



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2026

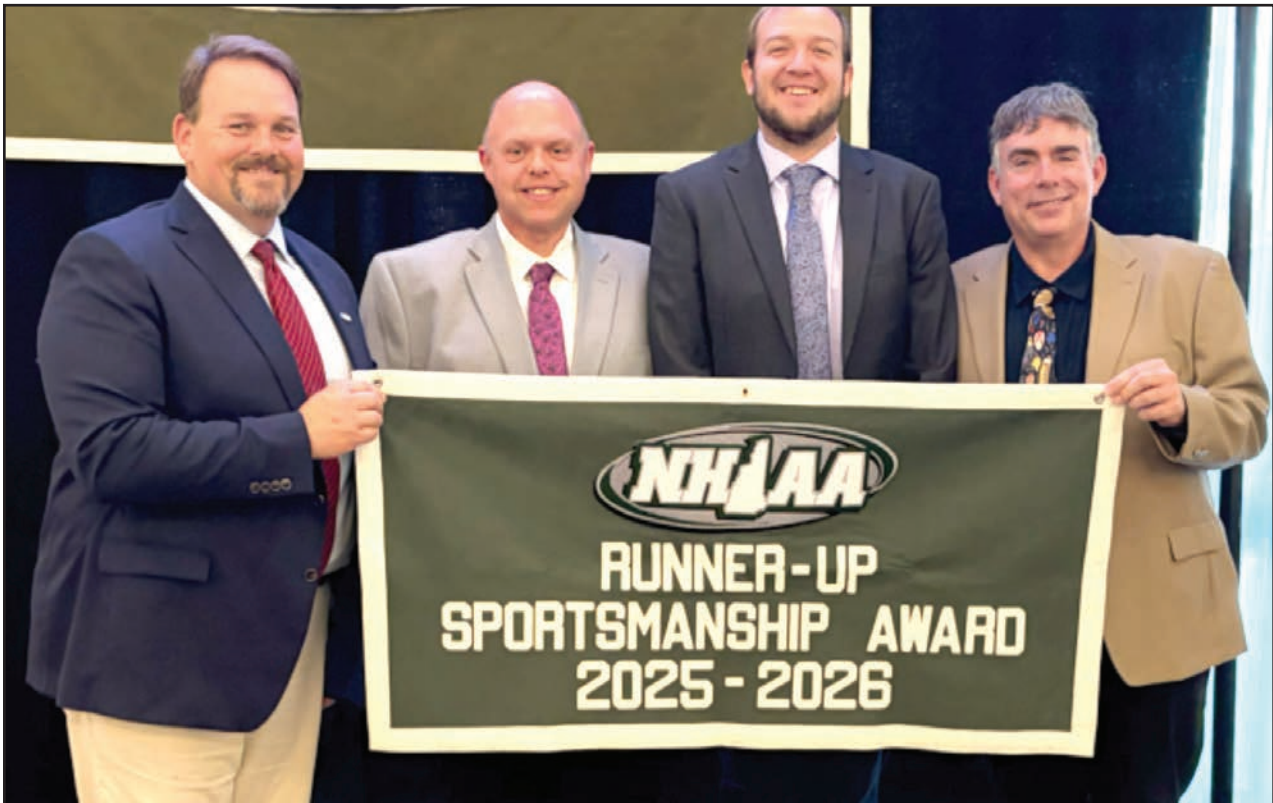
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Winnisquam Regional High School named Division III runner up for NHIAA Sportsmanship Award

TILTON — Winnisquam Regional High School was named the Division III runner up for the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA) Sportsmanship Award at the NHIAA Annual Meeting on Sept. 21.

The award is voted on by Division III athletic directors with input from their coaches. The NHIAA has overseen high school athletics in New Hampshire since 1948 and works to make athletics an important part of a student's education.

Winnisquam Regional School District Athletic Director Ian Snowdeal said the recognition comes from the example set by the school's coaches, who show respect and integrity in everything they



COURTESY PHOTO

Holding the Division III Sportsmanship Award runner up banner, now displayed in the Winnisquam Regional High School gymnasium, are, from the left, Jeffrey Collins, NHIAA Executive Director; Eric Perry, Winnisquam Regional High School Principal; Ian Snowdeal, Winnisquam Regional School District Athletic Director; and Justin Roy, Chair of the NHIAA Sportsmanship Committee and Principal of Spalding High School.

do. Student athletes and fans carry that example on and off the field, at home games and away.

"We're proud of the way our Bears represent our school and community," the Snowdeal said. "Thank you to our coaches, student athletes, families and fans for representing Winnisquam with class and positive sportsmanship at our events."

The award banner now hangs in the Winnisquam Regional High School gymnasium.

Community members who would like to cheer on the Bears can join them for Senior Night on Friday, Oct. 16, Varsity Soccer at Conant High School, 4 p.m.; Volleyball at home against Franklin High School, JV at 4:30 p.m. and Varsity at 6 p.m.

Granite VNA offers Caregiver Connection in Belmont

BELMONT — Granite VNA offers Caregiver Connection on Thursday, Oct. 15 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at Tilly Market Café at the Belknap Marketplace at 96 Daniel Webster Highway.

Join us and connect with other family caregivers, while enjoying an opportunity to unwind and have discussions rich in empathy and resources.

Pre-registration is not required. For more information, call (603) 224-4093 or (800) 924-8620, ext. 85664 or visit www.granitevna.org. This program is offered at no charge.

About Granite VNA
Granite VNA is a not-for-profit licensed and certified home health and hospice care provider. The agency serves people of all ages in 72 communities across the Greater Capital Region and Central New Hampshire by providing home care, hospice care, pediatric and maternal child health services, and wellness programming. The agency has offices in Concord, Laconia and Wolfeboro. Formed through the merger of Concord Regional VNA and Central New Hampshire VNA & Hospice, Granite VNA has served New Hampshire since 1899. For more information about Granite VNA, visit www.granitevna.org.

Mattes leads resurgent Belmont golf team to Division III State Meet

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING
Sports Editor

BELMONT — Over the course of the last four years, the Belmont golf team has grown from a non-existent entity to a team competing for championships and the Raiders head to the Division III championships today, Oct. 15, looking to continue what has been a terrific run for a program that only came back to life four years ago.

And central to that comeback for the Raiders is coach John Mattes, who took over the program and has grown it into the cham-



JOSHUA SPAULDING

Coach John Mattes (left), seen with Athletics Director Cayman Belyea at a meet at Canterbury Woods, has led the resurgence for the Belmont golf team.

pionship contender over the last few years.

"There was a point where we didn't have enough kids to compete as a team, we just had a few golfers and he came in and every year it's grown into something even better," said Belmont Athletics Director Cayman Belyea. "The nicest part is the kids just seem to enjoy it and having fun."

"The fact that we have so many kids that not every kid can travel to every match, we didn't think we'd be in that position,"

SEE **GOLF**, PAGE A11

Soccer Bears and Raiders battle to 2-2 tie

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING
Sports Editor

TILTON — In a battle between neighboring rivals, the Winnisquam soccer squad got a goal in the final few minutes to salvage a tie with visiting Belmont on Tuesday, Oct. 6.

The Raiders started early after a solid defensive stop from Derik Matthews on Braeden Perrault, as Nico Smith sent a cross into the box at the other end and Aaryn Durand was there to knock it home for the 1-0 lead just 1:44 into the game. Matthews just missed connecting with Smith on another chance and Durand had a shot saved by Winnisquam goalie Katelyn Pacetti. Perrault sent a ball in just ahead of Nolan Abbott and Abbott had another cross through the box that missed connecting. Oliver Hatfield



JOSHUA SPAULDING

Winnisquam's Nolan Abbott and Belmont's Derik Matthews go up for the ball during action last Tuesday afternoon.

had a solid defensive stop for the Bears as well.

Winnisquam was able to knot the score with 32:11 to go in the first half, as Kane St. Hilaire sent a great ball through to Abbott, who fired the ball past Belmont goalie Ryan Monasky for the tying goal. Perrault just missed connecting with Abbott on another bid, with Monasky making the grab. Brennen Geoffrey had a good clear

SEE **SOCCER**, PAGE A6

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Bears cruise past Moultonborough, edge St. Thomas

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING
Sports Editor

TILTON — The Winnisquam volleyball team picked up a solid team win over Moultonborough on Tuesday, Oct. 6, 25-15 25-13, 25-7.

“This was a good team win with everyone contributing,” said coach Mark Dawalga.

Danica Weymouth led the offense with eight aces and four kills, Sophie Fair finished with eight kills and seven digs and Abby Meunier had eight assists, nine digs and two aces. Alissa Jean had four digs, two assists and three

aces, Eila Petty had three blocks, Claire Hart had three aces and three digs and Aaylah Cartier had six digs to help led the defensive side of things for the Bears.

Dawalga praised the play off the bench of Kinzie Nelson, Amelya Robinson, Alanna Cruz and Autumn Sarette and ninth grader Josephine Meyers saw her first varsity action of the season as well.

On Thursday, the Bears took on St. Thomas and came away with a hard-fought 3-2 win over the Saints.

“This was like a play-

off game with two very good teams competing at a very high level,” Dawalga said.

