

Winnisquam Echo

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2013

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PHOTO DONNA RHODES

School buses were a welcome sight at Winnisquam Regional Middle School last Thursday, after a mold issue in the building caused a one week delay in the start of the new school year.

WRMS students celebrate delayed return to school

BY DONNA RHODES
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TILTON — It may have been a week late, but the first day of school was nonetheless an exciting occasion for the sixth through eighth grade boys and girls who lined up outside Winnisquam Regional Middle School last Thursday, eager to see their friends and teachers and get back to their daily routines.

"I'm excited. I've missed everyone, and it feels good to be going back to school again," said one seventh grade student as she waited for the doors to open.

Classes at WRMS were delayed for five days after a mold problem was detected in some areas of the building just a week before the scheduled start date of Aug. 27.

The outbreak of mold is being blamed on the unusually humid summer.

As workers and janitorial staff hurried to clean the building, it became apparent that the sixth grade wing was going to need

more extensive work and, as a result, opening day was put on hold for all middle school students in the district.

The greatest problem in that wing, said Dennis Francouer of RPS Environmental Services, was that moisture coming up between the walls had cultivated mold growth that would continue to be a problem if it wasn't dealt with properly.

"They'll cut two feet up on the inside of those walls and, instead of sheetrock, use cement board there that won't support fungal growth," Francouer said at an Aug. 26 public forum.

The plan, as laid out by the district that night, was to clean and inspect all other areas of the school so it could finally be opened for classes on Sept. 5. The sixth grade wing however would remain closed awhile longer for the reconstruction work. In the meantime, classes for those students, Superintendent Dr. Tammy Davis said, would be held in other spaces throughout the building.

Some parents said that their sixth grade children, who were beginning their first year at the middle school, were anxious about what they would do and where they would go when the school reopened and their classrooms were still off limits.

Davis assured those parents that she understood those concerns and, to help ease the transition, the school held an open house on Sept. 4 for the sixth grade students and their parents. The evening allowed the boys and girls the opportunity to see what temporary arrangements had been made to accommodate their needs so they would be prepared for school the next day.

"The open house was helpful for them, and the first day of school went very well," Davis said.

Last Friday, she said the sixth grade wing will remain closed for approximately two to four more weeks of reconstruction but once the last vestiges of mold are removed from the wing, classes at WRMS should return to normal.

Sanbornton selectmen admit to lack of oversight on dump truck purchase

BY DONNA RHODES
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SANBORNTON — "It's our fault," proclaimed Sanbornton Select Board Chair Guy Giunta when two residents filed a Right to Know Request on the process being used for a town-authorized purchase of a new dump truck. "As far as I'm concerned, we were wrong, and I'm glad people are speaking up."

The error, Giunta said at the select board meeting on Sept. 4, came in not offering proper guidance to Public Works Director Johnny VanTassel when he was asked to make his first major vehicle purchase.

VanTassel, who took the reins at DPW in February of 2012, sought quotes for a new dump truck rather than putting the purchase out for bid. That mistake in the purchasing process was brought to the board's attention by budget committee members Earl Leighton and Jeff Jenkins.

The discussion actually began a week earlier, when

Jenkins and Leighton asked why they had not seen any bid requests posted for the truck purchase, which was approved at the 2013 Town Meeting this past May.

They then filed their RSA 91-A request to see what was transpiring, and were pleased that at the town responded promptly.

"We've done so many things recently that I'm just surprised we forgot how to go through the process," said Jenkins last week, when he met once again with the board. "I think with the money involved here, it's important to be as open and transparent as possible."

Selectman Karen Ober thanked Jenkins for his attention to the matter, and acknowledged the dump truck was also her first major purchase as a selectman. In VanTassel's defense, however, she noted that recent leases on police cars and even the purchase of a fire truck had all been done through quotes and not bids.

