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The Record

Friday, Dec. 14, 2018
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The Jeff Woodburn case has been bounced back to circuit court after a judge vacated his previous order moving it from circuit to superior court at the request of state prosecutors.

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On The Cover



From left, Faith Santo is congratulated by her mother Donna and aunt Anne Knights following Littleton's win over Groveton at LHS on Monday, Dec. 10, 2018. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

CLOSE TO HOME

Christmas Magic

“You seem so excited about getting the Christmas tree this year,” one of my girls said to me last week as we sorted through our box of ornaments and contemplated where to hang each one. While some Decembers the tree trimming can seem as much holiday chore as happy tradition, it’s true that this year I was eager to get the tree up, to insert that key symbol of the season into the living room.



BY MEGHAN MCCARTHY MCPHAUL

I figure this is because I can feel the shift of this season in my children, from pure magic to – well, whatever comes after the magic fades. And because I ran into a mom of older kids, the day we got our tree, who said her offspring don’t even want to help decorate the tree anymore. And because I remember getting there myself – reaching the age, somewhere in teenage-dom, where I didn’t really want to help with the tree anymore either, when hanging ornaments onto needed branches felt more tedious routine than joyful ritual.

My kids aren’t there. Yet. But I can see the writing on the packaging of Christmas future. So I am embracing this season as much as I can – and trying not to let the bittersweet-ness of growing-too-fast children seep too deeply.

Instead of dwelling (for long) on the photo from five short years ago that popped up on my computer screen recently – the one of my now-non-believing son writing his annual missive to Santa in large, uneven, red and green letters – I focus instead on his sister’s excitement of getting the Christmas decorations out and strewing them about the house.

Rather than worrying (too much) about the littlest exclaiming incredulously that so-and-so doesn’t believe in Santa OR elves, I focus on her sleepy-eyed fascination each morning with finding our own magical elf, Jingle. And try to ignore the fact that she’s already let go of the Tooth

Fairy and the Easter Bunny, so Jolly Old Saint Nick is the only one left.

Although this season is busier than busy, I try (with occasional success) to step back, take a breath, and focus on the joy – and the goodness of that busyness. How lucky to be busy with things that I love – writing and coaching and being Mama – even if many dark winter mornings I long for a few more cozy minutes snug in bed.

Beyond the deadlines and shoveling and bills I wish I could ignore, there is skiing and cookie-making and finding and wrapping gifts and eating good food with people I love. My house smells like Christmas trees and ski wax – two of the happiest smells I know. And it sounds of children, sometimes fighting – with me or each other – but also sometimes, often, laughing and sharing stories and discussing which decoration should go where.

Shining lights fill the season – on the tree in my living room, from the glint of sunlight off snow, and shimmering in the so-dark winter sky. The other night, as we were driving through that darkness, my daughter looked out the window at the countless stars twinkling from an unimaginable distance away from our car, our town, our planet.

“There are so many,” she said, her voice filled with wonder. “They look like Christmas tree lights sparkling all around us.”

Perhaps, then, the magic of this most wonderful time of the year doesn’t fade so much as it shifts. Maybe it’s there to be found, no matter what form of magic we believe in, if only we look the right way, in the right places.

Meghan McCarthy McPhaul writes about an array of topics for various publications. More of her writing may be found at www.Meghan-McPhaul.com.

FYI

Waterford Man Faces Up To 6 Years For Fatal Crash

Following a felony settlement conference at Grafton Superior Court last month, a former Lower Waterford man charged with DUI negligent homicide in the 2016 crash that killed a Lisbon man faces up to six years in N.H. State Prison.

At the close of the Nov. 15 non-public conference, Manuel Aguilera, 25, who was indicted on two felony counts of negligent homicide in 2017, announced his intention to plead guilty, in a filing submitted by his attorney, Mark Sisti, of Chichester.

According to the notice of intent, the plea was negotiated by the defense and prosecution and involves a proposed N.H. State Prison term of 3

to 6 years, drug counseling at the prison, unspecified restitution, and no contact with the victim’s family.

A plea and sentencing hearing has been scheduled for Jan. 29.

Aguilera was accused by prosecutors of being drugged behind the wheel on Dec. 20, 2016, when his car crossed the center line in Littleton by Staples office supply store on Meadow Street/Route 302 and collided with a truck being driven by Loriston Shumway, 43, who later died of head injuries two days later after being airlifted to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon.

Aguilera and a passenger in his car, Aisha Fekay, 30, of Littleton, were transported to Littleton Regional Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

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Financial Troubles Force WREN To Hit Pause Button

Non-Profit To Close Three Months, Evaluate Future Options

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

BETHLEHEM — For Debbie Aldrich, sales staff member at the Bethlehem store of the Women's Rural Entrepreneurial Network, it's been a dream job.

"I've worked here for five years and have loved every minute of it," she said Tuesday. "I'm an artist myself and helping other artists sell their work is very rewarding."

Aldrich, however, is one of 13 paid WREN staff members who will be laid off beginning Jan. 1 when WREN, the nonprofit that has served North Country small businesses and artists for a quarter century, suspends or ends programs, closes space, prepares to sell some property, and spends 90 days to evaluate its options and reinvent for the future and looks at ways to create a sustainable future.

The store and gallery in Bethlehem, though, will remain open until Dec. 31, and WREN is hoping it can close out a strong month and holiday season.

"We would like to end that period with a

bang," said WREN Executive Director Alison Chisolm. "We are full-speed ahead until the stop and pause."

The decision to stop for three months comes after a year of financial struggles that WREN partly overcame after a successful fundraiser in April, only to find other and deeper money troubles six months later and saw items that sold last year not selling this year.

"We'd been holding our own until October when our sales were really off and the grants we had hoped for didn't materialize, said Chisolm. "We were operating on a thin edge, but didn't see this coming. We've been in rapid response mode and have been transparent with our members."

The programs that are ending are not the most viable for the future and include the incubator spaces in Bethlehem and Berlin as well as the second retail store at the Mt. Washington Resort, said Chisolm.

"Since we are ending our incubators, we are selling our real estate, in Berlin and at 22 Park Avenue [in Bethlehem]," she said.

WREN, however, will keep its Main Street property in Bethlehem, two condominium prop-

erties and the undeveloped Main Street parcel. "We are not randomly disposing of assets," said Chisolm.

The board of directors determined WREN didn't have the resources to operate the programs and devote itself to a reinvention for the future and decided the better investment was to allow the organization to catch a breath, take a pause, and advance a plan, said Chisolm.

"The WREN of the past is not the WREN of the future," she said.

After the 90-day pause, WREN members - there are about 800 members, with 75 to 80 percent in the North Country - and the community will be updated.

The hope is to reopen in the second quarter of 2019.