St. Thomas won the first set 25-20 before the Bears dug deep and won the second and third sets by matching 25-23 scores. The Saints bounced back to win the fourth set by a 25-20 score to force a fifth and deciding set, which

both teams making great plays in a back and forth battle before the Bears got the 15-13 win.

“I am really proud of this team and how they have come together as a team,” Dawalga noted. “This group works so hard every day in practice and now see their hard work paying off in games, it’s really exciting to see.”

Fair had eight digs, 13 kills, five aces and a block, Weymouth had nine digs, six kills, five aces and two blocks, Meunier had seven digs and 20 assists, Bernier had seven digs and an ace, Hart had a dig, a kill and a block, Petty had a kill and a block, Nelson had two aces, Cartier had eight digs, Jean had seven digs and

three aces and Cruz had a pair of digs.

The Bears are slated to wrap up the regular season at home against Franklin on Friday, Oct. 16, at 6:15 p.m.

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

HIGH SCHOOL SLATE

**Thursday, Oct. 15
GILFORD**
Cross Country at Merrimack Valley; 4
WINNISQUAM
Cross Country at Merrimack Valley; 4

**Friday, Oct. 16
BELMONT**
Boys’ Soccer vs. Inter-Lakes; 3:30
Girls’ Soccer at Inter-Lakes; 4
Volleyball at Concord Christian; 6:15
GILFORD
Boys’ Soccer vs. White Mountains; 3:30
Field Hockey vs. Monadnock; 4
Football at Campbell; 7
Girls’ Soccer at White Mountains; 4
Volleyball at Kingswood; 6
WINNISQUAM
Boys’ Soccer vs. Conant; 4
Volleyball vs. Franklin; 6:15

**Monday, Oct. 19
WINNISQUAM**
Volleyball vs. Prospect Mountain; 6

**Tuesday, Oct. 20
BELMONT**
Boys’ Soccer vs. Winnisquam; 3:30
Girls’ Soccer at Campbell; 4
GILFORD
Boys’ Soccer at Stevens; 4
Girls’ Soccer vs. Stevens; 4
WINNISQUAM
Boys’ Soccer at Belmont; 3:30

**Wednesday, Oct. 21
BELMONT**
Volleyball vs. Moultonborough; 6:15

All schedules are subject to change.

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SANBORNTON — This spooky season, step through the doors of history and into an evening where the past and the paranormal meet.

On Friday, Oct. 16, Breakthrough Medium Brandie Wells invites guests to the historic Lane Tavern at 520 Sanborn Rd. in Sanbornton for a unique Spirit Gallery & 1800s Spiritualism Experience. Built in 1801, the beautifully preserved tavern provides an atmospheric setting for an evening inspired by the fascinating Spiritualist movement of the 19th century.

The evening begins with an open-forum Spirit Gallery, where Brandie Wells will connect with angels, spirit guides, and loved ones

in spirit, sharing messages of hope, healing, and validation with audience members.

Following a brief intermission featuring light autumn appetizers, guests will travel back in time to explore some of the traditional practices associated with 1800s Spiritualism. Participants will have the opportunity to create their own talking board and learn about pendulums and dowsing rods as historical tools used in attempts to communicate with the unseen.

Together, guests will explore the history and atmosphere of the Lane Tavern while experiencing these time-honored spiritual practices in a unique hands-on setting. The event takes place

Friday, Oct. 16, from 7 to 10 p.m. at the Historic Lane Tavern, 520 Sanborn Rd., Sanbornton.

Guests are asked to arrive having eaten dinner. Light autumn appetizers will be served during intermission. This is a sober event.

Tickets are available at: Brandiewells.com.

Whether you are fascinated by the history of Spiritualism, curious about mediumship, intrigued by paranormal traditions, or simply searching for an unforgettable autumn evening, the Historic Lane Tavern offers a setting where history and mystery come together.

Brandie Wells, known as The Breakthrough Medium, is a certified Angelic Healer, Hypno-

tist, and Psychic Medium who has dedicated her career to connecting people with messages of love, healing, and inspiration. Through spirit channeling and mediumship, Brandie works to bridge the paranormal with the angelic realms and guide people through both the light and shadows of the soul.

Brandie connects with approximately 5,000 clients each year and has been bringing her unique events and experiences to audiences for more than a decade.

“Healing your past; revealing your potential.”

Don’t miss this chance to step back in time and explore the extraordinary.

UUCF congregation invites community to Halloween Storybook Walk

FRANKLIN — In September of 2025, members of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Franklin (UUCF) knew they wanted to complete a community project that would benefit others.

Congregation member and Franklin High School English teacher, Charlie Chapple, suggested installing a Little Free Library on the UUCF Meetinghouse front lawn. This idea was well received by

UUCF’s members and friends; monetary donations were collected to purchase the Little Free Library and gently used books were gathered. For the past year, weekly rotated books at the Little Free Library at 206 Central St. have been finding new homes. And people have kindly donated books by leaving them in the Little Free Library for others to take.

This September, UUCF members decided

to do another community project, also promoting literacy. UUCF members and friends will be installing a Halloween Storybook Walk on their Meetinghouse front lawn that will be displayed from Friday, Oct. 23 to Saturday, Oct. 31 during daylight hours. We invite you to come for a walk and read the storybook, “The Spooky Wheels on the Bus,” written by J. Elizabeth Mills.

On Saturday, Oct. 24,

from 9 a.m. to noon, any child who goes through the Storybook Walk may pick out a gently used book to take home with them (while book supplies last). The rain date for this event will be Saturday, Oct. 31. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Franklin is located at 206 Central St. For more information, please call 603-934-2141 and leave a message with your name and phone number.

Raiders run with the crowds in Hopkinton

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING
Sports Editor

HOPKINTON — The Belmont cross country team was part of a huge number of athletes that took to the course at the Hopkinton Fairgrounds on Saturday during the Hopkinton Cross Country Festival.

Jenna Laramie led the way for the Belmont girls in the varsity race with a 199th place finish in a time of 24:31 with Lyla McSheffrey in 211th place in 25:12.

For the varsity boys, Brodie Henry finished in 130th place in 18:14 and Sean Andrews placed

177th overall in 18:46.

In the JV race for the girls, Zoe Perlet finished in 111th place in 26:32, Violet Smith was 128th in 27:12, Sara Milotovic was 178th in 30:32 and Allieanna Steele finished in 179th place in 30:40.

The Raiders are slated

to take part in the Capital Area Championship at Merrimack Valley High School today, Oct. 15.

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

PETS OF THE WEEK

Meet Honey!

Miss Honey is looking for a home that can help her build her confidence one yummy tube treat at a time! She has an adorable meow and loves to be pet by visitors who take a moment to say hello.

This little lady has had a journey of many transitions and stressors, and would love a quiet home with a cat-savvy family who can give her the love and patience



she needs to blossom. She is very food motivated and warms up with a little encouragement, patience, and a snack.

She is looking for a home where she can be the queen of your castle, as the only cat and no canine friends. A home with cat-savvy teenagers would be okay, but she would like a calmer home without young kiddos.

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Champions for Kids Breakfast draws capacity crowd, raises more than \$500,000 for Lakes Region youth and families

LACONIA — On Tuesday, Oct. 6, the 2026 Champions for Kids Breakfast, sponsored by Platinum Group at RE/MAX Bayside, brought together a capacity crowd of dedicated supporters, community leaders, volunteers, and a growing generation of new donors, demonstrating the Lakes Region's shared commitment to investing in local youth and supporting working families.

This year's event carried the inspiring theme, "Together We Can Do It!" a message that resonated throughout the morning as attendees were welcomed by Club youth who greeted guests and set an uplifting tone for the program.

The opening moments of the breakfast captured the spirit of the Boys & Girls Clubs' mission. Club members led the audience in a powerful call-and-response affirmation used daily by staff member Nicole Wittenberg in her toddler classroom: I am smart. I am kind. I am strong. I can do hard things. I'm a good friend. I'm glad you're here.

As the capacity audience repeated each statement alongside Club youth, the room was filled with energy, hope, and a reminder of the confidence and belonging that the Clubs strive to instill in every young person they serve.

The program featured welcome remarks from Wendy Mills, whose family's story is deeply woven into the history of youth services in the Lakes Region. Mills reflected on the tragic



loss of her son, Robbie, whose murder in 1998 became the catalyst for community leaders to establish a teen center in the region. That effort ultimately evolved into an organization that merged with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central and Northern New Hampshire in 2015, expanding opportunities and support for local youth.

"Robbie was looking forward to, but never got the chance to participate in, afterschool programming like the Boys & Girls Club. I am a supporter of the Boys & Girls Clubs because they have amazing goals and they make it all about the kids," said Mills.

The Champions for Kids Breakfast highlighted the critical role that quality youth development programs play in supporting working families and strengthening the Lakes Region. As demand for affordable, reliable care and enrichment opportunities continues to grow, community support remains essential to ensuring children have safe places to learn, grow, and thrive while their parents work.

The strong turnout

of both longtime champions and first-time supporters reflected a growing recognition that investing in young people is an investment in the future of the region. Testimony from parents underlined how much programming supports not just their children, but the whole family.

Parent Jessica McDonald said, "Belmont Early Learning Center staff helped me become a stronger, wiser mother. And because Ana could stay in school, BELC changed my life, too. I could finish my degree, build a career at Campion Insurance, and now provide for my children without state assistance. That is because of BELC, and because of the understanding and patience they showed both of us."

