerhouse Theatre Collaborative, and thrilled to be bringing the musical story of ‘The Magician’s Elephant’ to New Hampshire theatre audiences for the first time, alongside Charlotte Van Ledtje.”

Van Ledtje, a 12 year old from Durham, will play Adele. She is a dynamic young performer who has already been featured in professional productions at the Ogunquit Playhouse, including this past summer in “High Society,” at Maine State Musical Theatre, and has played Annie at both the Rochester Opera House and Argyle Theatre in Babylon, N.Y. Other more local credits include playing Matilda at the Winnipesaukee Playhouse and appearances with the Palace Theatre and Ovation Theatre Company.

Van Ledtje is excited to play Adele because “she’s brave, curious, and full of hope. I love how she believes in magic and possibility, even when things feel uncertain.”

The talented duo will be part of a cast of 56 filled

with many familiar faces to the Colonial Stage with Powerhouse. Seven members of the cast will be making their Powerhouse debut! Besides Halperin, rehearsals will be led by production team members Meg King (assistant director and choreographer), Alex Hunton (vocal director), and Dana Gardner (stage manager).

The large cast will help transport you to the town of Baltese, where nothing exciting ever happens. But one day a magician (played by Andrew Gibson, Powerhouse’s Jacob Marley in “A Christmas Carol”) summons an elephant which crash lands through the roof of the Opera House and sets off a chain of events too impossible to believe, including helping Peter, a teen boy, search for his long lost younger sister.

Powerhouse has engaged Sherry Gardner to build an (almost!) life-sized elephant puppet to be operated by three puppeteers and bring an elephant through the Colonial’s elephant door on Canal Street for the first time in many years! Performances will be May 1-3 at the Colonial Theatre, with matinees on both May 2 and 3 to appeal to family audiences. Tickets are on sale now at coloniallaconia.com and powerhousenh.org.

For all the details on Powerhouse Theatre Collaborative, auditions, and other events in the 2026 season check out powerhousenh.org or email info@powerhousenh.org.

There are still opportunities available for businesses to sponsor events in the 2026 season, including to sponsor the NH Premiere of “The Magician’s Elephant.”

SEND US YOUR NEWS!!!

Email Us @



news@salmonpress.news

PETS OF THE WEEK

Meet Boudreaux!

Meet Boudreaux, or as we like to call him BooBoo, BooBoo Bear, or Mr. Lanky. He is a very tall puppy who is ready for anything. He has super smell and a bark that reminds you of a sea lion. He needs a forever home that can teach him all about potty training and how to be the best dog he can be. He uses his words to get your attention and then will crawl into your lap for a snooze. He enjoys playing



with anyone willing, and would love to join you on life’s adventures.



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Driver arrested after pursuit through Lakes Region communities

LACONIA — A Belmont man was arrested after a pursuit that ended with a crash in Laconia.

At 11 p.m. Friday, Jan. 23, State Trooper Thomas Seager of the Troop E barracks attempted to stop a blue

Hyundai Sonata for a violation in Laconia. When the driver refused to stop, a pursuit ensued.

Troopers followed the Honda through Laconia and Gilford before returning to Laconia, where the pursuit ended after the driver crashed into a telephone pole on Bowman Street. During the pursuit,

the driver struck Trooper Seager’s cruiser, causing minor damage.

The driver was taken into custody and identified as Andrew J. Decormier, 33, of Belmont. Troopers determined Decormier had a probation warrant and additionally charged him with reckless conduct with a deadly weapon, disobeying a police officer, driving after being deemed a habitual offender, and other motor vehicle offenses. He was held at the Belknap County Jail pending an arraignment scheduled in Laconia District Court on Monday, Jan. 26.