"We have hired a small transition staff that are contractors to help the board during the 90 days to implement this process," said Chisolm.

During that time, ideas will be floated to determine which programs would be sustainable, she said.

In any given year, WREN operates on an operating budget of about \$700,000, some years a little less, some a little more.

The first half of each year can be difficult financially because a large percentage of WREN

operating funds comes from its gallery and retail sales, which can be slow during the first few months of a new year.

"We do have seasonal fluctuations, but they are more problematic when we are operating on such a thin margin," said Chisolm. "It wasn't for lack of effort."

Going forward, WREN must be responsive to the environment in which it operates, and nonprofits like WREN are always reinventing themselves, she said.

WREN was launched in 1994 as a way to develop an eight-month training and support program to help 12 lower-income women become small business owners.

Today, WREN membership includes both men and women living in New England and outside of it and it has offered many resources and initiatives that include Local Works, its retail store offering products from several hundred vendors at its gallery, as well as two farmers markets, outdoor marketplaces, and incubator office space.

Since its creation, WREN has helped nearly 2,000 business owners, and nearly half of its membership operate their own businesses.

In a message to its members, WREN said it

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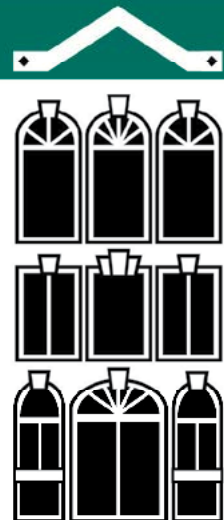
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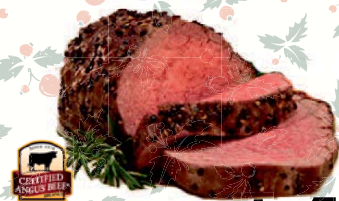
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News Briefs

Woodburn Case Bounced Back To Circuit Court

The Jeff Woodburn case has been bounced back to circuit court after a judge vacated his previous order moving it from circuit to superior court at the request of state prosecutors.

In an order issued Friday, Judge Thomas Rappa stated that based on further research of transferring criminal cases from circuit to superior court without a finding, he vacates his Nov. 26 order that moved it to Coos Superior Court.

A hearing on the state's motion to transfer the case to superior court - which Woodburn's defense had agreed to - has been

scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Dec. 19 at Haverhill Circuit Court in North Haverhill.

Cases in superior court are tried before a jury and cases in circuit court normally before a judge.

The case of Woodburn, the three-term Democratic state senator from Whitefield who was defeated in November in a bid for a fourth term, has taken several twists in recent weeks.

In granting a discovery motion filed last month by Woodburn's attorney, Donna Brown, Rappa said he finds there is a probability the confidential counseling records being considered for submission into evidence contain relevant material that might impact the alleged victim's credibility and there is a compelling justification for disclosure in that the information

contained in the records may be exculpatory for Woodburn.

Woodburn and the alleged victim, Emily Jacobs, of Jefferson, had attended couples counseling in Littleton, according to court records.

Woodburn faces four misdemeanor counts of simple assault, two misdemeanor counts of domestic violence, two misdemeanor counts of criminal mischief, and one misdemeanor count of criminal trespass for incidents prosecutors said occurred between August 2017 and June 2018.

He is accused of throwing a cup of water in Jacobs' face and throwing the empty cup that struck her face, hitting her in the stomach, kicking and breaking the clothes dryer in her house in 2017, and separate incidents of biting her in December 2017 and June 2018.

In September, Woodburn, 53, who was arrested Aug. 2, filed a notice of self-defense, alleging Jacobs tried to block or restrain him from leaving her and force was necessary.

On Oct. 9, the case's prosecutor, Assistant N.H. Attorney General Geoffrey Ward, filed a motion objecting to that notice, asking the court to strike it and arguing the self-defense claim has no merit, Woodburn has not specified as to which charges he intends to raise self-defense, and the use of such force by a defendant cannot be justified if he was the initial aggressor.

After one incident, Ward argues that Woodburn, when speaking with a friend, did not initially recognize he had committed criminal assault, but later admitted to the friend he kicked the dryer door off and recognized that "his anger had gotten the better of him."

In text messages between Woodburn and victim, Ward said victim confronted Woodburn about throwing the water and cup at her and he made admissions about committing the assault and allegedly wrote "I feel terrible about it" and had planned it hours before.

In a Nov. 26, 2017 email, Ward said Woodburn wrote to the

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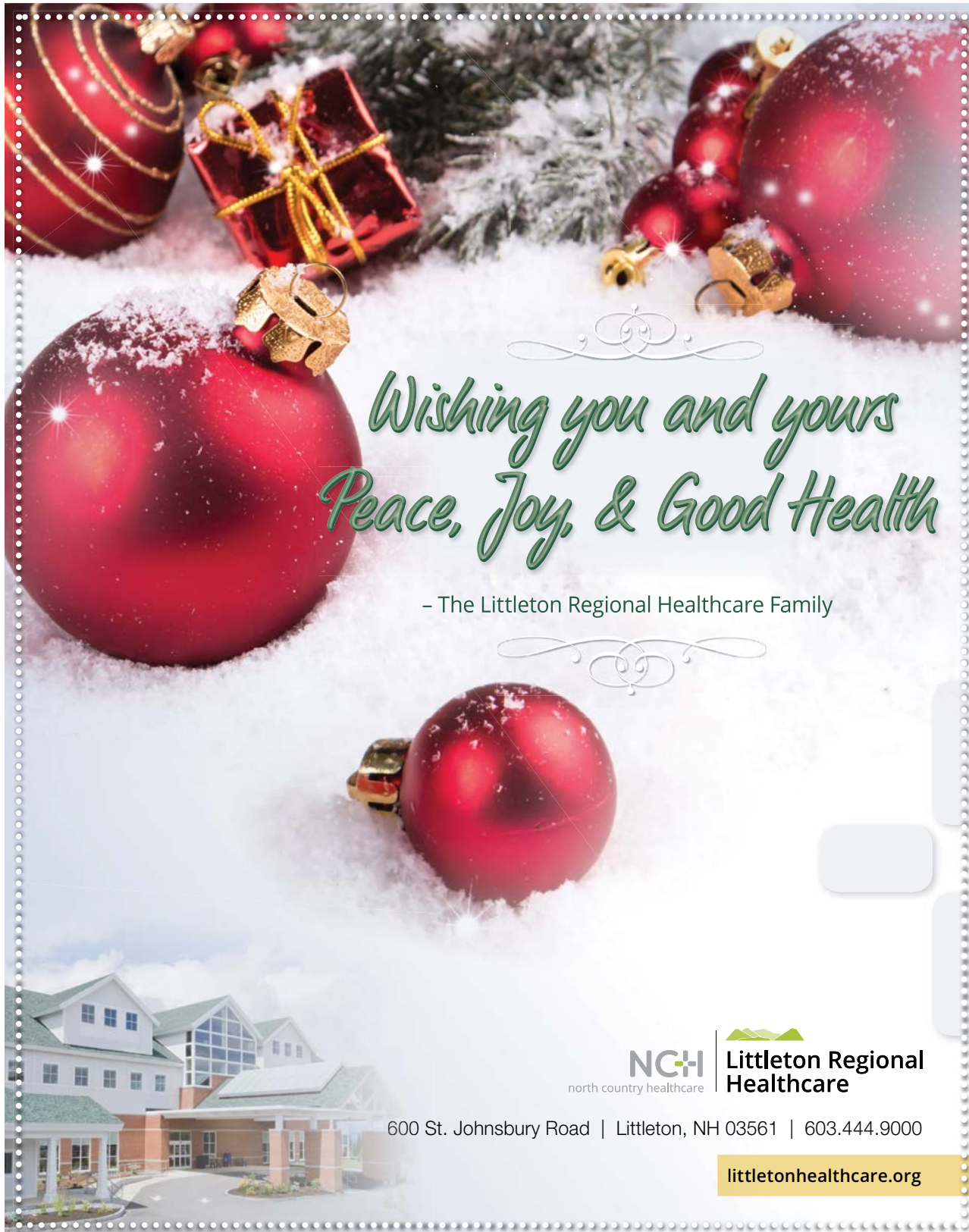
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News Briefs

