



The Littleton Weekly Record

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2024

NORTH COUNTRY

Advocate Encourages
Local Arts Expansion

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FREE



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Police Department Welcomes Two New Officers
With Swearing-In Ceremony. **Page 4**

LITTLETON

After Delay, Trial Nears For Driver Charged In Pedestrian Death

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

A Lancaster truck driver charged for the 2022 death of a pedestrian in Littleton was recently awarded taxpayer money for his defense as his trial that had been scheduled for October has been rescheduled to early 2025.

At Grafton Superior Court, James A. Dingman, 45, who at the time had been driving a tractor-trailer hauling wood chips, faces a Class B felony count of negligent homicide and Class A misdemeanor count of vehicular assault for the Feb 9, 2022, death of Ralph E. Porfido, 79, on Littleton's Main Street in front of the public library.

Prosecutors said Dingman, who was heading toward Union Street and had momentarily stopped his truck during a traffic standstill, was distracted by the use of his cell phone at the time his truck rolled back into gear and struck Porfido, who was walking to the library and in the marked cross-

walk and was pulled under the truck.

Early in the case, the prosecution and defense began sparring over what evidence they said should or shouldn't be presented to a jury.

The case began in February 2023 with the filing of the misdemeanor count and later an unsuccessful motion by Leonard Harden, Dingman's attorney, to dismiss the charge. A grand jury on the felony count subsequently indicted Dingman.

In early 2024, Harden filed a defense expert line-of-sight analysis, which prosecutors objected to, arguing it does not meet legal standards for evidence.

Motions followed, including the defense's request to present animations of the incident, to which prosecutors also objected.

Before any evidence is presented to a jury, the judge will review it to determine the reliability of expert testimony.

The state's discovery includes forensic analysis of mobile phone data through software used by computer forensic experts.

According to case documents, Dingman has enlisted a forensic investigative services firm to interpret the conclusions.

Prosecutors have sought a line-of-sight analysis, diagrams, and animation about what Dingman could see based on the line-of-sight analysis filed by the defense expert.

Prosecutors have argued that the defense's analysis does not comply with the admissibility requirements in the New Hampshire Rule of Evidence and the data used is "flawed" and insufficient.

A hearing on the pending motions was held on Nov. 14.

As of Monday, the judge was still taking the arguments and presentations under advisement.

On Nov. 19, the court granted Dingman \$5,500 in public funding for his defense expert fees. His request for an additional \$10,000 was denied.

A final pretrial conference is scheduled for Jan. 21.

In June 2023, the case went to a criminal mediation proceeding without a successful resolution.

NEWS BRIEFS

Hiker Rescued From Mt. Washington
After Alleged Altercation

SARGENT'S PURCHASE – Mt. Washington State Parks Staff rescued an unprepared hiker from the summit of Mt. Washington Tuesday about 11 a.m.

Personnel initially reported a single male hiker with a dog arrived at the summit and forced his way into a State Parks Sno-Cat vehicle and refused to get out when requested. There was a brief altercation, but was quickly de-escalated, according to New Hampshire Fish & Game officials. A call to NHFG was made and due to the inclement weather it was decided the best course of action was for the state parks staff to drive the hiker down to the base where they were met by Conservation Officers.

The hiker, identified as Tristan James Murrin, 27, of Virginia Beach, Va. was reportedly on a cross-country trip hiking different trails and peaks along the way. He said he had attempted to hike in Maine the previous day and ultimately made his way to Mt. Washington. According to Park staff, James Murrin had called the summit the previous day and inquired about hiking to the summit. He was advised by the staff that due to the inclement weather, it was not advisable to hike. James Murrin did not take this advice and instead chose to hike with the intention of trying to "beat the storm."

James Murrin started his hike up Tuckerman Ravine Trail at 5 a.m. and made it to the summit around 11 a.m. He was found to be woefully unprepared for the summit conditions and had a large dog with him that had to be

See Briefs, Page 8



ON THE COVER: Santa Claus waves to onlookers during the 2024 Littleton Christmas Parade on Friday, Nov. 29, 2024. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

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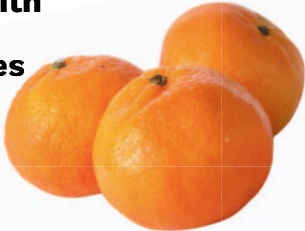
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LITTLETON

Police Department Welcomes Two New Officers With Swearing-In Ceremony

Town Budget Under-Budget, Mill Street Parking Time Extended

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — After a few years of hiring challenges, the Littleton Police Department is back up to capacity with two new officers who filled vacancies and were sworn in during last week's Select Board meeting.