While acknowledging the DPW director hadn't done anything purposefully wrong, Giunta said that anything over \$5,000 needs to be put out for bid. He felt perhaps a policy should be formalized to dictate how such purchases will be handled in the future.

"We may have a policy, but it's not written down anywhere. We're the boss of these guys, though, and we should have said we can't go through quotes — we need bids. I do think we were wrong," said Giunta.

Selectman Dave Nickerson spoke up to say Giunta should not speak for all selectmen. He said the board might have missed the fact that there were no bids being put out but, personally, he felt selectmen should be able to trust their department heads to do what is expected.

VanTassel himself responded to Jenkins and Leighton's Right to Know Request. Along with a letter, he included a copy of

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Belmont officials hope new foot bridge will bolster revitalization project

BY DONNA RHODES
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BELMONT — By this time next year, it is hoped that the installation of a classically designed pedestrian bridge over the Tioga River will give residents and visitors one more good reason to visit the Belmont Village District, thanks in part to the City of Dover.

The federal government recently completed work on a new bridge over the Cochecho River in Dover that included a walkway. When it opened to foot and vehicle traffic, the little covered bridge that was built for pedestrians in 1996 no longer had a use. The city moved the structure to an empty lot where it has sat waiting for a new location.

Ken Knowlton of the Belmont Conservation Commission was one of many from the town who worked on the Village Revitalization Project. He said when they learned that the City of Dover had a covered pedestrian bridge for sale for \$1, it caught their attention. They learned the 154-foot-long bridge was actually built in three sections and felt it could be the perfect solution to the continuation of the revitalization project in Belmont.

"After the charrette (in 2010) we decided that we wanted to put in a foot bridge where a bridge used to cross from the old railroad station (off Depot Street) to the Belmont Mill," Knowlton said. "We also wanted to put in a river walk but we'd need to replace two other old bridges out on the trail that were also taken down a long time ago. Our hope was that buying this bridge could kill two birds with one stone."

The Conservation Commission has donated \$1,000 from their operational budget for an architectural study to disassemble the bridge and relocate it to its



PHOTO COURTESY

This covered 13-year-old pedestrian bridge being sold by the City of Dover will soon be moved to Belmont to become part of the Village Revitalization project, providing access to both sides of the Tioga River that flows behind the Belmont Mill.

new home in Belmont.

Mark Roberts of Belmont owns a local company that specializes in moving buildings and has submitted a bid of approximately \$12,000 to transport the structure from Dover to Belmont. Installation would be somewhere around \$10,000, Knowlton added.

"What Mark gave us was actually a really good price," said Knowlton. "It could take somewhere around six loads to move the bridge here but I think in the long run it's still going to be cheaper than building a bridge from scratch."

Belmont Town Administrator Jeanne Beaudin stated that the actual sale of the bridge has not yet been finalized, but the City of Dover is in the process of signing papers and forwarding them to Belmont officials in the coming

days.

Beaudin said there are some limited resources available through a Land and Water Conservation Fund for the bridge and the future construction of a pavilion beside the Belmont Mill, but those use of that money would also require matching funds from the town.

When the bridge does arrive
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PHOTOS BY ERIN PLUMMER

LRGHealthcare and Laconia Historical Society representatives cut the ribbon on the exhibit "Shall We Have a Hospital?" at the Laconia Public Library. Cutting the ribbon is LRGHealthcare Vice Presidents Andy Patterson and Marge Kearns, Senior Vice President Suzanne Stiles, President and CEO Tom Clairmont, Laconia Historical Society Executive Director Brenda Polidoro, LRGHealthcare Senior Vice President Ellen Wolff, Vice President Leo Goddu, Chairman of the Board Scott Clarenbach, Dr. Peter Doane, Chief of Medical Staff, and Theresa Peters.

Laconia hospital history on display

BY ERIN PLUMMER
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LACONIA — From its beginnings as Laconia Cottage Hospital to the advanced care offered by Lakes Region General Hospital, the history of the Lakes Region's premiere health care facility is now on display at the public library.