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victim, "There is a dynamic in our relationship that causes me to lose my temper, yell, say unkind things and on rare occasions damage personal items. There is no excuse and I accept responsibility and will stop the behavior."

In his motion, Ward argued "There is no evidence to support the defendant's claims of self-defense, and specifically, that the victim blocked or prevented [Woodburn from leaving her] ... To the contrary, the evidence is that the defendant was unprovoked when he committed the assault, an assault he has made admissions to committing, and for which he apologized."

A mutual friend of Jacobs and Woodburn who was present during a speakerphone call and overheard the conversation between the two also heard Woodburn make admissions to biting her and kicking in the door to her home, said Ward.

Ward said a Dec. 25, 2017, entry in Woodburn's journal (given to prosecutors by Jacobs, at whose home it was allegedly left at) admits to kicking down the door, with Woodburn stating, "I've had a few explosive moments with [the victim] ... it's becoming regular and it scares me."

Woodburn has said he intends to fight the charges at court and looks forward to telling his side of the story and clearing his name.

Whitefield Elementary Embarks On Front Entrance, Office Security Renovations

WHITEFIELD — As schools across New Hampshire work to enact measures to make their buildings more secure, one in the North Country has taken a big leap ahead.

On Dec. 26, renovation work will begin on the front entrance to Whitefield Elementary School and on school offices.

The work comes after White Mountains Regional School District SAU 36 entered into a contract with Kingdom Construction, of Newport, Vt., at the Nov. 19 meeting of the SAU 36 school board, which approved the contract.

The work that is expected to wrap up on or before March 8 will increase front entrance, vestibule and office area security and its scope will include new front entrance doors and vestibule and a relocation of office space that will allow the receptionist or administrative assistant to see and communicate with people entering or leaving the school building.

Upgrades include security cameras, locking systems, Internet access, and additional security equipment.

In a statement, SAU 36 Superintendent Marion Anastasia said, "We are fortunate to have been awarded a Public School Infrastructure Grant that was available to New Hampshire public schools through the New Hampshire Department of Education for improving security in

schools. The cost of the renovation will be reimbursed 80 percent by the grant. We expect the project to cost \$195,000."

Michael Cronin, principal of WES, and Sharal Plumley, the school's vice-principal, said they are excited about the opportunity to upgrade the entrance and office area and said the renovations strike a balance between security and having a welcoming access for students and school staff members and member of the community.

During the renovation work, the front entrance, main office and school lobby will be closed to maintain the safety of students and staff members.

When school resumes after holiday vacation on Jan. 2, all students, staff and community members will enter the school through the side entrance to the gymnasium, a temporary entrance that will be secured with a buzzed-in system and security cameras.

The entry will transition through the gym to the far end of the lobby through the gym doors.

The main office will be temporarily located inside the hallway and the offices of the principals will be next to the temporary main office.

The offices of the nurse, school counselor and school resource officer will be accessible in the present locations.

Buses will continue to run on their regular schedule each morning and afternoon and bus boarding and disembarking will occur from the existing bus lane, parallel to the front of the school, but farther down the lane at the corner of the building near the side playground, said school district officials.

Students will then enter the building through the side gym door and the area will be marked with directional signage.

No changes are expected in parking.

Because of limited lobby space and the temporary entrance hallway, parents are asked to meet their children outside the gym entrance at 2:55 p.m. at end-of-day pickups.

Students will be escorted by teachers from their classrooms and there will be supervisions for all crossings to the parking lot.

Kingdom Construction has experience working in educational institutions during regular school operations and all of its crew members will have undergone background checks by the time on WES begins, said SAU 36 officials.

Ongoing updates for parents and community members will be provided throughout the three-month renovation.

"We're just so lucky this grant worked out for us," said Eileen Armstrong, paraprofessional at WES and school district communications coordinator who has children of her own in the school.

The renovations, she said, shows that the SAU 36 school district is looking toward the future.

In July, the N.H. Governor's School Safety Preparedness Task Force issued a 76-page report with 59 recommendations for the state's school districts in an effort to prioritize safety initiatives and keep schools safe and secure.

Recommendations include working more closely with first responders and beefing up

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Obituaries

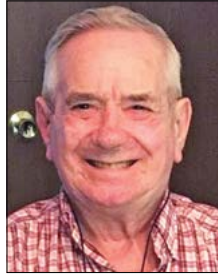
Edward "Gizzo" Boynton

Edward "Gizzo" Boynton, 74, of Littleton, N.H., passed away peacefully at his home on Thursday, Dec. 6, 2018. He was born August 12, 1944, in Bath Maine to Edward and Alberta (Paquette) Boynton. He graduated from Littleton High School in 1963 and enlisted in the U.S. Army where he was stationed in Germany. Upon his return, he settled in Littleton and began his truck driving career with Lewis Express Trucking Company and St. Johnsbury Trucking. After retirement, wanting to be involved in helping his town, Eddie ran for and was elected to the Board of Selectmen and was a member of Growth with Common Sense.

Eddie loved sports, especially football, where his favorite team was the New England Patriots. He also enjoyed movies, hunting and fishing. He was a proud member of the Elks Lodge, and Teamsters Union.

