

# The Citizen <sup>of</sup> Laconia

*The voice of New Hampshire's Lakes Region*

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2012-10-13 / History

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## Our yesterdays

By WARREN D. HUSE

[whuse@citizen.com](mailto:whuse@citizen.com)

### 125 YEARS AGO (1887)

from **The Laconia Democrat**

The Belknap Mill was "to erect a goodsized three story brick building in the Belknap yard to be used as a dye-house, etc. Work

is to be commenced at once." *Note: This was*

*the long building, next to the river, downriver of the Esty (later Sakansky and, still later,*

*Gilbert) Mill. It was razed during Urban Renewal.* The Boston & Maine Railroad took formal

possession of the Boston & Lowell Railroad

and its branches, Oct. 12. "If we understand

the situation correctly, Laconia is now located on the White Mountain Division of the

Lowell System of the Boston & Maine railroad."

### 100 YEARS AGO (1912)

from **The Laconia Democrat**

The Up-in-Town correspondent reported

"the lower end of Leavitt park is being slowly but surely completed, but it is a long ways

ahead to look for its finish. It takes a lot of

time and work to move the earth by cart

loads, to fill up and level off a rough piece of

ground like the Leavitt park."

Charles Wilcomb, a former resident of

Lakeport, "had been in town for a few days

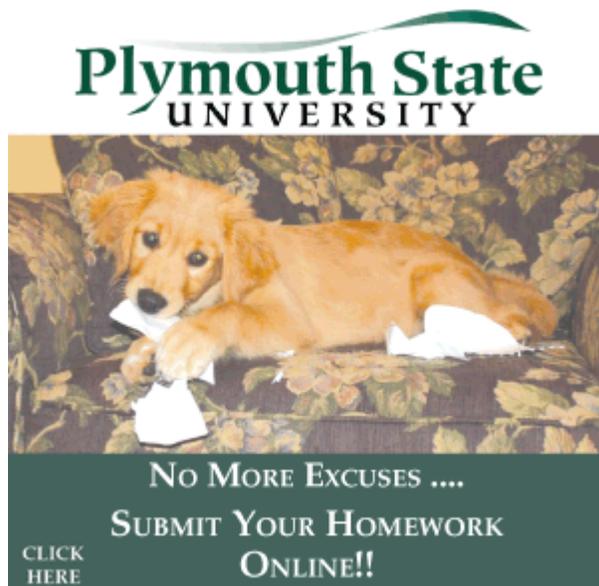
in the interests of the museum at Oakland,

Cal., of which he is curator; he has just returned from a trip to northern Europe; one of his side trips was a visit to the land of the midnight sun.”

### 75 YEARS AGO (1937)

#### from *The Democrat & The Citizen*

Gen. William F. Knight “had the pleasure of cutting four birthday cakes, opening boxes of flowers and other gifts” on his 90th birthday, Oct. 13. *Note: Knight’s honorary title derived from his appointment from 1895 to 1897 as quartermaster general on the military staff of Gov. Charles A. Busiel. Knight never served in any army nor in the Marine Corps. He was a longtime merchant and banker and a former mayor of Laconia.* (LD)



### 50 YEARS AGO (1962)

#### from *The Laconia Citizen*

The Motorcycle Committee of the Greater Laconia-Weirs Beach Chamber of Commerce had exceeded its goal of \$3,000 for the 1962 Motorcycle Week and had forwarded the funds to William Scheitinger, president of the New England Motorcycle Dealers’ Association.

Laconia Business and Professional Women’s Club named Dr. M. Alice Normandin its Woman of the Year. At 6:30 the next morning, “Dr. Alice was backing her car out of her driveway on Skyline Dr., Gilford and

on her way to make a call. Life was back to normal for the silver haired woman physician who has endeared herself to the Lakes Region and whose achievements were recognized,” Oct. 10, “at a dinner at the Laconia Tavern hotel.”

Bruno Jacob of Racine, Wis., executive secretary of the National Forensic League, was in Laconia, Oct. 15, to present the award as the leading chapter in New England at Laconia High School assembly. “He said that the only other chapters to win the award four times were Enid, Okla., and South St. Paul, Minn., both larger schools.” The award was received by LHS Principal

Donald Piper. Mrs. Ruth Estes, speech and debate coach was on leave because of her health and was unable to be present, but Jacob called at her home to congratulate her.

Men's judo classes opened this week at the Laconia YMCA with Haven Sanborn as instructor. He had just returned to Laconia after three years in the Marine Corps, serving mostly in Hawaii and Okinawa. Mayor J. Oliva Huot, Democratic candidate for Congress, was pictured riding a donkey at the Sandwich Fair.