Linda MacNeil, chair of the board, swore in Matthew Donoho and Timothy Monahan, both of whom are somewhat unique in that they had past careers before becoming full-time patrolmen for Littleton.

"They elected to go through their interviews and written tests and entered the police academy," said Littleton Police Chief Paul Smith. "It's a 16-week academy, paramilitary style. Upon completion of the police academy, depending on their date of hire, they then have to complete a 12-week field training program. Both officers have completed this."

Donoho grew up just outside

of Dallas, Texas, and lives with his wife, Shannon, in Littleton and they have family in the area, said Smith.

Donoho is a veteran of the Army who was a flight medic and special operations combat medic.

"He has paramedic training," said Smith. "He has a huge background in leadership and we are very lucky to have him on board at the Littleton Police Department."

Monahan, who lives in town with his wife and children, is no stranger to Littleton and had previously been a full-time firefighter/EMT with Littleton Fire Rescue.

Initially, Littleton police snagged Monahan part-time, said Smith.

"Tim actually came to Littleton with a part-time certification in law enforcement from 2015," he said. "Tim's a paramedic and he also has training as a photographer. In 2019, we put him on board as a part-time police officer, and when we had



Above left: Former Littleton Fire Rescue firefighter/EMT Tim Monahan, left, was one of two new Littleton police officers sworn in by Linda MacNeil, chair of the Select Board, during the board's meeting on Monday. **Above right:** Matthew Donoho. (Photos by Robert Blechl)

the openings late last year, Tim stepped forward and said I want to do a career change to become a full-time police officer."

Like Donoho, Monahan is a military veteran and combat flight medic.

"I have to say that for individuals starting this career having completed previous careers — Matt did 20 years in the military and Tim worked in Londonderry — they both have had an extensive background in leadership and running organizations such as ERs. To go to the police academy in your early 40s is a huge accomplishment with the physical



demands. They both did an outstanding job and they were both in the same police academy."

Monahan and Donoho graduated the academy in October.

Town Budget 9 Percent Under-Budget

As of Oct. 31, the municipal budget is again holding up solidly, said town manager Troy Brown.

"There are no areas of concern whatsoever," he said. "Revenues are solid."

The wildcard at this time of year is the weather.

But if the weather holds out and doesn't tax the highway, police, and fire departments,

the hope is that the course will continue, said Brown, who foresees no great concerns going forward.

"Right now, total general fund expenditures are 9.1 percent under-budget," he said.

"That's great, at this time of year," said MacNeil. "So we'll most likely end the year strong."

After the July floods, the board was looking at using \$500,000 from the undesignated fund balance for road and infrastructure repairs.

"Even though we were able to financially position the town to be able to access a half million dollars of funding through the unassigned fund balance, we had decided not to take that action unless we absolutely had to," said Brown. "Right now, with the budget you see, that's carrying the cost we incurred for those floods. That's another good positive statement as well."

Extended Parking, Transfer Station Manager Thanked

At a recent meeting, some Mill Street property and business owners suggested that the town change the time limit on the two Mill Street parking meters from 15 minutes to two hours, consistent with all other parking meters on Main Street, said Smith.

"It was initially set up for 15 minutes so that we have a rotation, but the owner of the

[Schilling] brewery as well as the people across the street are requiring longer stays for those two parking spaces," he said. "We're just fulfilling the request of the ownership."

If it was brought up by business owners that customers are spending longer than 15 minutes at establishments, it's reasonable to make all metered times equal, said Select Board member Kerri Harrington.

"Everything else is two hours," said Selectman Roger Emerson. "I agree."

The only parts of town that will remain under and over two hours are the parking spaces in front of the post office, which are 20 minutes, and the spaces at the Littleton Community Center, which are four hours, said Smith.

The board voted 3-0 to extend the Mill Street metered parking to two hours.

Saturday, Nov. 30, is the last day on the job for transfer station manager Steve Bean, who is departing the position to take a job elsewhere.