"Shall We Have a Hospital?" is a display of photos, artifacts, and facts from the history of Laconia Hospital on display at the Laconia Public Library.

The exhibit officially opened on Tuesday, with officials from LRGH and the Laconia Historical Society cutting the ribbon.

The display was the result of efforts by Brenda

Polidoro, Executive Director of the Laconia Historical Society, and Patricia Rice, Communications and Program Development Director at LRGHealthcare.

"We wanted to, as fully as possible, chronicle the history of Laconia Hospital," Polidoro said.

Polidoro said she and

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the truck specifications he used for the quotes to replace "DPW Truck 6," a 2004 six-wheel heavy duty dump truck.

Looking over the list at last week's meeting, Leighton said he had experience in the field of heavy equipment, and questioned some of the specifications listed.

"It needs to have heavier rims," said Leighton.

Jenkins suggested that the specifications be "deeper and clearer" once the vehicle is put out for bid.

He also asked that VanTassel consult the New Hampshire Department of Transportation for their

specifications and to see if they had a state contract the town could use to save money on the new purchase.

Nickerson said that once the specifications are clarified, there is "a whole pile of people we can put this out to bid on," besides using any state contract.

He also felt the town should look at maintenance schedules for highway vehicles so that the trucks might last longer than 10 years. In Tilton, Nickerson said, all the equipment is washed every day before it goes back into the garage.

"That's his (Tilton DPW director Dennis Allen's) philosophy. They want their trucks to last," Nickerson said.

VanTassel agreed but also reminded everyone that Sanbornton maintains more than 50 miles of roadways, many of which are dirt, causing greater wear and tear on his equipment than towns like Tilton and Meredith or even the state highway crews might experience with their vehicles.

In the meantime, he said he would move forward in the bid process.

"I'll call DOT for their specs for trucks then present that to the board and put it out for bid," said VanTassel.

The bid process means the new truck will likely be delivered a bit later than hoped for, but should still arrive in time to help with winter road maintenance.

BELMONT

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rive, it will be temporarily stored at the Belmont Highway Garage. Over the winter, the Conservation Commission will look for further funding, equipment and volunteers to place the three sections in their new locations along the Tioga.

"Pennstock Park is a good example of volunteerism in this community that didn't cost much at all in taxpayer dollars. This

bridge is going to be an attractive asset to the town and a route for people to use on a myriad of levels. We hope we can get people to help make that happen," said Knowlton.

With the addition of the bridge people will be able to cross the Tioga River from the village and walk, bike or cross country ski all the way to the Coca-Cola plant on Route 140.

Knowlton himself has skied along the trail site when freezing tempera-

tures allowed him to cross the river on ice. The bridge, he said, will give year round access to the entire length of the trail.

"It's a really beautiful bridge that was built to last and will suit our needs," said Knowlton. "The trail comes out just a little over a mile or two from the Winnepesaukee River Trail beside McDonald's in Tilton so, looking down the road, this could be a great thing for the future of Belmont and recreation in the area."

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Rice did much research was done into the history of the hospital, from its beginning as Cottage Hospital to the present as Lakes Region General Hospital. She said in the process many facts that had been forgotten were unearthed.

"As each one would find something, we would share with each other," Polidoro said.

Polidoro said putting the exhibit together was a three-month process.

"It is exciting," Rice said. "She definitely unearthed some information we were not aware of."

Rice and Polidoro said they were thrilled with how the exhibit came out.

"I think it's important for people in the city to see where it all began," Rice said. "At the end of the day it's their hospital."

"If it weren't form the community we wouldn't be here," Polidoro said.

The exhibit was titled "Shall We Have A Hospital?" named after the Nov. 27, 1891 editorial in the Laconia Democrat advocat-

ing the need for a hospital in the area. Another article documenting the grade crossing accident in 1897 further illustrated the need. The patients injured in that accident were taken to the Mount Belknap House in Lakeport.