Chris Emond, CEO, shared, "We have an obligation to teach our children to stand up for what they believe is right. To do this, we need to give them a foundation that includes a safe place to be, positive adult mentors, and opportunities to try new things."

Proceeds from the Breakfast will support the programs and services that help local

youth achieve academic success, develop healthy lifestyles, build strong character and leadership skills, and provide working families with the support they need to succeed. This year, the Club added two new locations in the Lakes Region by opening the new Sara M. Allen Lakes Region Child Care Services site located at the Gale School in Belmont and assuming management of Plymouth State University's former Center for Young Children and Families, now the Early Care and Education Center at Plymouth State University.

Chris Kelly of the Platinum Group at Re/Max Bayside closed out the event explaining how attendees could help by becoming members of the Champions for Kids Society and pledging \$1,000 or more for the next five years. This year's event raised a record-setting \$503,710 in gifts and pledges. Over the next several years, the funds will offer sustainability for the Club's programs, shore up the Club's food program among rising costs and decreasing federal funding, and strengthen staffing to better care for

those kids and families who need it most.

About Boys & Girls Clubs of Central and Northern New Hampshire

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Lakes Region includes Lakes Region Child Care Services and is a regional division of the parent organization Boys & Girls Clubs of Central and Northern New Hampshire. In the Lakes Re-

gion alone, BGCCNH serves nearly 800 youth and provides more than 89,000 meals and snacks at 9 locations: the Lakes Clubhouse in Laconia, Laconia Early Learning Center, River's Edge, Belmont Boys & Girls Club, Belmont Early Learning Center, Sara M. Allen, Holderness Boys & Girls Club, Winnisquam Camp, and the early education center at Plymouth State.

Bears run in crowded field at Hopkinton Fairgrounds

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING
Sports Editor

HOPKINTON — The Winnisquam boys finished 39th overall in a huge field at the Hopkinton Cross Country Festival on Saturday at the Hopkinton Fairgrounds.

In a field of more than 300 runners, Cullen Desrochers led the Bears in the boys' varsity race in 18:22 for 138th place. Lazar Arbutina was 200th overall in 19:13, Carter Lloyd was 247th in 20:11 and Owen Bakis was 254th in 20:30. Tristan Honeman rounded out the scoring for Winnisquam with a time of 20:36 for 256th place. Lucas Durphey was 257th in 20:39 and Kellan Hilliker was 272nd in 21:26.

Eloise Abbott led the way for the Bear girls in the varsity race with a time of 22:33 for 136th place and Anna Guerra was 238th overall in 28:51.

In the JV boys' race, Ryan Courtney was 84th

in 19:56, Alexander Paquette was 105th in 20:11, Kyren Whitmore placed 135th in 20:56, Alexander Mauch was 231st in a time of 23:07, Luke Larrabee was 246th in 23:36, Grayson McSweeney placed 292nd in 25:00, Samuel Button placed 308th in 26:37, Andrew Paquette was 318th in 27:32 and Kamdyn Reagan finished in 319th place in 27:56.

Natalie Wolfe led the Bear girls in the JV race, finishing in 151st place in 28:52, Penelope McSweeney was 169th in 29:51, Ariana Maxwell finished in 187th place in 32:24 and Clara Sancho Yague was 205th in 38:22.

The Bears are scheduled to take part in the Capital Area Championships today, Oct. 15, at Merrimack Valley High School.

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

PSU soccer ID clinics set for Nov. 22

PLYMOUTH — The Plymouth State University men's and women's soccer programs have released the details of the annual fall Panther Soccer ID Clinic.

The half-day clinics are geared toward high school players aged 16-and-up with an interest in playing at the collegiate level. Both

clinics are scheduled for Sunday, Nov. 22, with the girls' clinic running from 9:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., and the boys' from 2:15 to 5:30 p.m. An optional, joint Admissions tour for both groups is scheduled for 1 to 2 p.m.

The Panther Soccer ID Clinics offer high school players the opportunity to train and

play in the Plymouth State environment while gaining insight into the college recruitment process. Participants will also learn what it takes to succeed physically, emotionally, technically, and tactically at the collegiate level. Attendees will receive a PSU soccer tee shirt and post-clinic access to

video footage from the two technical/tactical training sessions.

The clinics are run by head coaches Rob Wright and Sammy Blizzard Bogardus and their staffs and are limited to 28 participants and a maximum of four goalkeepers. The registration fee is \$85, and a multi-child discount is available.

Registration links, waiver forms, and the camp brochure can be found on the department website at athletics.plymouth.edu/camps.

PSU softball hosting fall and winter clinics

PLYMOUTH — The Plymouth State University softball program will host its annual pitching, hitting and defensive clinics this fall and winter, head coach Mike Bernier announced on Thursday.

The fall pitching clinics are scheduled for Nov. 8, Nov. 15, and Dec. 6 at the Bank of New Hampshire Field House at ALLWell North. Open to players in grades 6-12 of varying ability levels, the sessions will cover proper warm-up drills, pitch grips, and the mental approach to pitching.

Clinics run from 2 to 4 p.m., with on-site registration beginning at 1 p.m. Pitchers should bring a personal catcher. The cost is \$75 per session, with discounted rates available for athletes who register for multiple sessions. Indoor footwear is required.

The hitting and defense clinics will be held Jan. 31, Feb. 14, and Feb. 21 also at the Bank of New Hampshire Field House. Designed for students in grades 6-12, the sessions will focus on throwing, fielding,

hitting, and baserunning, with instruction provided by PSU coaches and players. Clinics run from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with on-site registration opening at 10:15 a.m. The cost is \$80 per clinic, with discounts available for multiple sessions. Participants should bring gloves, bats, sneakers, and water.

For more information and links to the mandatory online registration and waiver forms, please visit athletics.plymouth.edu/camps.

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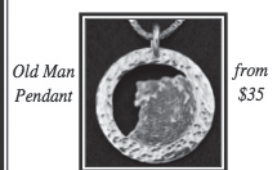
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Opinion

Letter submission policy

Letters to the Editor must include the author’s name, address, and a daytime phone number for purposes of verification in order to be considered for publication. Only the author’s name and the town in which they reside will be published. Letters submitted without all of the required information will not be accepted.

It is the sole prerogative of the Editor to determine whether a submission satisfies our requirements and decency standards, and any submission may be rejected at any time for any reason he or she might deem appropriate.

Victories beyond the score board matter too

In high school athletics, success is usually measured in wins and losses, championships and individual accomplishments. Scoreboards tell one story, but they rarely tell the whole story. Sometimes, the most meaningful victories have little to do with the final score. That is what makes the recent recognition of Winnisquam Regional High School particularly worthy of celebration.

At the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association’s annual meeting Sept. 21, Winnisquam was named the Division III runner-up for the NHIAA Sportsmanship Award. The honor, determined by athletic directors throughout the division with input from their coaches, recognizes something that cannot be measured by statistics: character. For the student-athletes, coaches, families and supporters who represent Winnisquam, this recognition should be a source of considerable pride.

There is something especially meaningful about an award that comes from one’s peers. The athletic directors and coaches casting those votes are the people who see Winnisquam teams compete, who interact with their coaches and who witness how players and spectators conduct themselves when emotions run high. Their recognition suggests that the Bears have made a positive impression well beyond their home fields and gymnasium.

Athletic Director Ian Snowdeal credited the school’s coaches with establishing an example of respect and integrity that carries through to student-athletes and fans. That observation gets to the heart of what high school sports should accomplish.

A good coach teaches far more than how to execute a play, improve a serve or defend a goal. Coaches help young people understand accountability, perseverance, teamwork and the importance of treating others with dignity.

Those lessons are not always easy to teach, particularly when a championship is on the line or a disappointing loss brings frustration. Yet those are precisely the moments when sportsmanship matters most.

Anyone can shake hands after an easy victory. Showing grace after a heartbreaking defeat requires considerably more maturity. Likewise, respecting an official’s decision when it goes against your team, encouraging a struggling teammate or acknowledging an opponent’s outstanding performance demonstrates a kind of strength that extends well beyond athletics. These qualities matter because the vast majority of high school athletes will not go on to play professionally. Their athletic careers may end with graduation, but the habits they develop through competition will accompany them into college, the workplace and their communities.

The young person who learns to accept criticism constructively may become a better employee. The athlete who learns to put the team’s interests ahead of personal recognition may become a stronger community leader. The student who learns to respect an opponent may carry that same respect into disagreements later in life. That is the lasting value of school athletics.

The recognition also serves as a reminder that sportsmanship is not solely the responsibility of those wearing uniforms. Parents and spectators have an important role in establishing the atmosphere surrounding high school competition. Their conduct from the sidelines and bleachers can reinforce the values coaches work to instill, or undermine them. Young athletes notice how adults respond to controversial calls, disappointing performances and opposing teams. When adults demonstrate patience, encouragement and respect, they provide lessons every bit as influential as those delivered during practice.

For communities such as Tilton, Northfield and Sanbornton, school athletics offer something else of value: a shared source of identity and pride. The Bears represent more than an individual school. They represent the families, neighbors and communities that support them.