Eddie is survived by his two sons, Eddie and Brandon; a daughter Sandy; and a granddaughter Charlotte. Siblings include brother Kenneth Boynton and wife Dotty; sisters Carolyn Dickinson and her husband Stephen, Cindy Applegate, Cathy Fitzgerald and husband David, Sheila Keach and Lisa Boynton Smith and husband Mike; along with many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his parents, Edward and Alberta, and his sisters Sandra Webber, Bette Reynolds, and Linda Boynton.

Visiting Hours will be at Ross Funeral Home, 282 West Main St. Littleton, on Friday December 14, 2018 from 6-8 p.m. There will



Edward Boynton

be a memorial service on Saturday, Dec. 15, 2018 at 11 a.m., also at Ross Funeral Home, conclude with a committal service at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Cemetery. In lieu of flowers donations can be made to Littleton Meals on Wheels, P.O. Box 98, Littleton, NH 03561. To share memories and condolences go to www.RossFuneral.com

Barbara S. Gilbert

Barbara S. Gilbert, 94, of Grandview Drive, Lancaster, N.H., died Saturday evening, Dec. 8, 2018, at the Country Village Genesis Healthcare Center, Lancaster, where she has been residing after a period of declining health.

Mrs. Gilbert was born in Sheldon Springs, Vermont, on Nov. 26, 1924, the daughter of Joseph Andrew and Cora Almira (Ovitt) Cantell.

For most of her life Barbara resided in Groveton with her late husband Francis William "Cap" Gilbert. During WWII Francis was drafted by the U.S. Army and Barbara went to work at the Groveton Paper Mill where she was employed for 44 years. In 1998 she and Francis moved to Lancaster. She enjoyed her family, life and her home in Lancaster.

Surviving family members include her 3 children: David W. Gilbert of Burlington, Vt., Ronald J. Gilbert of Texas, Terri L. Peterson of Lancaster; 12 grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by Francis in 2002; a brother Lawrence Cantell and a sister Eleanor Brady.

Visiting hours will be held Sunday afternoon, Dec. 16, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Bailey Funeral Home in Lancaster.

A graveside service will be held in the spring in Northumberland Cemetery.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made in her memory to Coun-



Barbara Gilbert

try Village Genesis Healthcare, 91 Country Village Road, Lancaster, NH 03584 or The Morrison, 6 Terrace Street, Whitefield, NH 03598.

Please go to www.baileyfh.net for more information or to send an online condolence.

Charlotte Gowitzke Tewksbury

Charlotte Gowitzke Tewksbury died on Nov. 30, 2018. Charlotte was born Jan. 17, 1928, to Howard E. Gowitzke and Amy (Coldwell) Gowitzke in Dover, N.H. The oldest of three children, her siblings included Robert and Helen. Charlotte spent many years in Woodsville, N.H., graduating with the Woodsville High School class of 1945.

Charlotte married Roger Tewksbury on Jan. 1, 1949, and they made their lifetime home in Littleton, N.H., where they raised their three children: Janet, Howard, and Harold. She worked for many years with and retired from the NH Department of Employment Security. She was a very active member of the United Methodist Church in Littleton until declining health curtailed her involvement in church activities.

Charlotte was well known throughout the community as "the bike lady", preferring to ride her bike to work and do errands in town rather drive a car. She was often seen walking for exercise in the Cottage Street area. She enjoyed her grandchildren and always gave of her time to babysit them when the need arose.

She leaves behind her children Howard (Debbie) Tewksbury of Littleton, N.H.; Harold Tewksbury of Littleton, N.H.; two grandchildren Larry and Wendy, and a great-grandson Chase.

Charlotte was pre-deceased by her husband Roger, daughter Janet, and her sister Helen.

The family would like to give a special thank you to Sandy McCabe for the loving support and care given to Charlotte during the many years of her declining health.

A graveside service and gathering afterwards for family and friends is tentatively scheduled for April 27, 2019, at Glenwood Cemetery in Littleton, N.H.

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Otten Says Time Is Of The Essence For The Balsams

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

On Monday, Balsams developer Les Otten told the Coos County Delegation he is not as confident in the resort's redevelopment as he was five years ago, but said if the delegation supports an amendment in legislation that would restructure the project's financing, it might have a chance.

"There is no chance if we don't pass the legislation," he said. "I think the project is in grave time jeopardy now."

Speaking at a delegation meeting in West Stewartstown, Otten said time is of the essence and asked the delegation to support the creation of a Tax Increment Financing district, known as TIF or tax assessment district, for the unincorporated place of Dixville and allow the county to issue a \$28 million bond from a private lender that developers say is a critical financing piece in the total \$175 million development package.

The county would not own the bond and its involvement would not leave it or its taxpayers on the financial hook, he said.

Others, however, including a Coos County commissioner, asked the delegation to slow down and do its due diligence to ensure the county would not be financially liable if the project is not successful.

Otten's proposal comes out of Senate Bill 30, passed into law in 2015, which would have allowed the creation of a TIF only through the participation the N.H. Business Finance Authority, which had been asked by developers to provide a state guarantee on the \$28 million loan.

In August, after reviewing the Balsams application for the better part of a year, the BFA could not reach an agreement with Balsams developers and passed on the application, saying they asked for but did not receive assurances from the developer that would protect New Hampshire taxpayers from losing \$28 million.

"An alternative path without the BFA will require an amendment to the existing legislation, allowing for the county to be the issuer of the bond, without a loan guarantee," Otten said to the Coos County Delegation. "While this may seem complicated, there is no fiscal responsibility of the county for issuing the bond. It will simply allow for the tax assessment loan to be made by a lender who is providing the funds, and there is no financial risk or obligation

by the county, or by the state for that matter."

The amendment would allow for property taxes to be collected to fully be used for the repayment of the bond and not applied toward additional county taxes, which would be exempt, he said.

County tax payments would resume once the bond has been repaid, and the county will receive fees for administering the tax assessment district while the bond is outstanding, said Otten.

The amendment would need to be passed in the 2019 legislative session, which begins in January, he said.

State Rep. Edith Tucker, D-Randolph – who spoke of the successes of the revived Mountain Washington Hotel and Mountain View Grand Resort and said Otten's plan to move the Balsams forward would bring a third grand hotel back to the county – has submitted a bill for the amendment to SB 30.

"While this amendment does not guarantee the ultimate project success, preserving the value and ability to have the tax assessment district as intended will give us a chance at restructuring the overall project's financing," said Otten. "I feel we owe it to at least try."

If successful, a revitalized Balsams would constitute hundreds of millions of dollars in new investment and create thousands of jobs, and the market has responded favorably, he said.

The development's financing also includes \$20 million in developer equity; about \$35 million in other equity, including preferred equity from investors; \$18 million in equipment lease financing for the ski area; and \$53 million in construction financing.