"I just want to let the community know how much as a Select Board we have appreciated Steve's leadership," said MacNeil. "His attitude, the ways he's trained his workers down there. It's well run, and he got a well-deserved accolade from NRRRA [Northeast Resource Recovery Association] a few months ago."

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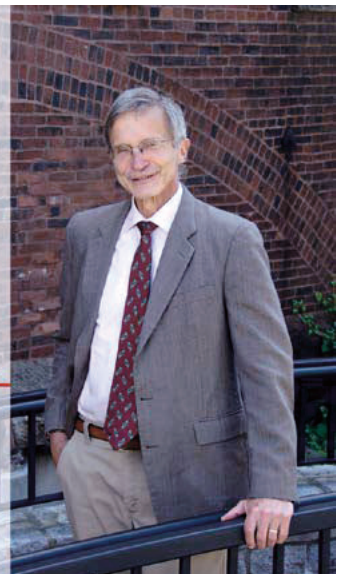
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/MO

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54,388 miles
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2024 DODGE HORNET SUV R/T AWD

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Stk.#J24180A
2,356 miles
SALE PRICE \$33,900



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2021 RAM 2500 REG CAB TRADESMAN 4X4

\$531
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Stk.#DT24230A
41,002 miles
SALE PRICE \$35,554



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2024 SUBARU OUTBACK SUV TOURING XT AWD

\$560
/MO

Stk.#J24144AA
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SALE PRICE \$37,500



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Stk.#J24128A
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/MO

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2022 JEEP GRAND WAGONEER SUV SERIES II 4X4

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OBITUARIES

ROY W. FRIZZELL

November 20, 1950 – November 30, 2024

PITTSBURG – Roy W. Frizzell passed away unexpectedly at his home on Dalton Road in Pittsburg, N.H., on Saturday, November 30, 2024, at the age of 74. Born in Lisbon, N.H., on November 20, 1950, Roy was the cherished firstborn son of Wilfred C. and Nathalie Edith (Whitehill) Frizzell.

Most of the following is true - Roy graduated from Pittsburg High School in 1969 and achieved his overly celebrated electronics degree from Concord Tech. He began his professional journey at Northeast Electronics in Concord, where he gained valuable experience. He later returned to his home to embark on a fulfilling 34-year career at Ethan Allen. During his tenure, Roy served as Plant Manager at the Island Pond Division, worked at the Burnham, Me., Division, and ultimately held the position of Quality Control Manager for the Northeast District. He retired with a legacy of excellence and dedication, so we understand.

In his retirement years, Roy embraced life to the fullest, spending winters in Florida and enjoying the great outdoors. A skilled hunter and avid fisherman, he built his first camp while still in high school and later cherished time at another camp just outside Island Pond, Vt.

Roy proudly served on the Island Pond Advisory Board of Community National Bank. A proud Master Mason, he was affiliated with the Evening Star Lodge #37 in Colebrook and a Sons of the American Legion member of the American Legion Post #47 in Canaan, Vt.

Known for his warmth and charisma, Roy had an extraordinary ability to connect with people. Whether among friends or strangers, he was quick to start conversations, sharing his humor and wit. He firmly believed that family and friendships were life's great-



est treasures and found joy in celebrating God's Wink and counting his blessings.

Roy is lovingly remembered by his son, Ethan, and his wife, Sue. He is also survived by his sisters Sally J. Masson and her husband George of Canaan, and Cathy McComiskey of Pittsburg; his grandchildren, Canaan and Hallie Frizzell, and Eric and Joe Petel; five great-grandchildren; numerous nieces and nephews; and his loving companion, Alison Lynch.

There is fresh joy in heaven with his parents, his brothers Peter J. Frizzell (1969) and Bradley A. Frizzell (2012), his sister Judy E. Roche (2024), his nephew Jeffrey G. Masson (1969), and his brothers-in-law Mackie McComiskey (1987) and Raymond Roche (2003).

Roy's life was a testament to kindness, dedication, and love. His legacy will live on the wisdom he shared, "I knew it would end this way."

Calling hours will be Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024, from 5 to 7 p.m. at the Jenkins & Newman Funeral Home in Colebrook, immediately preceded by a Masonic Funeral Rite at 4:45 p.m. A funeral will be held at 1 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Colebrook, with his son, Major Ethan Frizzell, chaplain of the Salvation Army, officiating. Burial will be in the spring of 2025 in the Colebrook Village Cemetery of which notice will be given.