The sportsmanship banner now hanging in the Winnisquam Regional High School gymnasium is therefore more than another athletic decoration. It represents a standard worth maintaining and an example future generations of athletes can strive to follow.

As the fall sports season approaches its conclusion, there will be more opportunities to cheer for Winnisquam’s teams, celebrate senior athletes and recognize the dedication required to compete. There will be victories worth remembering and losses that sting. Both are part of sports. But long after the scores have been forgotten, the reputation these young athletes establish through their conduct can endure.

Congratulations to Winnisquam’s coaches, student-athletes, families and supporters for demonstrating that winning with class, and losing with dignity, are accomplishments worthy of recognition.

Championship banners celebrate what a team achieved during a season. A sportsmanship banner celebrates the kind of people a school is helping its students become. And that may be the greater victory.



COURTESY PHOTO
The Runaway Pumpkin WOW Trail fundraiser returns to Laconia on Oct. 24! Participants who register by Oct. 10 will receive a long-sleeved technical shirt sponsored by MVSB. The annual race and community event helps raise funds to support the maintenance and continued improvement of the WOW Trail. Go to www.wowtrail.org/runawaypumpkin to learn more and to register. Pictured, from left, are Jennifer Beetle, Runaway Pumpkin Event Director; Susan Dagostino, MVSB Branch & Business Development Officer; Jamie Poiré, Runaway Pumpkin Race Director; and Samantha LeClair, MVSB Business Development Officer.

The fine art of knowing when to leave

There comes a point in a man’s life when he begins to appreciate the difference between being invited somewhere and being expected to stay until the furniture is put away.

I have reached that point.

Don’t misunderstand me. I enjoy a good gathering. I like seeing old friends, catching up with neighbors and standing around a table of food pretending I’m only going to have one more cracker with cheese.

But somewhere around my 60th birthday, I developed a new appreciation for getting home before the evening news.

My wife, who has considerably more social stamina than I do, finds this amusing. We can be at a perfectly pleasant gathering, surrounded by perfectly pleasant people, and I’ll begin checking my watch at approximately the same time the conversation turns to somebody’s upcoming kitchen renovation.

It’s not that I’m bored. I’m simply aware that my favorite chair is sitting empty at home, and I hate to disappoint it.

The problem, of course, is leaving.

In New Hampshire, leaving someone’s house isn’t a single action. It’s a complicated social ritual that can take longer than the visit itself.

First, you announce that you should probably get going.

Nobody takes this seriously.

Someone offers another cup of coffee. Somebody else remembers a story they meant to tell you. Before you know it, you’re discussing a man from three towns over who once backed a snowmobile through a garage door.

Twenty minutes later, you stand up.

This is considered a significant development, although it doesn’t necessarily mean you’re any closer to leaving.

You say something like, “Well, we really ought to be heading out.”

Your host responds, “No rush.”

And there you stand, coat in hand, while an entirely new conversation begins.

Eventually, you make it to the front door.

This is where things become dangerous.

The front door is where people remember the important stuff. Somebody asks how your son is doing. Somebody mentions a mutual acquaintance. Your wife remembers that she wanted to ask about a recipe.

You put your coat on.

Then you take it off because the house is warm and apparently you’re going to be there another half-hour.

I’ve participated in departures that required three separate handshakes, two hugs, a discussion about the weather and a detailed explanation of which road we planned to take home.

And this is before anybody starts talking in the driveway.

The driveway goodbye is a New England institution.

It can happen in January, with the temperature hovering around 12 degrees, and otherwise sensible adults will stand beside a running automobile discussing whether the town should replace the old bridge.

Meanwhile, the person sitting in the passenger seat is slowly turning into a frozen vegetable.

I’ve been that person.

I’ve also been the fellow standing outside the car, enthusiastically continuing a conversation while my wife gives me increasingly meaningful looks through the windshield.

Marriage teaches you many things. One of them

KIND HEARTS, COLD WINTERS By CHIPPY

is that a woman can communicate the phrase “Get in

this car immediately” using nothing but her eyebrows.

After 30 years, I can recognize that expression from 40 feet away.

Still, there’s something rather wonderful about the way people linger.

We live in a world where everything seems to be measured in minutes. We schedule appointments, rush through errands and complain when a traffic light stays red a few seconds longer than expected.

Yet put a few old friends together on a porch or in somebody’s kitchen, and suddenly nobody seems particularly concerned about the clock.

The conversation wanders. Stories get repeated. Someone remembers a person nobody has mentioned in 15 years, and for a few minutes, that person is part of the gathering again.

I’ve noticed that the best conversations often happen after everybody has officially agreed the evening is over.

The formal visiting is finished. Nobody feels obligated to entertain anybody. People relax, and the talk becomes a little more genuine.

That’s when somebody shares a worry, recalls an old kindness or says something they’ve been carrying around for a while.

Sometimes, those extra 20 minutes turn out to be the most important part of the evening.

I was reminded of that recently when we visited some friends. We’d had a lovely time, and I’d already begun mentally planning the remainder of my evening.

A comfortable chair. Something mindless

on television. Perhaps a bowl of ice cream if I could convince myself it was a reasonable nutritional decision.

We said our goodbyes. Then we said them again.

Finally, standing near the door, our host mentioned an old friend we hadn’t seen in years. That led to a story about a summer long ago, which led to another memory, and before long all four of us were laughing so hard that nobody could finish a sentence. I forgot about the television. I even forgot about the ice cream.

For a while, we were younger people again, remembering the sorts of things that seem insignificant when they happen but somehow grow more precious with time.

When we finally made it to the car, my wife looked over at me.

“See?” she said. “Aren’t you glad we stayed?”

I had to admit that I was.

Of course, admitting your wife is right is something a married man should do regularly, even if he occasionally requires a little encouragement.

These days, I still appreciate a quiet evening at home. I still believe there’s nothing wrong with leaving a party before the last folding chair has been stacked. But I’m trying not to be quite so quick to reach for my coat. Because the older I get, the more I realize that time spent with good people is rarely time wasted.

And someday, when we’re remembering the friends we’ve known and the evenings we’ve shared, I doubt we’ll regret the extra half-hour spent talking in somebody’s driveway.

Although I reserve the right to reconsider that philosophy when it’s 12 degrees outside. Especially if I’m the one sitting in the passenger seat.



Winnisquam Echo

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All-new Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland tour stops in Laconia Nov. 22

LACONIA — TCG Entertainment, the leading producer of live entertainment, announces its all-new Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland tour across the U.S. and Canada. A must-see holiday event and beloved tradition for families everywhere, Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland visits the Colonial Theatre on Sunday, Nov. 22. Tickets are on sale now at www.CirqueMusica.com. <https://www.etix.com/ticket/p/39284770/cirque-musica-holiday-wonderland-laconia-colonial-theatre>

This holiday season, Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland 2026 invites audiences into a luminous world where time bends and wonder takes over. When our heroes are swept into an enchanting winter realm, they begin to rediscover something unexpected—the magic, curiosity and joy they thought they had outgrown.

Reimagined for 2026, this all-new production features your favorite holiday music and a bold line-up of breathtaking circus acts. From gravity-defying aerialists to edge-of-your-seat acrobatics, each moment is crafted to feel more dreamlike and emotionally resonant than ever before. It's a fresh take on a beloved tradition and unlike anything audiences have seen from Cirque Musica in its 17-year history.

Touring cities across North America, the production brings together elite performers from around the globe to create a visually stunning and musically rich holiday experience for audiences of all ages. In select markets, guests can enhance their visit with a VIP experience, offering exclu-



sive behind-the-scenes access, cast meet-and-greets and interactive photo opportunities.

“We wanted this year’s production to feel transportive in a completely new way—something that doesn’t just celebrate the holidays but makes audiences feel like they’ve stepped inside them,” said Stephen Cook, President of TCG Entertainment and Producer of Cirque Musica.

Cirque Musica Holiday Wonderland is an unforgettable experience for the entire family to enjoy – a world-class circus experience infused with the holiday classics we all love. Experience the magic live at the Colonial Theatre on Sunday, Nov. 22—and step into a holiday world you won’t want to leave. For more information on ticketing, visit www.CirqueMusica.com.

About Cirque Musica

Cirque Musica is one of the top cirque-style shows in the industry. Since its inception in 2010, the world-renowned cast has performed feats of grace, skill, and strength to audience members worldwide. The visually stunning masterpiece of artistic interpretations combines mesmerizing acrobats, aerialists and daredevil athleticism with the greatest music of all time. Current and past produc-

tions include Cirque Musica Symphonic, Cirque Musica Querida-The Official Cele-

bration of Juan Grabiél, Heroes and Villains, and more, Cirque Musica shows are ground-breaking productions guaranteed to thrill and captivate audiences of all

performance uniquely bridges the theatrical origins of the material with the raw power of a live rock concert, delivering a frontman presence that is both electrifying and deeply authentic.

“The only band endorsed by me and Jim Steinman,” Meat Loaf said of this tribute to his musical legacy. “Do not miss this! This is the closest you could possibly get... This is not a tribute band, but Meat’s incredible, actual band and this band rocks!” raves Sir Brian May of Queen. “Andrew is phenomenal, the definitive embodiment of the rock-and-roll spirit,” says Jim Steinman.