Development spokesman Scott Tranchemontagne said the project had some real estate

See **Balsams**, Page 15

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News Briefs

Continued from Page 7

school security, to include surveillance cameras and more secure school entrances.

Landaff Study Committee Considers Fire Department's Fate

After eight months of research and study, the Landaff Fire Services Study Committee has issued its report on the pros and cons of keeping the town's fire department or disbanding it and contracting with Lisbon for fire services.

The question of whether to keep or dissolve the Landaff Volunteer Fire Department — one of only a handful of all-volunteer fire departments left in New Hampshire — has created a big split in a small town.

The committee was born at March town meeting when voters rejected two warrant articles that sought to authorize selectmen to enter into an agreement with the Lisbon Fire Department for fire protection and suspend the operations of the Landaff Volunteer Fire Department, and to raise \$18,000 to cover the expense of Lisbon fire service coverage.

Those articles were tabled when residents voted unanimously to authorize the creation of the committee — made up of two selectmen appointees, two members appointed by the LVFD, and one by the town moderator — to study and understand the fire department and the options for it.

The committee was tasked with issuing a report on or about Dec. 1, and released its 11-page report this week.

From the outset, committee members made it clear they are not a decision-making body and the report is one of information they were able to compile.

On Thursday, Doug Erb, committee chair and a former chief of the LVFD, told The Caledonian-Record that the goal now is to get the report — to be available at the selectmen's office and on the Landaff Ledger newsletter web site — into the hands of as many voters as possible so they can review it.

"We have one more piece we will add to it," he said. "The Twin State Fire Mutual Aid Association [made up of 23 area towns supporting each other for fires or emergencies] is reviewing ... how they charge those towns that don't have a fire department."

When that piece comes in, and with the committee's report complete, Erb said the committee's work is done.

"It will be up to voters and selectmen on where they take it from here," he said.

On Thursday, Landaff Selectmen Michael Ransmeier said he hasn't

yet read the report and the select board might have a better idea of the next step after its meeting next week.

Committee Findings

Among those listed in the report the committee met with were the Lisbon and Landaff boards of selectmen, Lisbon Fire Chief Greg Hartwell, Bath Fire Chief William Minot, Bethlehem Fire Chief and Twin State Fire Mutual Aid President Jack Anderson, Sugar Hill Fire Chief Allan Clark, and LVFD members and the Landaff Volunteer Fire Assoc.

According to the report, the LVFD compares favorably with other fire departments, reporting good turnout with training sessions, timely responses to calls, and high level of commitment of members, with 10 of the 16 current members having firefighter level 1 certification or higher training and five committed to pursuing level 1 training.

Both Anderson and Minot said the LVFD is a great asset to the Twin State Fire Mutual Aid.

The average annual costs of the LVFD run about \$30,000 annually and include \$20,000 in operational costs and \$10,000 in operational expenditures, representing about 2 percent of the combined town and school budgets, according to the committee's findings.

The committee compared the costs to the fire service expenses about 10 other New Hampshire towns with similar populations and tax bases and found that "Landaff's figures were about in the middle of the spending range.

They said, "If Landaff continues with its own fire department, it would seem reasonable to assume that these costs, with adjustments for inflation, could be maintained ... An advantage of retaining the existing fire department would be the voters of Landaff would continue to exercise control over any budgetary concerns."

According to Minot's report to the committee, "Once you lose your fire department, the voters lose control of the costs."

Lyman, a town of about 530 residents, contracts for fire service with Lisbon, and total costs increasing through the years, said Landaff study committee members.

In 2016, base cost plus per call charges for Lyman were \$18,084, costs in 2017 were \$23,084, and costs as of June 2018 were \$18,858.

The terms of any contract would be negotiated between the town of Landaff, with a population of about 415, and Lisbon.

Minot estimated that a major fire in a town without a fire department could cost in excess of \$10,000 and Clark estimated a small fire such as a first-alarm chimney fire could cost Landaff about \$6,000 per call.

In his report, LVFD Chief Jason Cartwright told the committee that recruitment and retention ebbs and flows with volunteer departments, whose members are always alert to new people moving into town and have ongoing recruitment efforts with various levels of success.

In the dispute several years ago regarding how the fire department handles donations and funds raised by firefighters, a trust fund was established that is controlled by the town with fire department oversight.

The committee wrote that some distrust arose from that process, communication broke down, and motives might have been misinterpreted, leading to a dispute with legal expenses on both sides.

Committee members said both entities felt a duty to safeguard the money and it is their conclusion that none of the funds were misappropriated.

"Everyone has a love of our town," they wrote. "The future of fire service is the most important issue going forward. The town needs to move forward and heal its wounds."

The fire station is in a 19th-century building, a former one-room schoolhouse, that has structural issues and lack of running water and septic.

Several years ago, a plan to build a new fire station for an estimated cost of \$850,000 was determined to be too expensive and never brought to the voters. In the meantime, the fire department building committee has explored new plans that would cost far less, and voters will have the final say on any proposal, the study committee wrote in its report.

In compiling the report, Erb said, "I feel our responsibility was to separate fact from fiction. We had a really good committee and at meetings would have people show up who were a great source of thought and direction and were a great resource for identifying issues we had to delve into. We covered a lot of ground."

North Country: Petition To FERC Poses New Threat To Biomass Plants

A petition to federal regulators by a Massachusetts-based group is posing a new threat to New Hampshire's wood-burning biomass plants, forest economy and the jobs they support, but a group of Granite State lawmakers is fighting back.

Last month, the New England Ratepayers Association (NERA) filed a petition with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission asking the commission to assert that it has the sole authority to set energy prices and to declare that New Hampshire's requirement for the utilities (Eversource Energy and Unitil) to purchase power from biomass plants at above-market cost violates federal law.

If FERC acts on the petition, filed Nov. 2, it would invalidate Senate Bill 365, which passed in veto override by the N.H. Legislature in September and kept or put back into operation the state's six biomass plants, including two in Bethlehem and Whitefield that employ about 20 area residents each.

NERA claims SB 365 is preempted under federal law because it "impermissibly sets rates for wholesale sales of energy" and violates FERC's regulations.

Not so, say 10 New Hampshire lawmakers that include state Sen. and Senate Majority Leader Jeb Bradley, R-Wolfeboro, and state Rep. Erin Hennessey, R-Littleton, who in their own filing in the case on Wednesday asked FERC to deny the petition.

They argue SB 365 simply uses the state's competitive procurement process law to require electric utilities to buy the energy of about 100 megawatts of eligible biomass at a 20-percent discount from the competitively procured rate.

"We passed this legislation because ... the Legislature found it to be in the public interest to promote the fuel diversity represented by these renewables as part of the state's overall energy policy," the lawmakers wrote FERC.

