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Veterans Home residents reflect on the legacy of 9/11

BY DONNA RHODES
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TILTON — Residents of the New Hampshire Veterans Home paused in their daily routine last Wednesday morning to pay tribute to those whose lives were lost in the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in New York City, at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and in a peaceful field in Shanksville, Pa.

Gathered in the Tarr Dining Hall, each of the veterans each held memories of what that day meant to them, when they heard their own nation was under attack.

“Freedom,” said one resident about his initial impression of the attacks. “That’s what I thought of. They cast the first stone, and it had a lot of ripples, but we fight for freedom.”

Rev. William Paige led off the ceremony, recalling the famed words of brave heroes like rugby player Todd Beamer, who was aboard United Airlines Flight 93 over Pennsylvania that fateful day. Beamer, who was faced with a certain death, was last heard to say, “Let’s Roll!” He and others on board then stormed the cabin where terrorists were in control of the cockpit, and were believed to be rerouting the plane to crash into the White House.

In his remarks, Paige also paid homage to Father Mychal Judge, chaplain for the New York City Fire Department, who rushed to the site of the World Trade Towers to pray for the city and deliver last rites to any the victims. Judge, Paige

recalled, was considered the first casualty of 9/11, when he was hit by falling debris from the towers.

Paige also acknowledged the little known story of the hundreds of boats from private residents who responded to the Coast Guard’s call for assistance that day.

“They helped to bring 500,000 people out of Manhattan to safety. A lot of Americans became heroes then,” Paige said. “It was a day that brought out the best in people.”

Commandant Peggy Labrecque also addressed the residents, saying, “We give a prayer of thanks for those who showed their indomitable spirit that’s part of our culture.”

Residents Helen Mollica and Elaine Baker present-



DONNA RHODES

Veterans Helen Mollica and Elaine Baker took turns presenting special readings during a Patriot’s Day ceremony at the New Hampshire Veterans Home last Wednesday, reflecting on the tragedy of 9/11.



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New Hampshire Veterans Home resident Raymond Plummer stood in salute when “Taps” was played during a Patriot’s Day ceremony last week, held in remembrance of the heroes and victims of 9/11.

ed special readings to add to the day. Mollica read from “Don’t Forget and Don’t Remember,” written by a seven-year-old child who reflected on how life changed after that fateful day in 2001 and how she felt in the days since that time.

“Remember to honor those who keep you safe,”

the young girl wrote.

Baker read from the piece, “The Tragedy of 9/11” and concluded with the words, “May this day be remembered in our hearts...May this day awaken our nation.”

The ceremony closed with the playing of “Taps.”

Paige said he felt it was important to give the vet-

erans an opportunity to acknowledge that tragic day in the nation’s history and to acknowledge those who, like their own comrades, made and continue to make the ultimate sacrifice in protecting the nation.

Ober stepping down as TNFD Chief Will become Deputy Chief in Gilford Oct. 15

BY DONNA RHODES
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TILTON — It has been a somewhat contentious two years for Tilton-Northfield Fire Chief Brad Ober, and for some it was sad, but no surprise when he announced last week that he would be moving on to

the position of Deputy Fire Chief for the Gilford Fire Department. There, he will serve once more with another former TNFD chief, Steve Carrier.

Ober had little to say on his resignation except that he had notified Tilton-Northfield Fire Commission Chairman Paul

Auger last Wednesday of his resignation, and that, until his last day on Oct. 14, it would be business as usual at the department.

Ober joined TNFD on May 2, 2005 as their Fire Prevention Captain. At the same time, he managed to hold down the role of chief for the Ashland Fire De-

partment, and served as a member of their town’s planning board.

When Carrier left TNFD for Gilford in September of 2010, Ober was asked to step up as acting Deputy Chief under Mike Robinson, and was ultimately named chief at the end of that year.

One of the conditions

of that hiring, which ultimately became a source of contention, was for Ober to move to the district. It was not until July of the following year however, that the boundaries of that residency requirement were ever officially laid out for Ober and he then had to scramble to put his home in New

Hampton up for sale. In the uncertain economy of the time, that sale fell flat for the new chief though.