In 1893, Rhoda Ladd left her entire estate to the then-town of Laconia with the suggestion of building a hospital, leading to the formation of the Rhoda Ladd Hospital Fund Committee. After much community support, Rhoda Ladd's home on Court Street opened as Cottage Hospital in 1897. The Laconia School of Nursing was founded in 1898 and graduated its first class in 1899.

Laconia Hospital opened in the current location on Highland Street in 1908. It became Lakes Region General Hospital in 1967.

The exhibit documented milestones including the formation of the Laconia Clinic in 1937, the hospital's expansion in 1987, and the construction of the East Wing in 2011.

Photos and artifacts told of the doctors and nurses

who have been involved in the hospital over the years. The display showed uniforms and medical tools during the hospital's history.

LRGHealthcare President and CEO Tom Clairmont praised the exhibit.

"It is great to see all these memories," Clairmont said. "This is really remarkable."

Many of the photos and several artifacts, such as a nurse's uniform, were provided by former nurse Theresa Peters. Peters was an alumnus of the nursing school and worked at the hospital for many years.

Peters said Polidoro called and asked her if she had anything she could offer the exhibit. Peters provided photos of doctors and nurses through the years from her own photo album.

She said she thought the overall exhibit was wonderful.

"A lot of people in this city will get a chance to see a lot of things that have gone over the years," Peters said. "It will be seen by a lot of people and it's very nice."

LACONIA

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Demon DeCoste, 37, of Northfield for Protective Custody-Alcoholism.

Kelsey Hirst, 18, of Canterbury for Driving While Intoxicated.

Joshua Gordon, 27, of New Hampton for Burglary.

Steven K. St. Jacques, 24, of Franklin for Driving While Intoxicated.

Other calls included Simple Assaults, Willful Concealment, Thefts, Sexual Assault, Pistol Permits, Animal Involved Incidents, Motorist Assist, Welfare Check, Abandoned Vehicle, Business & Residen-

tial Alarm Activations, Assists other Agencies, Domestic Disturbances, Found Property, Harassing Communication, MV Checks & Lockouts, Noise Complaint, Property Checks, Sex Offender Registration, Suspicious Activities/Persons & Vehicle, Paperwork Service and Unwanted Person.

VEGAN

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itled, "Nutritional Update for Physicians: Plant-Based Diets" in the Spring 2013 issue of The Permanente Journal, the authors wrote, "The objective of this article is to present to physicians an update on plant-based diets. Concerns about the rising cost of health care are being voiced nationwide, even as unhealthy lifestyles are contributing to the spread of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. For these reasons, physicians looking for cost-effective interventions to improve health outcomes are becoming more involved in helping their patients adopt healthier lifestyles. Healthy eating may be best achieved

with a plant-based diet, which we define as a regimen that encourages whole, plant-based foods and discourages meats, dairy products and eggs as well as all refined and processed foods."

A major obstacle in educating the general public about the health benefits of plant-based protein is the U. S. Dept. of Agriculture itself. The USDA's Dietary Guidelines for Americans are designed by the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. In his article, "Saving U.S. Dietary Advice from Conflicts of Interest" that appeared in The Food and Drug Law Journal (2010, Vol 65) Jeff Herman put it succinctly when he wrote that in the Committee's recommendations, "there is oddly no discussion at all of the scientific

research on the health consequences of eating meat. If the Committee actually discussed this research, it would be unable to justify its recommendations to eat meat, as the research would show that meat increases the risks of chronic diseases, contrary to the purposes of the Guidelines. Thus, by simply ignoring that research, the Committee is able to reach a conclusion that would otherwise look improper."

"This month, we'll be sampling edamame (soy beans), black beans, and quinoa, all great sources of plant proteins!" said Dell'Amico.

Cost for class is \$30, children 12 and under are free! For more information, call Dell'Amico at 729-0248.

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