Tab Benoit brings Soul of the Swamp Tour to the Colonial

LACONIA — The Colonial Theatre of Laconia will present Tab Benoit’s Soul of the Swamp Tour on Thursday, July 2, at 7:30 p.m., with supporting act The Cold Stares. Tickets to the show are on sale now at coloniallaconia.com or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Tab Benoit is a four-time Grammy nominated singer, songwriter and guitarist who has built a remarkable 30-plus-year career on the foundation of his gritty and soulful Delta swamp blues, acquiring a devoted legion of fans along the way, as well as five Blues Music Awards, including BB King Entertainer of the Year (twice) and an induction into The Louisiana Music Hall of Fame. After a 13-year hiatus, Tab is back with his latest effort, I Hear Thunder, on his own label, Whiskey Bayou Records. The new album was his first #1 on the Billboard charts in more than 30 years.

Benoit has recorded and/or performed with Junior Wells, George Porter Jr., Dr. John, Willie Nelson, Big Chief Monk Boudreaux, Billy Joe Shaver, Maria Muldaur, James Cotton, Cyril Neville, Kenny Aronoff, Allen Toussaint, Kim Wilson, Jimmy Thackery, Charlie Musselwhite, Kenny Neal, Chris Layton, Ivan Neville, Jimmy Hall, Jim Lauder-

dale, Anders Osborne, and Alvin Youngblood Hart to name a few.

The original owner of The Colonial Theatre, Benjamin Piscopo, was from Italy, and the theatre featured a fire curtain depicting Venice as seen from the water. In August of 2002, the theatre closed after 87 years of operation.

On June 15, 2015, the City of Laconia announced a partnership with the Belknap Economic Development Council (BEDC) to purchase, renovate, and reopen the Colonial. The newly reopened Colonial Theatre has a seating capacity of 750 and plays host to various performances, including music, theatre, comedy, and civic events. Spectacle Management manages the Colonial

Theatre and is home to the Powerhouse Theatre Collaborative. The Colonial Theatre is located at 609 Main St., Laconia. For more information, visit www.coloniallaconia.com.

Founded in 2012, Spectacle Live offers venue operations, booking, programming, marketing, and production services across New England from offices in Lexington, Mass., Lowell, Mass., and Laconia. The company partners with over a dozen venues to manage facilities and promote a variety of events, including concerts, comedy, theater, and family entertainment. For more information, contact Pete Lally at plally@spectaclelive.com or 617-531-1257. www.spectaclelive.com

Ice Fishing Derby happening this weekend!

MEREDITH — The Meredith Rotary Club is thrilled to share that the ice has officially been declared “in,” and the Derby trailer is being set up for the highly anticipated Great Meredith Rotary Ice Fishing Derby!

Event Details: Feb. 7-8, on any public fresh body of water in New Hampshire, with Derby HQ located at Hesky Park in Meredith.

For more information about the derby, visit our website: icefishingnh.com.

The Meredith Rotary Club is dedicated to serving our community through impactful events and initiatives. Proceeds from the Ice Fishing Derby support local charities and projects that make a difference in the lives of our neighbors.

We look forward to seeing you on the ice this weekend!!

Meet Lolo!



Lolo is a sweet, handsome boy with a heart full of love. He’s a little wary at first—understandably, after so much change—but his gentle, affectionate nature always shines through once he feels

safe. Lolo is a little extra special though because he has a birth defect that impacted his leg, he’s lived with it for his whole life. It doesn’t slow him down a bit—he’s still active and curious—but he moves a bit differently, often with an adorable “army crawl” . His leg looks a little wonky but so was Nemo’s fin! Our orange and white boy is a little insecure about it and doesn’t like to show it to just anybody so he really needs that special person to build up his confidence and let him see that it’s okay to be weird

Franklin Savings Bank grants \$5,000 to The Home Possible project

FRANKLIN — Franklin Savings Bank recently granted \$5,000 to The Home Possible Project to assess and evaluate a potential supportive housing community in Gilford for adults with developmental disabilities.

“Everyone deserves a safe, supportive place to call home,” comments Brian Bozak, President & CEO, Franklin Savings Bank. “We are proud to contribute to The Home Possible Project’s mission to create housing for adults with developmental disabilities. Supporting this project aligns perfectly with our mission to uplift lives and invest in our communities.”