In order to meet the deadline for his job requirements, at the eleventh hour on Jan. 1, 2012, Ober announced that he had officially moved to an apart-

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Community members bid farewell to departing library director

BY DONNA RHODES
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SANBORNTON — Sanbornton Library overflowed with patrons, friends and well-wishers last Friday night as the town bid farewell to Library Director Cab Vinton.

“He’s a great friend and a great guy. He’s very accomplished and super bright. Cab devoted himself to this library,” said Townsend Sand at the reception held in Vinton’s honor.

Vinton said it has been an honor to head up the all-important library services in Sanbornton and said he wished he could bring a lot of his friends and library patrons with him to his new job in Plaistow.

“You don’t really have a home until you’ve worked in a small community library,” he said.

Vinton also wished his yet to be named successor well, and said he hoped he had helped to lay a good

foundation for the future of Sanbornton Public Library.

“There are bigger and better things to come here,” he predicted.

Among those who were sad to see Vinton move on were former librarian and current volunteer, Priscilla Bodwell.

“I was a librarian here for 30 years, then continued volunteering for the past seven years with Cab. He was always so cordial and showed his appreciation for my help. We’ll miss him,” she said.

Even the youngest of readers stopped in to say goodbye, like six-year-old Alicia. She held lots of fun memories from reading programs at the library, most especially the time she and her fellow readers tried to stuff Vinton in a plastic bag after he read “The Librarian from the Black Lagoon.”

“I’m really going to miss his stories,” Alicia said.

“He played them up so well.”

Besides a spread of cheese, crackers, fruits and cake, friends of SPL also compiled a memory book for Vinton to take with him to his new home.

Letters, drawings, photos, and news clippings filled the pages, including one note from a newer resident that read, “I am grateful to have found a library with a librarian who is so responsive to my reading requests...I wish him joy, laughter and lots of challenges in his new position.”

Saphaedra Renee echoed the sadness many felt in saying goodbye to Vinton. She said she had come to consider the library her “home away from home” and felt Vinton should have been given a cape to wear as library director.

“He’s Super cab,” she said with a big smile. “I had to come by tonight and wish him well.”

The Library Board of Trustees is now trying to find someone willing and capable of taking the place of “Super Cab.”

Linda Vanvalkenburg, chair of the board, said they are already receiving resumes and, following the upcoming interview process, the board hopes to make a recommendation to selectmen in another six weeks. Until that process is complete and a new director is named, she said that the other full time librarian, Martha Bodwell, will head up services at the library.



DONNA RHODES

The community of Sanbornton filled their public library last Friday night to wish outgoing director Cab Vinton well in his new job in Plaistow. Vinton, standing to just off center in a blue shirt, was touched by the support and friendship he found during his seven years in the position.

A famous face visits Belmont

BY DONNA RHODES
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BELMONT — A familiar face was spotted on the green in Belmont Village last week, when Fritz Wetherbee and his crew paid a visit to the area to film segments for the popular WMUR Channel 9 television show, “Chronicle.”

Wetherbee is, among many things, a seasoned reporter, photographer, college instructor, editor and author.

Through the years, he has appeared in a variety of radio and television programs, and has received numerous awards for his work, including five Emmy’s.

However, Wetherbee is perhaps best known for his colorful tales and historic glimpses of New Hampshire’s past on both the former “New Hampshire Crossroads” television show and, more recently, “Chronicle.”

After a trip to Canterbury last week, the crew arrived midday in Belmont on Friday, where they recounted the story of the Belmont Mill.

They also touched on the story of Richard Pavlik, whose threat in 1960 to President Kennedy, written on a postcard, was turned over to authorities by Belmont Postmaster Thomas Murphy. Murphy spotted the threat when Pavlik, a former postal worker himself, mailed it through the Belmont Post Office.