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ground-breaking productions guaranteed to thrill and captivate audiences of all

tain 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 Street, Laconia, NH

03246.www.coloniallaconia.com

About Spectacle Live
Founded in 2012, Spectacle Live offers venue operations, booking, programming, marketing, and production services across New England from offices in Lexington, MA, Lowell, MA, and Laconia, NH. 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 atplally@spectaclelive.com or 617-531-1257. www.spectaclelive.com



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Squirrel Nut Zippers keep 30th anniversary celebration going with festive Christmas Caravan Tour

LACONIA — Following a triumphant year celebrating the 30th anniversary of their platinum-certified breakthrough album *Hot*, the Squirrel Nut Zippers have announced that they are bringing the party into the holiday season with the return of their acclaimed Christmas Caravan Tour, a joyous musical celebration that has become one of America's most cherished and distinctive holiday traditions.

Tickets for Squirrel Nut Zippers Christmas Caravan Tour at the Colonial Theatre of Laconia on Thursday, Dec. 17 at 7:30 p.m. are on sale now at ColonialLaconia.com or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Blending the warmth of Christmas classics with the infectious energy of New



Orleans jazz, vintage swing, folk traditions, blues, and

Americana, the Christmas Caravan transforms venues into festive wonderlands where audiences are transported to a bygone era filled with revelry, nostalgia, and holiday cheer.

For more than two decades, the Christmas Caravan Tour has captivated audiences nationwide with its unique mix of seasonal favorites, fan-loved originals from their hit album *Christmas Caravan*, which has sold more than 250,000 copies and reached #12 on

the Billboard Holiday Albums chart, and the band's signature blend of musical styles. Equal parts holiday concert, vaudeville revue, and vintage variety show, the performance delivers an unforgettable evening filled with dazzling musicianship, spirited sing-alongs, heartwarming moments, and plenty of surprises.

"The Christmas Caravan Tour has always been about creating a sense of wonder and community," said Jimbo Mathus, frontman and

co-founder of the Squirrel Nut Zippers. "The holidays are one of the few times when people slow down long enough to gather and share music. We wanted to create something that feels timeless—a celebration of old-world Christmas traditions, American roots music, and the joy of bringing people together. Every year the audience becomes part of the show, and that's what makes it so special."

This year's Christmas Caravan promises an eve-

ning of musical storytelling and festive celebration. Whether performing a swinging rendition of a Christmas classic, a New Orleans-inspired holiday romp, or one of their signature hits, the Squirrel Nut Zippers create a concert experience that feels equally at home beneath twinkling Christmas lights and inside a lively Prohibition-era speakeasy.

The tour follows the band's highly successful 30th anniversary celebration of *Hot*, the landmark album that helped spark the swing revival of the 1990s and remains one of the era's most influential recordings with. Certified platinum and featuring the hit single "Hell," *Hot* introduced millions of listeners to the band's inventive fusion of jazz, swing, blues, folk, and Southern roots music and continues to resonate with new audiences with the single recently featured in hit TV series like *Wednesday* (2025) and *Lucifer* (2021).

As the band commemorates three decades of *Hot*, the Christmas Caravan serves as both a holiday celebration and a testament to the enduring appeal of one of America's most original musical groups.

Learn to make felted pumpkins with Hannah Gage



MEREDITH — Join us at the Meredith Fine Craft Gallery on Saturday, Oct. 24 from 2 – 4 p.m. for a Felted Pumpkins class with juried artist Hannah Gage.

In this beginner-friendly class, fiber artist Hannah Gage will guide students through the process of creating a small and simple pumpkin using needle felting techniques. These fuzzy pumpkin figures make for great fall decorations with a personal handmade touch.

All materials, including wool and felting tools, will be provided for use during the workshop. Students will complete a finished felted piece that can be framed later. No prior experience is necessary—just an interest in learning a new fiber art technique. Students should bring water, and a snack if desired.

Tuition is \$40 per student, with a \$25 materials fee paid cash or check to the instructor on the day of class.

Space is limited, and pre-registration is required.

Those who wish to take the class must sign up by Wednesday, Oct. 21.

To register for this workshop, call the Meredith Fine Craft Gallery at (603) 279-7920 or visit the Gallery at 279 Daniel Webster Highway in Meredith.

For more details, visit our Web site at <http://meredith.nhcrafts.org/classes/> and our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/nhcraft/>.

The Meredith Fine Craft Gallery is located at 279 DW Highway, Meredith, and is dedicated to the education and support of New Hampshire's fine craft tradition since 1932.

SOCCER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

for the Raiders and Bronson Glines went the other way for a bid that was saved by Pacetti.

With 29:23 to go in the first half, Glines delivered the go-ahead goal for the Raiders to make it 2-1. Matthews sent a nice ball up to Glines for a bid with Jon Wright and Hatfield making a solid defensive stand. Perrault connected with Abbott for a chance that Monasky made a diving save on and Smith went the other way for a chance that Pacetti came out to clear away. Pacetti stopped another Belmont chance from Matthews while Perrault had a direct kick going the other way.

Abbott had a solid defensive stand on a chance from Kyle Waldron and Noah Bassett made a good stop on a run from Smith. Zayn Morris sent a shot over the net for Belmont and Abbott made a run that was stopped by Geoffrey in the defensive backfield. Winnisquam had a corner kick but could not convert and St. Hilaire had a chance denied by Monasky. Matthews made a nice defensive stand and Abbott had a run stopped by Geoffrey, with Winnisquam getting another corner kick chance. Kaito Tamaru got in close on a throw-in for the Bears, but Monasky made the save and the defense cleared the ball. Smith headed a chance on net that Pacetti saved and Belmont had a corner that they could not convert.

Perrault just missed connecting with Abbott on a bid and Perrault made a run into the zone that led to another Bear corner kick. Abbott had a bid denied by Monasky and Winnisquam came back with a couple of corners, with Monasky saving a bid from Bassett and Perrault sending a shot high while Wyatt Bamford had a good clear on the second kick for the Raiders. Perrault sent a direct kick over



JOSHUA SPAULDING

Brady Nelson goes after the ball during his team's game with Belmont last Tuesday.



JOSHUA SPAULDING

Belmont goalie Ryan Monasky dives to make a save during action last Tuesday against Winnisquam.

the net and the game went to the half with the Raiders up 2-1.

Hatfield had a good defensive stop for Winnisquam to start the second half and Durand had a run for the Raiders. Belmont had a corner kick that David Mahoney sent over the top of the net and Pacetti stopped a bid from Evan Martinez. Perrault sent a direct kick wide of the net and Waldron just missed connecting with Bamford going the other direction. St. Hilaire made a defensive stop on Smith and Durand and Bassett had a strong defensive play on Smith while Pacetti handled a shot from Glines.

Winnisquam had a cor-

ner kick chance but could not convert and Mahoney had a chance going the other way that went wide. Abbott made a run for the Bears that Sam Binder was able to turn back and both Simon Ahlgren and Bassett had good clears for the Bears. Perrault had a direct kick go wide of the net and the Bears had a corner that couldn't connect.

Abbott sent a ball in to St. Hilaire, who saw his shot go wide of the net and Glines went the other way with a chance that went high. Joey Thomas had a shot for the Raiders that Pacetti stopped and Abbott sent a shot wide of the net.

With about two minutes

to play in the game, the Bears were able to score off a throw-in to pull even at two as the ball bounced around in front of the net, hit a few different bodies and went into the net. The Bears turned away a late Belmont corner kick to salvage the 2-2 tie.

The two teams will play again on Tuesday, Oct. 20, at Belmont at 3:30 p.m.

Winnisquam will also be hosting Conant on Friday, Oct. 16, and Belmont will be hosting Inter-Lakes on Friday, Oct. 16, at 3:30 p.m.

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

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Bears can't keep up with strong Gilford attack



JOSHUA SPAULDING

Gilford's Grace Southworth looks to get the ball past Winnisquam goaltender Olivia Power in action last Wednesday in Tilton.

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING

Sports Editor

TILTON — Sometimes when David takes on Goliath, Goliath wins. Such was the case on Wednesday, Oct. 7, when the powerful Gilford field hockey team took care of business against host Winnisquam and returned home with the 14-0 win.

Gilford's Catherine Fay had an early defensive stop before the Golden Eagles went on the attack, with Gracie Makely and Kaylin Liesner making solid defensive stops for the Bears on runs from Grace Southworth and Abi Lyman while Riley Coutts also had a strong centering pass for the Golden Eagles.

Gilford struck with 11 minutes to go in the first half, as Coutts found the back of the net for the 1-0 lead. Southworth had a shot wide of the net and Mylie Keith sent a nice ball up the field for the Bears.

With 8:41 to go in the first quarter, Fay ripped a shot to the back of the net from the top of the circle for the 2-0 lead

and with 7:03 to go, Fay sent the ball into the circle and Southworth tipped it past Winnisquam goalie Olivia Power for the 3-0 lead. Southworth made another run that was stopped by Addison Todt for the Bears and Fay sent another ball in to Coutts that went wide of the net. Emma Legro sent a couple of balls wide of the net for Gilford and Makely had a good clear for the Bears.

Gilford upped the lead to 4-0 with 3:01 to go in the first, as Southworth put home a rebound of a Power save. Keith had a long ball through the circle for the Bears and Makely made a good defensive stop on Coutts and Power stopped a Southworth shot. Todt had a clear late and Gilford had the 4-0 lead after one quarter.