ISO-New England, which oversees New England's bulk electric

See **News Briefs**, Page 11

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Supervisory Administrative Unit #84, Littleton School District, Littleton, NH will destroy records that have been collected, maintained and/or used in providing special education services. This activity is in compliance with Federal, State and local policy. The destruction of data policy provides that records may be destroyed when they are no longer needed for educational planning purposes (except for Individualized Educational Plans). Please be advised that some of the information contained in these files may be needed later on for other purposes, such as eligibility for Social Security Disability benefits. **STUDENTS WHO WILL BE AFFECTED:** this destruction policy only applies to Special Education students who received services through June of 2011. **TO OBTAIN THESE EDUCATIONAL RECORDS:** If you wish to have these records before they are destroyed, please contact us at 603-444-2758 (dhampson@littletonschools.org) before January 31, 2019. Records will be provided only to a former student who is 18 years of age or older, or the legal guardian. We will notify the individual by phone when the requested records are prepared. The records will be obtained at the SAU office, 65 Maple St. Littleton, NH. Anyone obtaining records will be required to produce identification that contains both picture and signature.

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News Briefs

Continued from Page 10

power system, has expressed the need for fuel diversity, they said, and renewables can reduce generation fuel security risks.

“This legislation does not seek to interfere with FERC’s authority,” said the N.H. legislators. “To the contrary, FERC retains the authority to exercise regulatory oversight over all wholesale sales of electricity, including any power purchase contracts executed under [New Hampshire] RSA 362-H.”

Since NERA’s Nov. 2 filing, the petition has gained the support of intervenors, among them the office of the N.H. Consumer Advocate and electric utilities that include Eversource.

NERA, which supports Eversource’s proposed Northern Pass transmission line (denied by state site regulators in February), and Gov. Chris Sununu, who vetoed SB 365 before that veto was overridden by the N.H. Legislature, argue the above-market price the utilities pay for the biomass power gets passed on to electric rate payers.

Lawmakers and biomass supporters, however, say the additional cost to consumers is small and the requirement for the electric distribution companies to purchase biomass power maintains more than 900 jobs (120 total employed directly at the plants) and strengthens the jobs of many more residents who work in the logging, sawmill, trucking, heavy equipment, service, restaurant and supporting industries.

In its petition to FERC, NERA is being represented by Steptoe and Johnson, a Washington, D.C.-based international law firm that has represented Eversource Energy.

NERA filed its petition with FERC for a \$27,130 filing fee.

On Friday, NERA President Marc Brown declined to answer how

many members and donors NERA has and who they are, who specifically paid the \$27,000 filing fee, and if anyone directly or indirectly associated with Eversource or any other utility in New Hampshire donate to NERA or coordinate efforts.

“NERA does not disclose its members,” he said. “It is our belief that the focus should be on the merits of our arguments, not on the composition of our membership. We hired Steptoe and Johnson because they are a highly-regarded, well-known law firm with expertise in the energy industry and are especially experienced in matters before FERC.”

Representatives of Eversource were asked if anyone directly or indirectly representing Eversource donate to NERA, if anyone directly or indirectly representing the company paid any amount toward the NERA’s filing fee, and if anyone representing Eversource asked NERA to file the petition with FERC.

“We have not made any contributions to NERA,” said Eversource spokesperson Kaitlyn Woods. “We have filed as an intervenor in this case as the result will have an impact on the cost of electricity for our customers. Senate Bill 365 was enacted by the New Hampshire Legislature, and as a regulated utility, we will comply with whatever determination the FERC and the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission makes in this case.”

Brown said, “NERA filed the petition before FERC, and paid the filing fee, because SB 365 violated federal law and would increase electricity rates to New Hampshire’s families and businesses by nearly \$100 million dollars over the next three years.”

During a biomass rally at PineTree Power in Bethlehem in August, former state Rep. Herb Richardson, R-Lancaster, said the average cost to ratepayers on their monthly bills is \$1.78, the price of a cup of coffee and a small price to pay, he said, to keep local economies and local businesses and jobs healthy.

WREN

Continued from Page 4

will be hibernating and reinventing in the first quarter of the New Year as its efforts to turn around the operation in 2018 and preserve programs and staff didn’t work and it’s time for more dramatic changes.

Chisolm said the community at large will be invited into the conversation.

WREN’s Bethlehem location has been the home of the Local Works Marketplace and The Gallery at WREN.

All WREN memberships will be extended free of charge through March 31, classes, workshops and coaching are paused from Jan. 1 to March 31, the Bethlehem store and gallery are paused from Jan. 1 to March 31, the Mt. Washington store (WREN Local Works Gallery) closes Dec. 31, and farmers markets are paused from Jan. 1 to March 31.

As of this month, WREN has approximately 300 vendors and more than 200 artists.

As for the 13 staff members, they have worked in jobs that are “meaningful to them personally, but also financially,” said Chisolm.

The art medium of Aldrich, a Sugar Hill native who spent 21

years outside the North Country before returning, is watercolor, and she has had several shows at WREN and participated in membership shows for the past decade.

Being an artist and trying to find a job in retail that meets her needs financially and professionally is difficult because those jobs are few and far between, she said.

“It’s a great organization,” said Aldrich. “It’s made a huge difference in people’s lives. It’s enriched my life and everybody else’s.”

Area residents have asked how they can help WREN, said Chisolm, and they can help by shopping at WREN stores that carry local and artisan products and supporting the organization financially and also by staying engaged and supporting WREN during the reinvention process.

“Don’t count us out yet,” she said.

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- Little creek
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- Patted on
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- Over
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- Toss out
- So far
- Naval officer
- Dry
- Neighbor of Thailand
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- Uncultured ones
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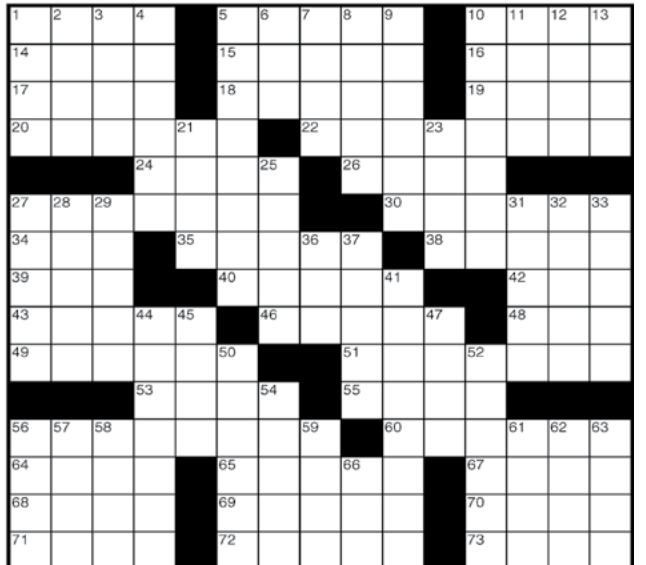
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- Not defy
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- Computer graphic
- Dee or Bullock
- Young horse
- Aleta’s son
- Corn storage
- “Iliad” writer
- Tracked down
- Hoop site
- Decorate the tree
- Ponytail site
- Still sleeping
- Blarney Stone locale
- Famous rib donor
- Mine finds
- Uniform color
- Car with four doors
- Strong, unpleasant smell
- Chute material
- Relates
- Donkey noises
- Wading bird
- Zeus or Odin
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- Smudged
- Papeete native
- and Sullivan
- Petri-dish medium
- Plumbing need
- Lasso parts
- Give, as a verdict
- Marshy tract
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To submit for this calendar and for event descriptions, visit www.caledonianrecord.com/calendar/