“Chronicle” then took a



DONNA RHODES

Fritz Wetherbee and his crew, cameraman Chris Shepherd and producer Mary-Paige Provost, were busy filming six segments for WMUR’s “Chronicle” in Belmont last week, but were happy to pose for a photo in front of the Belmont Bandstand.

look back at the hurricane of 1938 during their filming in Belmont.

Wetherbee said that no matter what anyone calls the historic storm, whether it be the Yankee Clipper, the Long Island Express or the Great New England Hurricane, it will always be remembered for one thing.

“It altered the landscape in New England forever,” he said as he looked grimly into the camera.

The storm, which struck on Sept. 21, brought 10 hours of rain and 12 hours of “pure terror,” Wetherbee recalled as he stood beneath sunny skies in Belmont. To this day it is still the costliest hurricane New England’s history.

He and the crew filmed six separate segments for “Chronicle” last week, where he not only highlighted bits of local history, but spun his tales about “Binky,” the contrived

character he uses to relate Yankee humor and resiliency.

“This is the tale of Binky Sears and the Telemarketer, when Binky is offered something for nothing,” he crooned before the camera set up behind the Belmont library.

The reconfigured village green in Belmont made the perfect backdrop for the

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AIRPORT

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have been on the meadow at Sawyer flats during the summer and on Lake Winnepesaukee in the winter. Laconia Municipal Airport was originally located in the vicinity of the current O'Shea Industrial Park in Laconia. It was built in 1934.

The airport was constructed in its present location in Gilford for national defense under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The City of Laconia and Belknap County shared the cost of purchasing the initial 439 acres, at a cost of \$7,100 each. Construction began in January of 1941 on two runways: North-South Runway

17-35 & East-West Runway 8-26. Both runways were 150 feet by 3,500 feet. This also included the relocation and building of the highway from Lake Shore Road to the so-called Weirs Road near Winnepesaukee Farm. The first landing at the new facility was made by Barton McLellan of Plymouth and the first student to solo from the airport was Alma Gallagher on Jan. 2, 1942. Runway 17-35 was closed in 1976 due to maintenance deterioration of the approach. Runway 8-26 was extended 1,000 feet in 1963, and again extended 1,000 feet in 1965. The current runway is 5,890 feet by 100 feet.

The Airport is now owned by the City of Laconia. The

Laconia Airport Authority (LAA) was established by the state legislature in 1941 to operate and manage the airport. The LAA is comprised of the mayor of Laconia as Chair, the Chair of the County Commissioners, the Chair of the Gilford Board of Selectmen, two appointed residents of Gilford, and four appointed residents of Laconia.

Laconia Municipal Airport's first seasonal scheduled air carrier service certification was acquired on March 24, 1950 as part of Northeast Airlines' Route 27. Application was submitted and approval received July 3, 1953 to upgrade the service to a year round basis. This service was irreg-

ular, however, and on Aug. 5, 1963 the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) amended Northeast Airlines' certificate requiring seasonal service only.

In October of 1968, Winnepesaukee Airlines, Inc. offered some off-season air carrier service. In June of 1969, Northeast Airlines was allowed to suspend its summer service to Laconia Municipal Airport with Winnepesaukee Airlines providing replacement service until 1980. At that time, Precision Airlines purchased Winnepesaukee Aviation (WA) taking over WA's functions at Laconia Municipal Airport. Except for a brief interruption of service in 1970, WA and

WA/Precision Airlines continued to provide year round commuter service from Laconia Municipal Airport to Boston's Logan International Airport until 1983.

In 1987, Valley Airlines began air carrier service from Laconia Municipal Airport until 1989 when Skymaster took over. Skymaster was sold to Atlantic North, which operated from March of 1993 until August of 1993. From 1993 to the present day, there have been no air carrier operations at Laconia Municipal Airport. The Laconia Airport is a now a General Aviation Airport with all civilian flying except scheduled service. "Laconia Airport's Rich

History and Bright Future" exhibit runs from Sept. 5 through 25, and is free and open to the public Monday-Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; other hours are by chance or appointment. While visiting, please inquire about information on becoming a member of the Belknap Mill Society. Plan to tour the permanent exhibit that interprets the many years the 1823 Mill served as a textile mill; the Belknap Mill is the oldest unaltered brick textile mill building in the country.