Adi Baron had a good run to start the second for Gilford with Makely making the defensive stop and Keith sent a good ball up to Brooke Gammon, with Susanna Tilley making a solid defensive stop. Layla

Gloddy had a nice defensive stop for Winnisquam and Power stopped a shot from Southworth.

Gilford upped the lead to 5-0 on a corner with Kierra Walker ripping a shot past Power for the 5-0 lead with 12:27 to go. Walker and Ady Lemien had shots denied by Power and Keith had a nice clear. Gammon just missed connecting with Iris Vieira on a bid that Addi Hodsdon cleared for Gilford while Keith also had a good defensive chance. Lemien and Coutts connected on a bid that went wide and Walker sent a ball wide on a corner chance. Power turned away a bid from Lyman and Gilford had another corner, with Tilley sending the ball in to Southworth, who's bid went wide.

Power denied a Coutts chance and Fay made a run that was stopped by Keith's defense while Vieira went the other way with a bid that Tilley turned away. Gilford upped the lead to 6-0 with 2:42 to go, as Coutts had a bid denied by Power and Baron was



JOSHUA SPAULDING

Winnisquam's Brooke Gammon controls the ball during action against Gilford last week.

there to put the ball in the net for the 6-0 lead.

The Golden Eagles made it 7-0 just before halftime with a shot from Lyman that was tipped into the net by Coutts for the 7-0 half-time lead.

Gilford scored just 30 seconds into the second half, with Southworth finishing off a feed from Coutts for the 8-0 lead. Coutts made another run that Gloddy stopped and Gloddy had another good clear while Vieira made a run the other way that was stopped by Gilford goalie Addalyn Montminy. Winnisquam had a corner chance that Vieira sent wide of the net and Baron had a shot denied by Power.

Gilford upped the lead to 9-0 with 9:45 to go with Coutts scoring the ninth goal of the game. GLoddy had

another defensive stop and Power handled a bid from Baron before Gilford scored its 10th goal with 7:40 to go, as Tilley sent a nice ball in to Coutts who finished it off. Baron and Coutts had chances denied by Power and Liesner had a good defensive stop.

Southworth scored with 6:21 to go to make it 11-0 and Coutts sent another shot wide of the net. Gammon sent a nice ball up to Vieira and Southworth came back with a shot that Power stopped. Baron and Southworth got in close for a bid that Power handled and Gloddy made a solid stop on a Lemien run. Gilford had a corner chance, with Lyman's shot denied by Power and Baron's chance at the rebound was also stopped.

With 1:40 to go in

the third quarter, Legro scored for the 12-0 lead and with 50 seconds to go, Coutts sent a nice ball in to Baron, who found Legro for her second goal and the 13-0 lead after three. The Golden Eagles added one more goal in the fourth for the 14-0 final score.

Gilford wraps up the regular season on Friday, Oct. 16, at home against Monadnock at 4 p.m. while the Bears wrapped up their season after deadline.

The Division III tournament starts on Thursday, Oct. 22, at the home of the higher seed.

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

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Winni Playhouse presents a musical for the whole family!

MEREDITH — The stage of the Winnepesaukee Playhouse will be transformed into an Italian village square when the children’s musical, “The Commedia Pinocchio: An A Capella Musical” is presented on Oct. 17 and 24-25. The Playhouse’s Professional Theatre for Young Audiences program is now in its fourth year, once again providing a high-quality production of a beloved children’s story for audiences of



CLUES ACROSS

1. Nocturnal rodent

5. Requesting

11. Give temporarily

12. Frivolousness

16. Military arm

17. “Westworld” actor Harris

18. Persian Gulf port city

19. Air hostesses

24. Partner to “Pa”

25. Percussion instrument

26. Raincoats

27. Lower the light

28. Asian mountain range

29. Every one of two or more

30. Lack of difficulty

31. A public announcement of a proposed marriage

33. Reduces in size

34. Make an impact
38. Serviceman

39. A French river

40. Prehistoric people

43. Messenger ribonucleic acid

44. “Layla” singer Clapton

45. Ancient Greek sophist

49. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)

50. “Top Gun: Maverick” actor Powell

51. A way to disentangle

53. Atomic #93

54. Manifesting approval

56. Indigo bush

58. Larry and Curly’s pal

59. Off-Broadway theater award

60. Fencers

63. Masses of fish eggs

64. Passerine birds

65. Arrange systematically

CLUES DOWN

1. Colorless part of blood

2. Of a main artery

3. Photog’s tool

4. Blues Traveler hit “But ___”

5. Grew older

6. Not the leader

7. ___ Lang: country singer

8. A driver’s license is one

9. Nests of pheasants

10. Antelopes

13. One quintillion bytes

14. Japanese lute

15. A type of cat

20. It cools your home

21. Dorm official

22. Pouches

23. German trigraph

27. Form of Persian

29. ___ route

30. Upper body part

31. Bridge building degree

32. Indicates position
33. Political action committee

34. Edible nuts

35. Front part of a quadruped

36. Locate

37. Geological time

38. Of I

40. Northern Utah city

41. They work in the trenches

42. Hammer is one

44. Tall deciduous tree

45. Performers

46. Slang for mistake

47. More open

48. Most slick

50. Provokes

51. Home of the NCAA’s Flyers

52. Sodium

54. Large fish of the mackerel family

55. Not one

57. ___ and behold

61. Atomic #21

62. “The Great Lakes State”

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all ages.

In this charming musical, a troupe of classic Italian commedia dell’arte performers descends upon a village square, armed with only a trunk full of rudimentary costumes and props. Imagination takes flight as they begin to tell the tale of the woodcarver Geppetto, the wise cricket, the naughty boys who transform into donkeys, and all of the adventures you expect from the story of a special puppet who yearns to be a real boy.

The musical is suitable for a family audience of all ages as younger children will be captivated by the familiar characters in the “Pinocchio” story while older children and adults will appreciate the inventiveness of the travelling commedia troupe. Developed in Italy during the 1500s, commedia dell’arte became one of Europe’s most influential theatrical traditions. Professional companies traveled from place to place performing for audiences in public squares, marketplaces, courts, and theatres. They didn’t need elaborate scenery to create a world. With masks, costumes, props, music, physical comedy, and a great deal of imagination, a company of actors could turn almost anywhere into a stage.

Director Cory Lawson says, “Commedia dell’arte embraces silliness. It embraces the clown, the ridiculous, the unexpected, and the wonderful possibility that something might go completely wrong. It invites actors to play with one another and, just as importantly, to play with the audience. There is no fourth wall here. Nothing is hidden.

We share the magic with you and invite you in on the joke.”

The production welcomes back Robert Hooghkirk and Grace Gilbert, who were featured in last year’s production of “Winnie-the-Pooh.” They are joined by Emmie Shoemake Wright, Gio Coppola, and Robert Sharkey who are all making their Playhouse debuts. Miles Messier is the music director, and Margaret Fair provides the choreography.

Performances will take place on Oct. 17 and 24 at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. and Oct. 25 at 1 p.m. The production is generously sponsored by R&D Paving and Lakes Region Community College. Tickets are available online at www.winnepesaukeeplayhouse.org or over the phone at (603) 279-0333.

Deadline nearing for Greater Lakes Region Children’s Fund grant requests

LACONIA – The Greater Lakes Region Children’s Fund is accepting applications for funding until Oct. 15. Details and an online application are available at childrensfundnh.org.

Local nonprofit organizations that provide support to local children and their families in need are encouraged to apply for funding if they:

- Hold tax-exempt status under Section 501(c) 3 of the Internal Revenue Code and/or public agency status.
- Serve Greater Lakes Region’s children in need.
- Have a proven history of providing value to the children in the region.

Numerous fundraising events in the Lakes Region throughout the year support the Greater Lakes Region Children’s Fund, including a four-day signature event,

the Children’s Auction, every December.

In the past four decades, the organization has distributed more than \$10 million to over 150 nonprofits that serve low-income families and children in the Lakes Region.

For more information on how to apply and the kinds of organizations funded, visit childrensauction.org.

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Guest vocalist Catherine Martinez joins LRSO for holiday Pops concert

LACONIA — The Colonial Theatre of Laconia will present Lakes Region Symphony Orchestra Presents Holiday Pops! with Guest Artist Catherine Martinez on Saturday, Dec. 5, at 7 p.m. Tickets to the show are on sale now at ColonialLaconia.com or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Put on your favorite Christmas sweater, gather your loved ones, and come experience the wonder and joy of the season with Lakes Region Symphony Orchestra and special guest vocalist Catherine Martinez.

Located in beautiful Meredith New Hampshire, the Lakes Region Symphony Orchestra is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides the best classical music performances for central New Hampshire during the fall, winter, and spring. Under the baton of Conductor and Music Director Benjamin Greene, LRSO performs a variety of



Catherine Martinez

COURTESY PHOTO

music ranging from the classics of Beethoven and Mozart to popular music including the sounds of Broadway, movies, and orchestral Pops classics.