The Home Possible Project creates and provides residential options, services, and support designed to meet the needs of adults with developmental disabilities and similar disabling conditions. They are dedicated to fostering growth and independence through vocational, social and recreational opportunities



COURTESY

Pictured, left to right: Gary Dimartino, Home Possible Project Advisory Group; Dorothy Piquado, Board Member, Home Possible Project; Lisa DiMartino, Board Chair, Home Possible Project; Meg Miller, Board Member, Franklin Savings Bank; Joel Fisher, Vice Chair, Home Possible Project; and Brian Bozak, President & CEO, Franklin Savings Bank.

“We are deeply grateful to Franklin Savings Bank for this generous \$5,000 grant, which brings us another step closer to building our flagship community residence for adults with developmental disabilities

in the Lakes Region. This one-level, fully accessible home will feature 12 private studio apartments, each with its own ADA-compliant bathroom and kitchenette, along with inviting common areas

such as a shared kitchen and dining room, family room for socialization and friendships, and space for 24/7 staff to provide personalized, person-centered support. Our goal is to promote independence, foster a true sense of belonging, and create a warm, inclusive environment where residents can thrive. Franklin Savings Bank’s support is an investment in a stronger, more compassionate community, and we are

honored to have them as a partner in this important work,” said Lisa DiMartino, Board Chair of The Home Possible Project.

Visit The Home Possible Project online to learn more at <https://www.homepossiblelhn.org>.

Established in 1869, Franklin Savings Bank is an independent, mutually-owned community bank, offering an array of commercial lending, personal banking and investment services. The Bank also offers investment and financial planning services through its wholly-owned subsidiary, Independence Financial Advisors. A recognized leader in providing the latest in financial services technology, Franklin Savings Bank remains committed to serving the needs of businesses, families and the communities it serves, through a dedicated team of employees, a diverse line of financial products and services, and continued investment in emerging technology. Visit www.fsbh.bank to learn more or follow the bank on Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube.

Swim With A Mission awards grants to three Lakes Region veteran service organizations

REGION — Swim With A Mission (SWAM) is excited to announce the distribution of three substantial grants to Veteran Service Organizations (VSOs) in the Lakes region of New Hampshire. The total of \$227,500 in funding will provide essential support to programs dedicated to improving the lives of Veterans, active-duty service members, and their families.

Camp Resilience receives \$200,000 Grant

The Patriot Resilient Leader Institute, DBA, Camp Resilience is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 2014 by a group of Veterans and local citizens. Since 2014, Camp Resilience has welcomed hundreds of participants to rediscover their health and wellness. The organizational leadership consists of a diverse group of individuals with backgrounds in business, military, public safety, mental health, and nonprofit sectors.

Camp Resilience recognizes that those who have served their country and communities often need a helping hand to recover and maintain their mental and physical health. By running Camp Resilience retreats for service members, Veterans, first responders, and their loved ones, Camp Resilience does its part to help those who have served bounce back in mind, body, and spirit.

Camp Resilience serves about 200 participants a

year offering three and four-day retreats in the beautiful Lakes Region of New Hampshire, which provide Veterans, and in some cases their spouses/caregivers and their families, with peer-to-peer counseling, life skills workshops, and outdoor activities.

Lakes Region Veterans Coalition receives \$2,500 grant

The Lakes Region Veterans Coalition (LRVC) is comprised of local Veterans and community leaders working to implement the Together With Veterans (TWV) suicide prevention program. This program, funded by the VA Office of Rural Health, focuses on helping rural Veterans connect with their communities and access vital mental health resources.

The Together With Veterans program is a five-phase process to support rural communities in developing a local action plan to prevent Veteran suicide. The five Phases guide the community through identifying Veterans and other key partners; learning about suicide prevention and specific community strengths and needs; and developing and carrying out an effective local Veteran suicide prevention action plan.