Visit www.belknapmill.org for a complete list of Belknap Mill events. For information about functions, the history of the building and more, call 524-8813.

FRITZ

FROM PAGE A1

filming last week. Workers had moved the historic, century-old bandstand back to its newest location just the day before, capping off a year long project that is hoped to make the village an attraction for residents and visitors alike.

After spending an hour in the village, he and the team headed off to Lake Winnis-

quam where they looked forward to disclosing another story about Mohawk Island.

The six segments filmed in town will be soon be shown over several of the upcoming episodes of "Chronicle."

To learn more about his trip to Belmont and some of the rich history it holds, tune in to Channel 9 each week night at 7 p.m. when Wetherbee promises, "I'll tell you the story."

OBER

FROM PAGE A1

ment in Tilton, but the controversy over his hiring did not stop there.

While commissioners backed off on their scrutiny of Ober for a time, in July of this year, they made the decision to begin tracking the mileage on his job-appointed com-

mand vehicle. Ober's application in Gilford was evidently already in process at that time, and his ensuing resignation followed that latest decision by the commission just late last week.

Despite his differences with the commission, Ober says he leaves with nothing but many well wishes and much respect for his fellow firefighters and the residents of the district he

has come to know so well over the years.

During his tenure as chief, Ober said he has much to be proud of, including the purchase of a new Quint ladder truck and the refurbishing of the cramped quarters for personnel in the outdated Central Street Station.

Besides that, the district has seen the purchase of a new ambulance under Ober's leadership as well as a new X Monitor/Defibrillator machine, which saved the life of a local man who had a heart attack while shopping at Market Basket.

"Over the past couple of years, we also hired three new employees, were able to implement a Capital Improvement Plan for equipment, and put a Step in Grade pay system in place for employees," Ober added.

On top of that, he and the department worked together to reorganize the Call Company and Career Fire Fighter service shifts so they could train and learn to work together on a higher level.

"That move has worked out very well, actually, and I'm proud of that," said Ober.

While Auger could not be reached for comment, selectmen in both towns were concerned to hear the district will be going

through the costly process of hiring a new chief once again.

Tilton Select Board Chairman Pat Consentino said she has nothing but the "utmost respect" for Ober. She praised him for bringing the two communities together after they faced dissolution of the district in 2010, and for serving the public well in his work with businesses, schools and the two communities as a whole.

"There was a definite consistency in the professionalism he displayed, and this is a profound loss," said Consentino.

Northfield Select Board Chair Steve Bluhm also expressed his dismay over the resignation, and wished Chief Ober "nothing but the best" in his new endeavors.

Gilford's Chief Carrier sent out a press release on the hiring of Ober last Thursday.

"I couldn't be more pleased," said Carrier. "Brad quickly rose to the top of our hiring process. His experience as a fire chief in two different communities and his extensive fire prevention background makes him tremendously valuable to our department and our community. I know Brad well and have worked with him in the past and I know this is a good fit."

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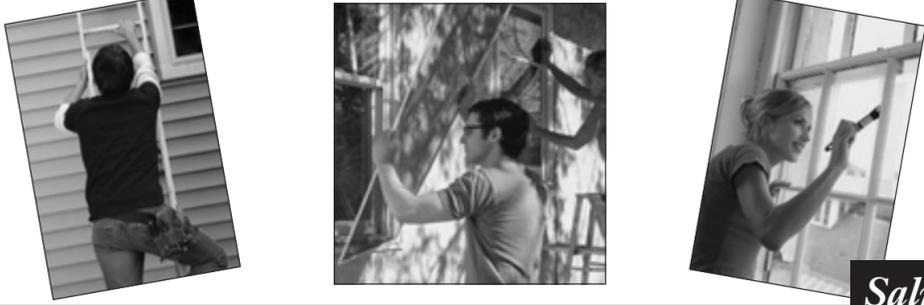
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