Friday, Dec 14

COMMUNITY

Acorn Club Storytime: 10:30-11:30 a.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@stjathenaeum.org, 8027451391. <http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

What a Disaster Series: San Francisco Earthquake and Fire for Children: 3:30-4:30 p.m., Littleton Public Library, 92 Main Street, Littleton. Mary Bingman Children's Librarian, littlibyouth@gmail.com, 6034445741. <http://littletonpubliclibrary.org/children/>.

5 Rhythms: Sweat Your Prayers: 5:30-7 p.m., Balance Bethlehem, 2087 Main Street, Bethlehem. Shoshanda Diamond, shodiamond@gmail.com.

<http://www.balancebethlehem.com/workshops>.

Family Game Night: 6-9 p.m., Littleton Community Center, 120 Main Street, Littleton. Littleton Community Center, 6034445711. <http://Littleton-CommunityCenter.org>.

Sheffield Community Caroling: 6-7 p.m., Sheffield Town Hall, 3210 VT Route 122, Sheffield. Kathy Newland, skyhigh9@hughes.net, 802-626-5164.

Sheffield Community Tree Lighting: 7-8 p.m., Sheffield Town Hall, 3210 VT Route 122, Sheffield. Ed and Audrey Richardson, edrichardson@juno.com, 802-626-9416.

MUSIC

Christmas Party: 8-11:55 p.m., Fraternal Order of Eagles 2629, 793 Main St., Bethlehem. Fraternal Order of Eagles 2629, 603-444-5795.

DJ & Karaoke: 8 p.m.-12 a.m., Fraternal Order of Eagles

Get Out

Arts & Entertainment In The North Country

MAGICIAN JIM MACDONALD

Popular North Country magician Jim Macdonald will appear at the Littleton Opera House, Littleton, N.H., on Saturday, Dec. 15, 6 p.m. in conjunction with a showing of The Polar Express and a visit with Santa Claus. All proceeds go to Littleton Parks and Rec programming. For more information contact Littleton Parks and Recreation or the Littleton Opera House.



2629, 793 Main St, Bethlehem. Charlene Virge, cg_v@roadrunner.com, 603-444-5126.

Saturday, Dec 15

COMMUNITY

Fifth Annual Walden Craft Fair: 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Walden School, 135 Cahoon Farm Road, Walden. Rachael Shedd, 802-

533-2213.

Readers Cafe book discussion: 9-10 a.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Laura Clerkin, lclerkin@bethlehemlibrary.org, 603-869-2409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

Santa at the Sheffield Town Office: 9:30-11:30 a.m., Sheffield Town Office, 37 Dane Road, Sheffield. Ellie Dole, elliedole@charter.net, 802-626-8398.

Craftsbury Farmers Holiday Market: 10 a.m.-1 p.m., Simpson Hall, Sterling College, 1322 N Craftsbury Road, Craftsbury Common. Larry Bohlen, 156church@gmail.com, 802-755-9030. <https://www.craftsburyfarmersmarket.com/craftsbury-farmers-holiday-market/>.

Chronically Awesome: Navigating the landscape of chronic illness in a quick fix world: 1-3 p.m., Littleton Public Library, 92 Main St, Littleton. Meagan Carr, littlib@gmail.com, 603-444-5741. <http://www.littletonpubliclibrary.org>.

Holiday Movie Event: Elf (Including Audience Participation): 4-5:30 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@stjathenaeum.org, 802-745-1391. <http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

Tree Lighting - Cookie Exchange: 4-6 p.m., Coventry Community Center, 168 Main St., Coventry. Martha, recreation@coventryvt.org, 802-754-2266.

Night In Bethlehem: 5-7:45 p.m., Green Mountain Mall.

Sunday, Dec 16

COMMUNITY

Family Dance Hour - Cultural Dancing with Children: 3:30-5:30 p.m., Neskaya Movement Arts Center, 1643 Profile Road, Franconia. Neskaya, movementarts@neskaya.com, 603-823-5828. <https://www.facebook.com/events/335113493954494/>.

Live Nativity Pageant:

6:30-8:30 p.m., Whitefield Common, 27 Jefferson Road, Whitefield. Community Baptist Church, cbc1816@myfairpoint.net, 6038372469. <http://www.cbc1816.church>.

MUSIC

Maple Leaf Seven Concert: 7-8:30 p.m., York Street Meeting House, 153 York Street, Lyndon. Jim Gallagher, info@uprightsteeple.org, 802-473-4208.

Monday, Dec 17

COMMUNITY

Golden Ball Tai Chi: 8:30-9:15 a.m., St. Johnsbury House, 1207 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Vicki Giella, vgiella@gmail.com, 603-638-4115.

Winter Wellness Workshop: 5:30-6:30 p.m., Balance Bethlehem, 2087 Main Street, Bethlehem. Kandis Barrett, kandisbarrett@gmail.com, 802-535-8298. <http://www.balancebethlehem.com/workshops>.

Tuesday, Dec 18

COMMUNITY

Free Playgroup for Ages 0-5: 9:30-11 a.m., NEKCA Parent Child Center, 115 Lincoln Street, St. Johnsbury. NEKCA Staff, 802-748-3201.

Storytime: 10-11 a.m., Co-

See **Get Out**, Page 14

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UPCOMING EVENTS brettonwoods.com/calendar

DECEMBER Find holiday spirit all month with festive decorations and special events like Cocoa with Mrs. Claus, Sleigh Rides with Santa, and Breakfast with the jolly couple. Fees apply.

DECEMBER 15 - 45TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION Celebrate our Sapphire Anniversary with special apres ski party and \$45 lift tickets!