Chris Peirce, Vice President of LRVC, shared, “In New Hampshire, Veterans make up 9 percent of the adult population. Understanding their unique cul-

ture and recognizing the signs of Veteran

suicide is crucial, even though it’s a difficult topic. Encouraging people to ask the right questions

and acknowledge the problem is key to reaching out and offering support.”

At Liberty CONNECTIONS receives \$25,000 grant

At Liberty CONNECTIONS was founded in 2023 by Veterans, for Veterans, with the mission of helping those who have been impacted by trauma and are struggling with life’s challenges. The organization offers transformative events and retreats at independent horse farms,

such as UpReach Therapeutic Equestrian Center in Goffstown, NH, and The Ladd Farm in Bridgewater, NH. These retreats are specifically designed to help Veterans, their families, and others affected by trauma reconnect with themselves, each other, and their communities.

Through hands-on equine-assisted activities, participants are provided with a safe, healing space to process their experiences and promote emotional well-being.

Dr. Kathleen Roth, Founder of At Liberty CONNECTIONS, shared, “Serving in the U.S. Army for 25 years was my greatest honor, but it didn’t come without personal sacrifice. It wasn’t until years after my military retirement that I experienced a transformative equine-assisted session. This powerful

healing process helped me overcome severe depression and anxiety. Now, I’m passionate about sharing this experience with other Veterans and their families, helping them find healing, connection, and a renewed sense of hope.”

SWAM’s continued commitment to local veterans

These grants reflect SWAM’s ongoing commitment to supporting Veterans in the NH Lakes region and beyond. Through its partnerships with local organizations, SWAM continues to help improve the lives of those who have served our country.

To learn more about

Swim With A Mission and

its 2025 grant recipients,

visit www.swam.org.

About Swim With A Mission (SWAM) Swim With A Mission (SWAM) is a New Hampshire-based nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Veterans through fundraising, community engagement, and grants to local Veteran service organizations. Since its inception in 2017, SWAM has awarded more than \$13.6 million dollars to initiatives that enhance the lives of Veterans, promote their well-being, and ensure they receive the care and support they deserve.

(Left) Josh Wright (SWAM Advisory Board), Eddie Edwards (SWAM Advisory Board), Nancy Marston (SWAM Advisory Board), Ed Thelander (Navy SEAL & SWAM Advisory Board Member), Todd Wheatley (SWAM Board), Rick Botnick (SWAM Board), Andy Crews (SWAM Board), Holly Summers (Camp Resilience Development Coordinator) Angelo Mazzella (SWAM Board), Jeff Ladieu (Camp Resilience Executive Director), Phil and Julie Taub (SWAM Co-Founders)

At Liberty Connections

From Left To Right: (Left) Josh Wright (SWAM Advisory Board), Eddie Edwards (SWAM Advisory Board), Nancy Marston (SWAM Advisory Board), Ed Thelander (Navy SEAL & SWAM Advisory Board Member), Julie Taub (SWAM Co-Founder), Karen Kersting (Up-Reach Executive Director), Joyce Nelson (At Liberty Connections Treasurer), Todd Wheatley (SWAM Board), Rick Botnick (SWAM Board), Andy Crews (SWAM Board), Angelo Mazzella (SWAM Board), Phil Taub (SWAM Co-Founder)

Lakes Region Veterans Coalition

From Left To Right: (Left) Josh Wright (SWAM Advisory Board), Eddie Edwards (SWAM Advisory Board), Nancy Marston (SWAM Advisory Board), Ed Thelander (Navy SEAL & SWAM Advisory Board Member), Todd Wheatley (SWAM Board), Rick

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BOOKS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

riety of fresh fruit for the students. The donation underscored the community's commitment to providing

healthy options as part of the "Quest for School Breakfast."

The "Books and Breakfast" event is part of a larger effort by NH Hunger Solutions to increase breakfast

FIRE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

ployed a leader-line hose due to the distance from the engine to the structure. Entry conditions were further complicated as the front door lacked stairs and was accessed by a small ladder. A bystander informed crews that a person and multiple dogs were still inside the home. Firefighters used the ladder to make entry and encountered heavy fire. A primary search was conducted, and no occupants or animals were located.

