Our yesterdays

125 YEARS AGO (1893)
from The Laconia Democrat

Mayor and City Council authorized the Special Committee on School Houses to finish off and furnish the third story of the High School Building on Academy Street, so as to provide the two more classrooms for 100 school children, which would “relieve the pressure at this end of the city.” It was thought that Ward 6 could “manage to get along another year without a new building,” as they continued to use the old school house on Pearl Street.

A commercial, or business, course would be introduced this fall, at Laconia High School. “The course will occupy a period of two years and the instruction will be thorough and complete.”

In other business, the mayor and council voted to change the name of Elbow Street to Crescent Court.

By WARRICK D. HUSB
Local History Writer

100 YEARS AGO (1918)
from The Laconia Democrat

Enlistments, calls to military service, news and letters about service were supplemented by reports from the home front. As of Sept. 15, no sugar could be purchased from any local grocer without a sugar card. Representatives of the Food Administration would be at the Armory on Court Street, Sept. 16-14, to issue cards. And a lengthy proclamation set forth new restrictions on consumption of wheat flour and prescribed use of various types of “Victory Flour” containing percentages of barley, corn, rye, graham or meal along with the wheat.

75 YEARS AGO (1943)
from The Laconia Evening Citizen

The School Board voted to appoint Rhoden B. Eddy of North Brookfield, Mass., as superintendent of schools, succeeding C.W. McDermith.

After 67 years without a sister organization, the New Hampshire Veterans’ Association, at its annual reunion, Aug. 28, authorized the formation of a women’s auxiliary. “The final authorization was voted only after a long and stormy session that was in sharp contrast to the usual tranquil business meetings of the association.”

50 YEARS AGO (1968)
from The Laconia Evening Citizen

In the Urban Renewal area, six of 11 buildings had been taken down, with completion of that contract due in September. A $600,008 contract for bridge and drainage construction had been signed and widening of the Main Street Bridge was expected to begin shortly. During August, the Weeks Dairy Garage and the Normandin, McIntyre, Cheney and O’Neill law firm had moved to new quarters and Belknap Industries had vacated two of its buildings. Meanwhile, four parcels of land were being advertised for sale, with bids to close, Sept. 17. It was expected that there would be at least one interested developer “looking for the cash opportunity.”

A crane, raising 210 feet into the sky, was being used on the Spring Street construction project of Lakes Region General Hospital. The five-story, 100,000-square-foot addition to the hospital was 15 percent completed and completion of the project was expected by spring 1970.

History

50 YEARS AGO
LaFrance still skeptical on Winnisquam water

LACONIA — The state Water Supply and Pollution Control Commission issued a report, Aug. 26, 1965, on the results of testing of Lake Winnisquam water. The Citizen reported, 50 years ago this week.

In the report, the commission declared that “Winnisquam Water quality meets all standards for safe bathing and other forms of water use and recreation.”

Dr. Philip LaFrance Jr., who had rekindled controversy over the safety of the water a week earlier was skeptical, however, saying that it “very little reduced the sediment tanks at the State School had killed the bacteria.”

“Only time will tell when the live bacteria will appear again. The conditions for it are right.”

Meanwhile, LaFrance also said that enough fertilizer is “melted” into the lake to “do the entire lake a vegetable garden. It is now, one of algae.”

(“It would be another 11 years before the Winnipesaukee River Basin Project would go on line, in 1979, bringing a real reduction in the pollution and algae problems.”)

25 YEARS AGO
Poole got through ‘difficult times’ at SAU 30

LACONIA — On the eve of his retirement, Aug. 27, 1993, as superintendent of schools for SAU 30, Frank Poole recalled the most difficult time in his superintendent from 1990 to 1992, “during the Straight Arrow domination of the Laconia City Council,” the Citizen reported, 25 years ago this week.

When the Council cut the $12,100 million budget to $12 million — seemingly a $100,000 cut — increases in salaries, contracted services and utilities made it actually more than a $500,000 cut.

“The difficult decisions the Laconia School Board made that year included the release of 20 teachers and support staff members, the elimination of the gifted education program for all elementary school students, the entire athletic and activities program for all students in the school district, and the kindergarten program in Laconia,”

Staff Writer Robert Cook’s article attributed “one quality that helped Poole to get through those difficult times” as his ability “to avoid making enemies and maintain the same personable demeanor.”

Poole said he believes his successor, Richard Ayers, “is the right person to lead SAU 30 into the next century and fully supports Ayers’ plans to implement more technology in the classroom.”

10 YEARS AGO
Belmont sewer and water talks end abruptly

BELMONT — Selectmen voted, Aug. 18, 2008, to discontinue negotiations with the city of Laconia over extension of a sewer line into Route 108 from town. The Citizen reported, 10 years ago.

The town had hoped to trade a renegotiated water contract along Route 3 for expanded access to the city sewer line, thus permitting construction of Colosseum Indoor Sports, off Bishop Road.

Mike LeClair, who had spent two years planning the sports facility, had negotiated a sewer easement with Neil McGreevy, whose father had built a private sewer line 10 years earlier for what was, in 2008, Lakes Chrysler-Jeep.

Laconia officials had long contended that the water agreement was unfair and challenged it in court in the late 1980s, but lost. Belmont officials called the Laconia position “most definitely, completely unacceptable.”

Laconia Water Commissioner Richard Breton said, “All we’re trying to do is get out the way.”

Selectboard Chairman Ron Cormier believed one solution to the sewer hookup dilemma was to have Belmont purchase McGreevy’s private sewer main — “a purchase he believes changes the nature of Belmont’s sewer arrangement with Laconia and eliminates the need for the quid-pro-quo exchange.”

Roger Ballantyne ‘man of integrity and fun’

LACONIA — Roger Cochran Ballantyne, 65, vice president for Human Resources at Citizens Bank for 28 years until his retirement in 1998, and later at the Taylor Community, died, Aug. 29, 2008, The Citizen reported, 10 years ago this week.

Characterized as a “man of integrity and fun,” after Marine Corps service from 1962-1968 and with a bachelor’s degree from West Virginia University, he taught “everything from U.S. history to American government” at Laconia Academy for 30 years, and also taught banking courses there through the American Institute for Banking.

“He was just an absolute master teacher and my students adored him and he understood them. There weren’t enough acro...”

Rodgers Ballantyne was described by Roger Ballan...