DECEMBER 17 - IN THE MOOD FOR CHRISTMAS WITH THE GLENN MILLER ORCHESTRA The world famous Glenn Miller Orchestra returns to perform some of the greatest big band hits of all time plus holiday classics! Fees apply; includes three-course dinner. brettonwoods.com/glennmiller

DECEMBER 19 - 'GIRL POWDER' WOMEN'S SKI CLINIC Join three-time Olympian Miki Fera for this women's only ski clinic with other slope-loving ladies! Fees apply. brettonwoods.com/girlpowder

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Get Out

Continued from Page 12

bleigh Public Library, 14 Depot St., Lyndonville. Abby Johnson, abbjmjohnson3@gmail.com, 8026265475. <http://www.cobleighlibrary.org>.

Preschool Story Time: 10:30-11 a.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Bethlehem Public Library, lclerkin@bethlehemlibrary.org, 6038692409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

Reading Buddies: 4:30-6 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@st-jathenaecum.org, 802-745-1391. <http://www.stjathenaecum.org>.

ENTERTAINMENT

Bingo: 6-8:30 p.m., FOE Aerie 2629, 793 Main St, Bethlehem. Charlene Virge, cg_v@roadrunner.com, 603-444-5126.

Wednesday, Dec 19

COMMUNITY

Reading Buddies: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@st-jathenaecum.org, 802-745-1391. <http://www.stjathenaecum.org>.

Storytime: 10:30-11:30 a.m., Cobleigh Public Library, 14 Depot St., Lyndonville. Abby Johnson, abbjmjohnson3@gmail.com, 8026265475. <http://www.cobleighlibrary.org>.

BIAVT St. Johnsbury Area Support Group: 1-2:30 p.m.,

Grace Methodist Church, 36 Central St., St Johnsbury. support1@biavt.org, 877-856-1772. <http://biavt.org/coping-with-tbi/support-groups.html>.

Whatever Wednesdays: 3-4 p.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Bethlehem Public Library, lclerkin@bethlehemlibrary.org, 6038692409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

Learn to Meditate: 6-8 p.m., St. Johnsbury Shambhala Center, 17 Eastern Ave., St. Johnsbury. Caroline Demaio, cdemaio5@gmail.com, 8027489338. <https://st-johnsbury.shambhala.org/>.

Alzheimer Support Group: 6:30-8 p.m., Littleton Community Center, 120 Main Street, Littleton. Littleton Community

Center, littletoncommunitycenter@gmail.com, 6034445711. <http://LittletonCommunityCenter.org>.

Thursday, Dec 20

COMMUNITY

Free Playgroup for Ages 0-5: 9:30-11 a.m., NEKCA Parent Child Center, 115 Lincoln Street, St. Johnsbury. NEKCA Staff, 802-748-3201.

TOPS - Lyndonville: 10 a.m., First Congregational Church, 52 Middle Street, Lyndonville.

Beginning Computer Class: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., Cobleigh Public Library, 14 Depot St., Lyndonville. Cheryl McMahon, cobleighpl@gmail.com, 8026265475. <http://www.cobleighlibrary.org>.

Creative Kids: 3-4 p.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Bethlehem Public Library, lclerkin@bethlehemlibrary.org, 6038692409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

Cobleigh Library Origami Group: 3:30-4:30 p.m., Cobleigh Public Library, 14 Depot St., Lyndonville. Teresa Vasko and Abby Johnson, abbjmjohnson3@gmail.com,

Reading Buddies: 4:30-6 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@st-jathenaecum.org, 802-745-1391. <http://www.stjathenaecum.org>.

TOPS - Monroe: 6-7 p.m., Alice Frazer, alice.frazer@yahoo.com, 6036382358.

Meditation/Satsang: 6-7 p.m., Neskaya, 1643 Profile Road, Franconia. Christine Polito, christinepolito@hotmail.com, 978-491-9499. <http://neskaya.com/meditation/>.

Preschool Story Time: 6-6:30 p.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Bethlehem Public Library, lclerkin@bethlehemlibrary.org, 6038692409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

ENTERTAINMENT

Learn and Play Mah-Jong: 1-4 p.m., The Littleton Community Center, 120 Main Street, Littleton. Wendy S Clark, littletoncommunitycenter@gmail.com, 603-444-5711. <http://LittletonCommunityCenter.org>.

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Balsams

Continued from Page 9

investors who withdrew, but it still has about \$23 million from real estate investors, down from \$26 million.

The plan includes reconstruction of the Hampshire, Dix and Hale houses, a 400-room Lake Gloriette House hotel, a conference center, a marketplace, and a quadrupling in size of the Wilderness Ski Area.

Otten, who told the delegation that construction costs will only increase the longer the project is delayed, said he has been asked if the redevelopment can be downsized.

He said it can't, and a redeveloped Balsams, which would be a destination vacation, needs at least 100,000 people visiting in the summer and 100,000 in the winter.

Concerns

Those expressing concerns included Coos County Commissioner Rick Samson, of Stewartstown, who supported SB 30 in 2015, but said since that time he has studied the proposals and today cannot support the current one.

"Coos County taxpayers are currently being asked to support a county operating budget that will contain a deficit in excess of \$3 million," said Samson. "We have been doing this for the past several years and that is unacceptable to me and the taxpayers of Coos County."

TIFs are typically used to finance public infrastructure like roads, sewers and other requirements that make an area developable, and it is not standard practice to use that kind of financing for a single private development, and to do so would "reek of favoritism and improper routing of public money for private purposes," he said.

"To use the taxes that should go to the county or towns from the proposed project to pay off the loan is not in the best and proper spirit of the assessing and taxing of private property," said Samson.

He asked if the county is taking on any credit risk for the financing and questioned how the county can have zero risk, and said if the development fails the county could have a black eye that could last for decades and suggested it might then have to pay more in the debt market when it borrows on its own credit.

Stratford resident Jamie Sayen asked how any entity can issue a bond and not be obligated to pay it back.

"Much more needs to be learned about the proposed structure, including specific legislative requirements, before the delegation could even consider such a request that could ultimately have its taxpayers on the hook for this private developer's project," said Sayen.

State Sen. David Starr, R-Franconia, asked what is the estimated source of revenue and will it be enough to pay off the large loans for a large project.

The Balsams has been closed since September 2011.

Three months later, it was bought by Dan Hebert and Dan Dagesse.

Dagesse sold his share several years later.

Otten, who said he has put \$20 million of his own money into the redevelopment, came on board in 2014.

Otten assured the delegation that the county would not be liable as issuer of the bond and the plan gives the resort the opportunity to essentially be rebuilt from scratch.

"The challenges are significant, but the opportunity is what we need to focus on," he said.

After the meeting, Tranchemontagne said the project has about \$150 million in financing identified and the \$28 million loan would be the catalyst to secure some of the rest of that money.

State Rep. Wayne Moynihan, D-Dummer, the delegation chair, said if the N.H. Legislature approves Otten's request it would still need to go back before the county and the Coos County Delegation will ultimately decide if the redevelopment district can be a TIF.

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