The Colonial Theatre of Laconia

The original owner, 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 Street, Laconia, NH 03246. www.coloniallaconia.com

Spectacle Live

Spectacle Live’s mission is to create connections that make exceptional live experiences happen. Founded in 2012 and headquartered in Chelmsford,

Massachusetts, Spectacle Live is a live event and venue management company specializing in performing arts centers across the Northeast. The company partners with municipalities and arts organizations throughout New England to provide comprehensive services, including venue operations, marketing and promotion, booking and talent buying, ticketing, food and beverage management, technical production, and consulting. Spectacle Live currently works with more than a dozen venues across Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, presenting a diverse range of events from concerts and comedy to theater and family entertainment. For more information, visit www.spectaclelive.com or contact Pete Lally at atlally@spectaclelive.com or 617-531-1257.

Celebrate an Irish Christmas at the Colonial



LACONIA — The Colonial Theatre of Laconia will present Irish Christmas in America on Sunday, Dec. 20, at 5 p.m. Tickets to the show are on sale now at ColonialLaconia.com or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Celebrating its 21st year, popular holiday show “Irish Christmas in America” brings a

fascinating performance of music, song, dance, and stories of seasonal Irish traditions. Produced by Sligo fiddler Oisín Mac Diarmada, the long-running show features top Irish music, song and dance in an engaging performance rich in humor and boundless energy.

The holiday show

was first conceived in 2005 with past tours featuring such stellar guest vocalists as Niamh Farrell, Séamus & Méabh Begley, Teresa Horgan, Lumiere. Mac Diarmada enthuses about the program as a way to bring traditional and often unknown Irish customs to the States. “One of the most heartfelt themes of

Irish Christmas is emigration,” says Mac Diarmada. “Music was a way that people stayed close to home.”

A sparkling tradition among holiday events, Irish Christmas in America is a special show to see this season. For more information, visit irishchristmas.com.

Free Meredith Publisher’s Crawl invites community to help shape local news

MEREDITH — What do you wish local news covered more often? Where do you turn for information about your community? The Laconia Daily Sun and Granite State News Collaborative want to hear from you.

The two organizations will host a free Publisher’s Crawl on Thursday, Oct. 15, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. at Twin Barns Brewing Company in Meredith. The evening includes complimentary food, a cash bar, prizes and small-group conversations with local news professionals and fellow community members.

Part of the statewide Publisher’s Crawl series the gathering gives people a chance to talk about the issues that matter to them, the information they have trouble finding and what they would like to see from local news organizations.

Everyone is welcome, including people who rarely read, watch or listen to local news.

Participants do not need to live in Meredith, and no preparation is needed. Organizers encourage attendees to bring a friend or neighbor whose perspective local newsrooms might otherwise miss.

These conversations are already making a difference. News organizations participating in earlier Crawls have made changes to local coverage in Manchester, Nashua, Concord and Keene based on community feedback, with additional ideas being explored.

Admission is free, but registration is required because space is limited. Register at <https://bit.ly/PucrawlMeredith>.

The Granite State News Collaborative brings together news, education and community partners across New Hampshire to expand local reporting, share resources and strengthen the sustainability of local journalism.

Colonial to host Irish Winter Solstice celebration

LACONIA — The Colonial Theatre of Laconia will present Luna-sa: Irish Winter Solstice Celebration on Friday, Dec. 4, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets to the show are on sale now at ColonialLaconia.com or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Named for an ancient Celtic harvest festival in honor of the Irish god Lugh, Lúnasa was formed in 1997 from members of some of the greatest Irish groups of the previous decade, an early review from Folk Roots magazine describing the band as an “Irish music dream team.” From the start, the band’s complex arrangements and unique sound

reshaped the boundaries of traditional music and energized audiences the world over. Critical acclaim followed, The Irish Echo describing the band as the “the hottest Irish acoustic band on the planet”; MOJO magazine named the band “the new gods of Irish music,” adding that “nobody since the Bothies has wielded such a thrilling rhythmic underlay.” Billboard raved that “anybody who listens can’t help but find them contagious.”

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, NH 03246. 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

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The Colonial welcomes Jimmy Dunn’s Comedy All-Stars Nov. 7

LACONIA — The Colonial Theatre of Laconia will present Jimmy Dunn’s Comedy All-Stars on Saturday, Nov. 7, at 7:30 p.m. Tickets to the show are on sale now at ColonialLaconia.com or by calling 1-800-657-8774.

Jimmy Dunn
Jimmy Dunn is a stand-up comedian and actor from Boston, who currently plays “Moose” on the reboot of the legendary sitcom FRASIER. He got his start in “show business” telling jokes in a bar in Gloucester, Mass., where he was paid in beer and fried clams. Since then, he’s gone on to perform at some of the world’s most prestigious comedy events, including the Late Show with David Letterman, “Conan,” Montreal’s International Just For Laughs Comedy Festival, and Denis Leary’s Comic’s Come Home in Boston. Dunn’s first major television role was as Sean McCarthy on the critical-

ly acclaimed CBS sitcom, “The McCarthys.” He’s also written on several television projects, including two episodes of “Loudermilk” that he co-wrote with Academy Award winner Peter Farrelly.

Will Noonan
Will was named “Boston’s Best Comedian” by The Improper Bostonian magazine, is sometimes known as “The Honda Guy” for his years-long job as a spokesman for Honda commercials on TV and radio all over New England, as well as for his fan-favorite role in the Netflix movie The Sleepover. He is well known for his internet presence. His social media accounts include notable followers like Barack Obama, Shane Gillis, Chris Fleming, Mark Normand, Gary Gulman, Joe Rogan, Jim Gaffigan, and Bert Kreischer. Noonan has been the opening act for Bill Burr, Dave Attell, Andrew Schulz, Jack Whitehall, Colin Jost,

Michael Che, Ari Shaffir, and many more. He has appeared on The Oddball Comedy Festival with Amy Schumer, Hannibal Buress, and Sarah Silverman, told a story on NPR’s “This American Life,” and was named Comedy Ambassador and Moment Maker by Micro-soft. He has appeared on MTV’s “Ridiculousness,” “Laughs” on FOX, “Gotham Comedy Live” on HULU, and his comedy is played often on Sirius XM.

Maya Manion
Maya Manion is a respected New England comedian, joke writer, and podcast guest known for her sharp wit and engaging performances. Manion grew up in Vermont and later moved to Rhode Island to pursue a career in comedy. She has been performing stand-up since 2006 and has become a staple in the New England comedy scene. Manion has been featured on Nick at Night’s Funniest Mom in America and was a run-

ner-up in Mohegan Sun’s Funniest Comic in New England. She is recognized for her clever, witty humor, often drawing on personal experiences and family dynamics.

Emily Ruskowski
Emily Ruskowski is a one-woman charm offensive. With a style that’s totally approachable and instantly impressive, Emily is equally comfortable diving into personal insecurities or workplace nonsense. With an irrepressibly cheerful demeanor, she commands attention and delivers stories loaded with punchline after punchline. Her comedy combines a quick mind, an infectious energy, and a totally unique eye for observation. She brings a genuine sense of fun to material that ranges from a career in social work to a passion for boy bands. Ruskowski has been featured in the Washington Post and Boston Globe, and has appeared on the popular 2 Dope Queens Podcast and Laughs TV on

Fox.

The Colonial Theatre of Laconia
The original owner, 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, NH 03246. www.colonial-laconia.com
Spectacle Live
Spectacle Live’s mission

is to create connections that make exceptional live experiences happen. Founded in 2012 and headquartered in Chelmsford, Massachusetts, Spectacle Live is a live event and venue management company specializing in performing arts centers across the Northeast. The company partners with municipalities and arts organizations throughout New England to provide comprehensive services, including venue operations, marketing and promotion, booking and talent buying, ticketing, food and beverage management, technical production, and consulting. Spectacle Live currently works with more than a dozen venues across Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island, presenting a diverse range of events from concerts and comedy to theater and family entertainment. For more information, visit www.spectaclelive.com or contact Pete Lally at plally@spectaclelive.com or 617-531-1257. www.spectaclelive.com





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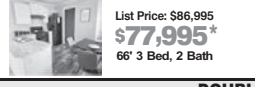
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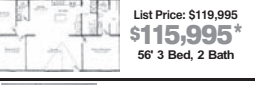


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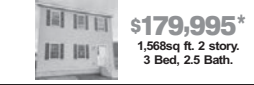
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Castle in the Clouds celebrates successful summer season, 20 years of Castle Preservation Society

MOULTONBOROUGH — Castle in the Clouds is celebrating another successful summer as they prepare to conclude their 2026 season on Oct. 25. Throughout the summer season, more than 40,000 visitors participated in more than 200 events and programs, including tours, guided hikes, theatrical performances, as well as classes and workshops led by local experts.

As the 2026 season marks the 20th anniversary of the Castle Preservation Society (CPS), Castle in the Clouds included special events and a gallery exhibit to recall the history of the National Historic Landmark Lucknow Estate. Hosted in collaboration with Foxx Run Farm in Ossipee, the Petting Zoo Weekend commemorated this milestone anniversary by paying homage to the original petting zoo featured on the estate when Richard Robie first opened



to the public in 1959. The gallery exhibit, “From Private Estate to Public Treasure: Lucknow after Thomas and Olive Plant,” features stories, photographs, and memorabilia of the various owners of the Lucknow Estate, including the Robie family, before

CPS assumed responsibility for managing the estate. The 2026 season provided a unique opportunity to reflect on the accomplishments of CPS over the past 20 years and plan for the future of Castle in the Clouds. To continue the mission of preserving and sharing the

buildings and landscape of the Lucknow Estate, CPS added two new members to their leadership team, Joseph Raboin as Director of Buildings & Grounds and Kate Armenio as Director of Business Operations. Both these roles are essential to providing the

unforgettable experience that Castle in the Clouds promises to visitors.