Grossman's held a grand opening, Oct.

12, of its new distribution center on Blaisdell Avenue, next to the Laconia Milling Co.

State Sen. Edith Gardner sawed a board to open the center. "Before the day was over, nearly 800 people had visited the store."

Manager Bill Patterson "reports 735 doughnuts were consumed and 30 gallons of cof-

nearly 800 people had visited the store."

Manager Bill Patterson "reports 735 doughnuts were consumed and 30 gallons of coffee by opening day guests who inspected the

new building with its over 10,000 square feet

of floor space. The store is the latest of its

type constructed with steel frame and plywood roof and siding.

## **25 YEARS AGO (1987)**

### **from The Laconia Citizen**

The state Department of Revenue Administration had set the city's tax rate at \$49.77 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation. "The 1987 rate is \$1.37 — or 2.8 percent — higher than last year's rate of \$48.40."

Some 40 Massachusetts Avenue area residents had organized the city's first Neighborhood Watch Program. Persons who attended an organizational meeting at Leavitt Park House "voiced concern about speeding, unleashed dogs, and vandalism. Laconia Police Detective and Crime Prevention Officer David Gunter and Cpl. Christopher Cost addressed those issues."

Lakes Region Family Service Association

Inc. had established a fund in memory of board member and former Laconia Police Department Patrolman Debra L. Bieniarz, who had died the previous month at age 29 from a brain aneurysm. Mrs. Bieniarz had also served the agency as a member of the Domestic Violence Advisory Committee

and was instrumental in raising funds for the agency's domestic violence shelter. "The fund will support educational projects aimed at increasing awareness of domestic violence; with the ultimate goal being to provide an alternative to violent behavior." Howard C. Hunt, 99, a resident of the city since 1941, died, Oct. 13. He had worked for Scott & Williams for many years, serving as safety director. His last employment was as a draftsman for Vernitron, where he worked until his 84th year. Earlier, for 20 years, he had been in the hotel business between Florida and New England.

### **10 YEARS AGO (2002) from The Citizen**

About a half-dozen volunteers from the Laconia Main Street program, as well as Executive Director Francoise Elise, "spent a good part of their Wednesday evening assembling scarecrows in the basement of the Laconia Congregational Church," Oct. 9. "The scarecrows, which are stuffed with

newspapers and wear clothes and other items donated by local businesses, are part of a promotional campaign to bring people to downtown Laconia. Main Street Chairman Warren Clement hopes to have 50 of the scarecrows in place by Halloween, some as early as next week."

Portable space heaters and coats were the order of the day at Laconia District Court as the city and state worked to replace a broken furnace there. "Nonetheless, the court has been and will remain open," Court Clerk Diane Lane said.

Lakes Region Day Care Center moved into a new home at First United Methodist Church, Gilford.

Giggles and Grins, a new family resource center of the Lakes Region Community Service Center, opened at 20 Canal St. Cantin Chevrolet was building a new collision and repair shop on Mechanic Street. Equipped with shovels, clippers, gloves and plenty of warm clothing, members of Opechee Garden Club had "been weathering the crisp fall mornings to spruce up the gardens at the Laconia Public Library and

prepare the land for plantings in the spring.”

The 24th annual quilt show of the Belknap Mill Quilters Guild was held this weekend at the Winnepesaukee Expo Center. “The

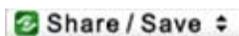
guild, which is comprised of more than 100 members, celebrated its silver anniversary as an organization this year while holding the quilt show for the first time at the Expo Center ... The quilts in the show received not only local, but global attention as a number of visitors and tour buses stopped by the Expo Center.”

After 42 years, the oldest art gallery in the Lakes Region was closing its doors. Through Oct. 12, the Loran Percy Art & Crystal Gallery on Route 11A was” holding an estate sale featuring the oil paintings of the Late Loran Percy as well as a 25% off sale on the crystal works of his daughter, Susan Percy-MacDonald.” Started in a garage in 1960, the gallery featuring Loran Percy’s paintings “moved to its current location in 1970 and 11 years ago became an ‘art and crystal gallery’ when Percy-MacDonald began to exhibit and sell her wares which also include paintings, there.”

Johnson & Dix’s Mobil “On the Run” convenience store celebrated its grand opening off Route 106 at the Belmont-Laconia line.

The 4,000-square-foot store “is owned by Johnson & Dix, an oil and propane distributor out of Lebanon which operates a total of 15 convenience stores throughout New Hampshire and Vermont.”

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