The bulk of the fire was knocked down using the leader line. Franklin firefighters then advanced an additional hose-line from the engine and extinguished the remaining exterior fire. Crews brought the fire under control after opening ceilings using hand tools and a chainsaw.

The fire originated within the wall where the basement wood stove chimney exited the structure. The home sustained extensive fire damage throughout the walls and ceilings and is considered a total loss. Following extinguishment,

crews accounted for one occupant and nine dogs. The occupant was uninjured. A second occupant was not home at the time of the fire. Three dogs required medical attention, six were uninjured, and one dog remains unaccounted for. The American Red Cross is assisting the displaced occupants, and Birch Hill Pet Resort in Northfield is assisting with the care of the dogs.

Fire departments from Tilton-Northfield, Franklin, Sanbornton, Belmont, Concord, and Laconia operated at the

scene. New Hampton and Gilman Fire Departments provided station coverage.

Firefighter Cody Caron noted, "Access to the house was difficult due to the snow and narrow path. Thankfully, we have the leader line and train with it regularly."

Caron also reminded homeowners to ensure wood stoves are installed in accordance with code and manufacturer requirements, noting this was the department's third woodstove-related fire this heating season.

participation across the state. Research consistently shows that students who eat breakfast have improved focus and memory, better attendance records, higher test scores and ac-

ademic performance. NH Hunger Solutions works to end hunger in the Granite State by improving access to federal nutrition programs, including school breakfast and lunch.

BOYS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

three-pointer to put Gilford in the lead. Brady Fysh connected on a bucket for the Raiders and Carroll added a hoop.

Folan sunk a free throw and a Hawkins basket tied the game at 19. A pair of Martinez buckets sandwiched around two free throws from Bamford upped the Belmont lead to six before a Uicker got the final basket of the first half and Belmont had the 25-21 lead at the halftime break.

Bryce Cook got the opening basket of the second half and after Fysh hit a free throw at the other end, Uicker had a hoop and Henry Sleeper drained a three-pointer to give Gilford the 28-26 lead.

Carroll answered with a three for the Raiders to put them back and front and then Brody Ennis finished off his own steal with a dunk to up the lead to three.

Uicker hit a hoop and a three-pointer and Gavin Forest connected with a bucket to close out the third quarter and Gilford had the 35-31 lead heading

to the fourth quarter.

Baskets from Carroll and Ennis tied the score at 35 early in the fourth quarter and then Uicker and Carroll exchanged baskets. A Hawkins three-pointer and hoop sandwiched around a Carroll free throw gave Gilford the 42-38 lead.

Martinez got the Raiders on the board with a hoop but Hawkins answered at the other end with a basket to keep the lead at four. Viar connected from the charity stripe before Gilford's Owen Wolpin drained a hoop for the five-point Gilford lead.

Martinez then hit a free throw and Carroll hit a three-pointer to cut the lead to one. Hawkins hit two free throws with 25 seconds to go to up the lead to three but Carroll's three-pointer with 10 seconds to go and the game went to overtime tied at 48.

Divers hit two free throws to start the overtime but Sleeper answered with a three-pointer and Hawkins hit a free throw to give Gilford the 52-50 lead. Fysh and Martinez each hit from the line and the

"We are thrilled to partner with organizations like NH Hunger Solutions, CLiF, and Hannaford to provide this opportunity for our students," said Jacqui McGetigan, WRSD

Family and Student Support Liaison. "By combining a healthy meal with the magic of literacy, we are setting our students up for success both today and in the future."

will be hosting Berlin on Monday, Feb. 9, both at 6 p.m. and will be at Winnisquam on Wednesday, Feb. 11, at 7 p.m.

Gilford will be back at it on Friday, Feb. 6, at home against Conant and will be hosting Newfound on Tuesday, Feb. 10, both at 6 p.m.