“Our staff and volunteers worked tirelessly this year to create a landmark season for the Castle and our visitors,” said Charles Clark, Executive Director of Castle in the Clouds. “Between our popular programs and events that are requested every year and the new events we organized to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Castle Preservation Society, we achieved our goal of delivering an unforgettable experience for everyone who visits onsite and online. As our new strategic planning continues, we are relying on the outstanding feedback we continue to receive from visitors, supporters and partners to ensure that Castle in the Clouds continues to be a must-stop destination in the Lakes Region.”

Although the 2026 season officially concludes at the end of the day on Oct. 24, Castle in the Clouds will continue to offer programs and events through the end of the year. Current calendar entries include Castle Trivia Night,

crafting workshops, holiday-themed programs, and the beloved Christmas at the Castle, which also features the exclusive Preview Party and Twilight Tours again this year. For more information about Castle in the Clouds and their upcoming events, visit castleinthecLOUDS.org.

About Castle in the Clouds

As the premier historical museum in the beautiful Lakes Region of New Hampshire, Castle in the Clouds provides each visitor with a look into the past while providing contemporary comforts to make every visit memorable. Originally called Lucknow, this breathtaking 6,300-acre property was developed in 1913 by Thomas G. Plant, a wealthy shoe manufacturer, to create a luxurious lifestyle with state-of-the-art amenities, beautiful handmade furnishings, and a large staff to run the estate. These days, visitors come from all around the world to tour the mansion and exhibit gallery, dine in the Carriage House Restaurant or Café in the Clouds, hike miles of hiking and walking trails maintained by partner organization the Lakes Region Conservation Trust, or enjoy one of our many programs and events. Operated by the Castle Preservation Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization celebrating its 20th anniversary in 2026, Castle in the Clouds is revered as a cultural and educational resource and listed on the National Register of Historic Places with national significance. Castle in the Clouds is also available as a fairytale wedding venue and versatile private event rental. For more information about Castle in the Clouds, visit castleinthecLOUDS.org.

GOLF

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

he continued. “It’s been pretty cool to watch.”

For their part, some of the seniors that have helped lead the resurgence over the last couple of years, also praised the work the coach has put in to make them all better.

“Coach Mattes has had a big impact on myself and the golf team for the last few years for always being a positive influence to all of us,” said team captain Jordan DeFrancesco. “He’s always lifting kids up after a bad day or congratulating us after a good day.

Coach always makes sure that all the kids leave every practice and match feeling supported and proud of themselves,” he continued.

“Coach Mattes impacted me and this golf team in so many ways,” noted senior Max Ryder. “He keeps the sport light and fun at the same time having competitive mini games to help us as golfers.”

“Over the last few years, Coach Mattes has been the driving force and heartbeat of our golf team,” noted senior Jasper Sottak. “His leadership goes far beyond just teaching mechanics, he knows how to keep our mindsets strong and positive.”

Belyea noted that the team’s success over the last couple of years has helped to grow the sport’s popularity in the fall season.

“I think people are starting to look and say, ‘golf, maybe I’ll take a look at that,’” the Belmont Athletics Director noted. “That has a lot to do with him, his approach with the kids is awesome, it’s not easy to pull a program from nothing.”

For the seniors, that first year was one that barely had enough kids to field a team, but they’ve seen the growth.

“As a freshman in high school it was only four kids barely having enough to have a team,” Ryder noted. “As the years went on more and more people started playing, whether it was their first time or they have been playing for a bit and decided to play competitively. I do not see this program slowing down as

coach Mattes has put such a positive name behind our golf team.”

“I would attribute the upward trajectory of this golf team to the culture that this team has created,” DeFrancesco noted. “As a team we have grown close and a big part of that has to do with coach Mattes. Silly competitions and traditions have built a very positive culture with the team that I definitely see continuing for many years to come.”

“I see the golf team continuing that growth for the next few years,” Sottak said. “The coach gives a word that describes everyone at the end of the year and that word can further one’s play style in a positive way.”

And for the golfers, they know that they have a supporter every time they tee

off.

“Coach Mattes is a very sincere person who truly cares deeply about every player on the team,” DeFrancesco said. “He’s a great coach and an even better person and is someone who I know will always support me and be here for me throughout life, even beyond golf.”

Even the parents of the Belmont golfers chimed in about Mattes’ impact on the team.

“John has an ability to bring a group of kids together and make them work as a team in what is often viewed as an individual sport,” noted Jeff and Danielle DeFrancesco. “He creates an experience where everyone can grow and develop as a player and an individual. He recognizes the strength each student

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Remembering a legend

Jeri Blair, longtime local hoop coach, passes away at 80

BY JOSHUA SPAULDING
Sports Editor

REGION — The local coaching ranks lost a true legend at the end of August, when former Belmont and Prospect Mountain coach Jeri Blair passed away at the age of 80 at his home in Florida.

Blair was a three-sport athlete at Belmont High School and was a member of the school's Hall of Fame before moving on to coach basketball, cross country and softball at Belmont and closed out his coaching career as the girls' basketball coach at Prospect Mountain High School in Alton. He was also inducted into the New Hampshire Coaches Hall of Fame.

Blair, who led the Raiders to the 2006 Division III girls' basketball championship, earned more than 300 wins during his time at Belmont and then ended up winning his 400th career game as Prospect Mountain's coach in 2011.

At the time of the championship, which came 23 years into his coaching run at Belmont, the longtime coach was thrilled to finally reach the pinnacle.

"It's the greatest feeling in my whole life — it's something I've been dreaming about for 23 years," Blair said to the Laconia Citizen's Scott Serrano at the time. "The four seniors (Chelsi Colombe, Rachel Eades, Lori Kjellander and Drew O'Connor) did so well today. They have been with me for four years and they worked so hard for it and they deserved it. With a minute and a half left I smiled because I figured the Gods were finally looking down on me."

In his 28th year while coaching with Prospect Mountain, he picked up his 400th win on Jan. 7, 2011, when the Timber Wolves defeated Raymond.

"I've been a long time doing it, so it's awful nice to have it arrive," Blair said at the time. "I look back and think where'd they all come from."

"It's well worth doing the summer programs and the AAU programs, it's a nice accomplishment," he said. "I've coached a lot of kids and had a lot of good ones, that's what got me to where I am."



JERI BLAIR (with his wife, Barb) is honored by the Prospect Mountain girls' basketball team after he picked up his 400th career win in early 2011. Blair is in the New Hampshire Coaches Hall of Fame for his years of dedicated coaching at both Belmont and Prospect Mountain.



Jeri Blair congratulating Sydney Robertson after Prospect Mountain won the Gilford Holiday Tournament in 2010.

A few of Blair's former players also weighed in on his impact on their lives.

"Coach Blair dedicated so much of his life to the game and to the young people he coached," said Sara

Hammond. "The lessons he taught us went far beyond basketball. His impact on generations of players is a legacy that will live on for years to come."

"Jeri was my saving

grace," said Chantelle Moynihan Rector. "Without him I'd still be a mess."

"He was never just a coach—he was someone who believed in me, challenged me, and helped

shape the person I am today," said Melissa Smock. "The lessons he taught me went far beyond basketball, and the memories we made will stay with me forever. I was lucky to have him as my coach, but even luckier to call him a friend and a part of my family. I love and miss him dearly."

In addition to being a coach, Blair was a barber who built lasting friendships with generations of customers and families during his time in Laconia and Alton. He opened his first barber shop in Laconia in 1964 before moving to Alton 10 years later, setting up on Main Street. He noted that the Laconia business was too busy and he had always wanted a "local" barbershop, which is exactly what he found in Alton. His barbershop became a place to not only get a haircut, but a place to come and talk about the goings-on around town and around the world. Though most customers always said it would take them a long time to actually get their hair cut, since Blair would involved in a story and stop cutting as he told his tale.

Blair officially hung up the clippers in the fall of 2020 as the pandemic was

still part of the world. However, for more than six years he and his wife, Barb, had been spending their winters in Florida, returning home in the spring to open the barbershop and welcome customers back to the chair.

"It's been a great ride," Blair said at the time of his retirement as he sat among the men who he called friends and clients, who were all stopping in to bid him adieu. "I've enjoyed it very much."

Blair was also involved heavily in beagle field trials for more than 40 years. Along with his father and his son, he raised championship beagles and served as an AKC and CKC judge throughout the northeast and mentored future judges.

A celebration of his life will take place on Sunday, Oct. 18, at Belmont High School. The celebration will begin at 2 p.m. and anyone in attendance is welcome to share memories of Jeri with an open mic. Those planning on attending should come dressed to celebrate Jeri's love of New England sports or their local school's team attire.

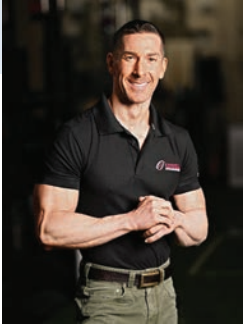
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