BHS 14-11-6-16-16-65
GHS 11-10-14-13-12-59

Belmont 65
Carroll 7-2-17, Viar 3-1-7, Martinez 7-8-22, Ennis 2-3-7, Divers 0-3-3, Fysh 1-1-3, Bamford 1-4-6, Totals 20-22-65

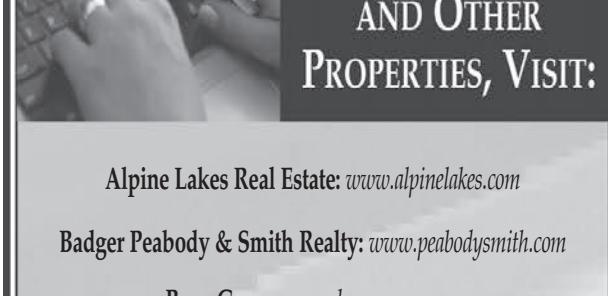
Gilford 59
Uicker 8-0-17, Forest 1-1-3, Hughes 0-2-2, Sleeper 2-0-6, Hawkins 7-5-21, Cook 2-0-4, Wolpin 1-0-2, Folan 1-2-4, Totals 21-10-59

Sports Editor Joshua Spaulding can be reached at 279-4516, ext. 155 or josh@salmonpress.news.

The Raiders were led by 22 points from Martinez while Carroll added 17 points. Hawkins led the way for the Golden Eagles with 21 points and Uicker finished with 17 points.

Belmont is back in action on Friday, Feb. 6, at home against Raymond,

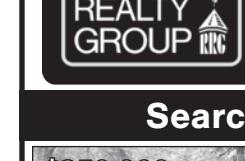
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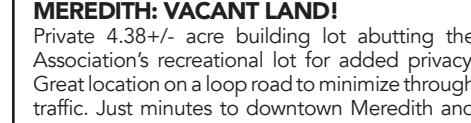
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MEREDITH: VACANT LAND!

Goodhue Boat Company announces acquisition of East Coast Flightcraft, strengthening service, boat selection

MEREDITH — Goodhue Boat Company, a family-owned and customer-focused marina group serving boaters across New England and beyond, is proud to announce the acquisition of East Coast Flightcraft, a highly respected dealership and marine service provider with deep roots in the Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire boating communities.

This acquisition rep-

resents a strategic and values-driven partnership built around a shared commitment to customers, community, and a genuine passion for life on the water. East Coast Flightcraft has long been known for its knowledgeable team, strong customer relationships, and dedication to delivering exceptional boating experiences — values that closely align with Goodhue Boat Company's

mission and core principles.

"For us, this acquisition is about serving customers better — plain and simple," said Cody Gray, COO of Goodhue Boat Company. "Boaters don't all want the same thing, and they shouldn't be forced into a one-size-fits-all solution. By expanding our portfolio of premium boat brands and services, we're better equipped to help each

customer find the boat that truly works for their lifestyle, their family, and the way they want to enjoy the water."

Customers of East Coast Flightcraft can expect continuity in the areas that matter most. The existing team will remain in place, day-to-day operations will continue without interruption, and the same trusted service and local expertise will remain at the

forefront. At the same time, customers will gain access to Goodhue Boat Company's expanded resources, broader brand lineup, and growing network of marina locations and boating services.

The acquisition allows Goodhue Boat Company to further invest in enhanced service capabilities, long-term customer support, and a wider selection of boats designed to meet the diverse needs of today's boaters — from

watersports and cruising to family recreation and relaxation.

Goodhue Boat Company looks forward to building on East Coast Flightcraft's strong foundation and continuing to help families create lasting memories on the water for years to come.

For more information about the new locations, services, or upcoming events, visit www.goodhueboat.com.

Interlakes Children's & Summer Theatre announce local auditions

WOLFEBORO — The Interlakes Summer Theatre and The Interlakes Children's Theatre will hold local auditions at the Inter-Lakes Auditorium, One Laker Lane in Meredith on Sundays, Feb. 15 and Feb. 22 from 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

The auditions will be open for adult actors who wish to be considered for any size roles in Hello, Dolly, Cabaret, and Annie

in the 2026 Summer Season. We will also be seeing children for our Youth Series. This program is completely free for local youth who wish to participate in any of the three musicals, including Princess K.I.M., Oliver, Jr. and Cats Youth Edition.

We will also be casting between 10 & 12 young girls (Ages eight to 15) to play Annie and the Orphans

in the professional production of "Annie". This Production will star "Illeana Kirven" as Miss Hannigan, currently touring the country in the Broadway Company of "Chicago" as Mama Morton.

All auditionees should bring a song to sing. We will provide sides/scripts to read. Callbacks for Annie and orphan will be by invitation and will be at a

later date.

You only need to attend one of the days and you will be taken in the order of arrival. Once your audition is complete, you may leave.

If you cannot attend in person, please send pix/resume/reels to interlakes-theatre@gmail.com.

Also address any questions to this email.

LIBRARY

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1
ders" by Peter Swanson, and the Friday Fiction Book Group will gather Friday, February 20 at 10:30 a.m. to discuss "The Measure" by Nikki Erlick.

Children and teen activities

Children are invited to enjoy weekly Story Time on Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m., along with special February activities. Drop-In Valentines Making will be available all day Thursday and Friday, Feb. 12 and 13, with all supplies provided. Teens ages 13-16 (and all interested readers) can join the Teen Book

Club on Thursday, Feb. 19 at 4 p.m. to discuss "Not If I Save You First" by Ally Carter. On Tuesday, Feb. 24 from 3-5 p.m., drop in to make Heart Diamond Art Magnets, recommended for ages 10 and up while supplies last.

Closures

The library will be closed on Monday, Feb. 16 for Presidents' Day.

For more information, visit belmontpubliclibrary.org, call (603) 267-8331, or stop by 146 Main Street during open hours: Monday-Friday 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Saturday 9 a.m.-1 p.m.

HELP WANTED



Full-Time Installers Apprentice

Energysavers Inc., a 50 year old hearth & spa product retailer in the Lakes Region, is looking for a motivated individual that wants to learn the trade of installing hearth products. You must be comfortable working on roofs when necessary and able to work with an installer to move heavy items. Energysavers pays for all educational costs to get and maintain NFI wood, gas and pellet certifications as well as a NH gas fitters license for gas hearth installations and service. Starting pay, \$18-\$20 hour based on experience.

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Stop in to fill out an application:

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SHAKER REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT GIRLS MS SOFTBALL COACH

Shaker Regional School District is seeking a coach for the 2025-2026 season for Girls Middle School Softball. Interested individuals should contact Cayman Belyea, Athletic Director, by phone at 603-267-6525 ext. 1362 or email at cbelyea@sau80.org. Successful completion, with satisfactory results, of a post-offer, pre-employment criminal background check, including fingerprints, is required. Shaker Regional School District serves the communities of Belmont and Canterbury, New Hampshire and is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

How to Submit an Obituary Guidance in Your Time of Need.



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Lakes Region Scholarship Foundation celebrates 70 years



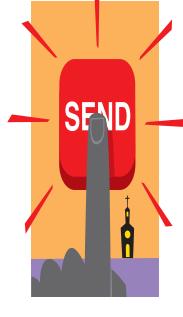
COURTESY
Executive Director, Chris Guilmett and Director Karen Switzer (far right), thanked retiring Trustees, for their 34 (cumulative) years of dedicated service to LRSF! (l to r) Phil Bonafide, Gayle Price (outgoing President), Jim Carroll (outgoing Secretary), Kathy Gilman, Chris, and Karen.



Chris Guilmett and Karen Switzer welcomed new LRSF Trustees at the Annual Board meeting. (left to right) Chris Guilmett, Executive Director, Andrea Besegai, Jessica Beane, Leisa D'Amour, Teresa Mahoney Mullen, and Karen Switzer, Director.

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