Expressions of sympathy may be made to the Brown-Frizzell Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o Trustees of Trust Funds, Town of Pittsburg, 1526 Main Street, Pittsburg, NH 03592.

Condolences may be offered online by going to www.jenkins-newman.com

KENNETH NEIL ALDRICH

June 1, 1929 – November 26, 2024

Kenneth Neil Aldrich, 95, of Waterford, Vt., passed away surrounded by his family on Tuesday, November 26, 2024. Born in Whitefield, N.H., on June 1, 1929, the son of William Scott Aldrich and Nila Margaret (Smith) Aldrich.

On December 30, 1950, Ken married the love of his life, Henrietta Helen Noyes. Together they raised a family, and founded and managed a thriving business, Aldrich Formica Center. Ken taught Building Trades at Littleton High School and the Trade School in Saint Johnsbury prior to starting his own business. He was able to teach many students in the North Country to drive as a Driver's Education Instructor.

Ken loved to travel, camp, and hike, visiting all 50 states and most of the National Parks. He loved building things to make life easier. He enjoyed playing cribbage, marbles, and cards and spending time with family. In 1984, Ken and Henrietta joined the Littleton Squares. For 32 years, they danced around the country building friendships and reaching the highest challenge square dance level.

Ken was always creating and finding ways to meet the needs of others. His love for woodworking became a mission to ensure that the church building was maintained. He was always repairing things and helping family and friends with projects to help make lives easier. Ken was the person everyone would go to for advice about starting a project from building a porch, to building cupboards and other projects for their houses as well as helping great-grandchildren with projects. No project was too big or small for him. He always worked hard and did these jobs with a smile.

Ken built many things but the most important thing that he built was his Legacy. He has been able to pass down his love of God and hard work ethic to his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He has been a pillar of strength and resilience in all of our lives. He was able to lead



us with patience and love that very few are capable of providing. He had a way of quietly supporting others to have their own thoughts and experiences. His strong, encouraging, and gracious love made him the leader and role model for many people.

Ken was predeceased by his wife Henrietta "Honey" Helen Aldrich, and one sister, Margaret Campbell. He is survived by his daughter Sharon Marie Bessette and her husband Ronald Bessette, daughter Carrie Ann Baron, son Gregory James Aldrich and his wife Shari Aldrich; nine grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren; Bryan Bessette, his wife Hannah Bessette and their children; Peter Baron; Penny Young, her husband Joshua Young and their children; Pamela Adams, her husband John Adams and their children; Jennifer Anti, her husband Thomas Anti and their children; Nicholas Bessette, his wife Jennifer Bessette and their children; Ginger Montminy, her husband Kevin Montminy and their children; Daniel Baron and his child; Tiffany Lasnier, her husband Jonathan Lasnier and their children.

Services will be held privately. In lieu of flowers, you are invited to make a donation to Littleton Regional Healthcare, 600 Saint Johnsbury Rd, Littleton, NH 03561 <https://littletonhealthcare.org/about-lrh/your-gift-matters/donate/> or Caledonia Home Health Care & Hospice, 161 Sherman Drive, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819 <https://www.nchcv.org/support/donate-today>

To offer the family an online condolence, please visit www.rickerfh.com. Ricker Funeral Home & Cremation Care of Woodsville is assisting the family with arrangements.

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North Country Primary Care



Pictured (L-R): Jamie Wagner, RN, MSN, AGPCNP-BC; Ericka Dekle, MSN, APRN, FNP-C; John Montminy, DO; Gordon Black, DNP, APRN; Page Tomlinson, DNP, NP-C

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We are excited to welcome several new primary care providers to North Country Primary Care, Littleton Regional Healthcare’s designated Rural Health Clinic. Our newest additions include Dr. John Montminy, Ericka Dekle, Jamie Wagner, Gordon Black, and Page Tomlinson, all of whom are accepting new patients now!

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NEWS BRIEFS

Continued from Page 2

factored into the rescue situation. Although James Murrin initially spoke with the investigating officers, he refused to cooperate any further with the Conservation Officers conducting the interview and chose to walk back to his vehicle parked at the Pinkham Notch Visitor Center from the base of the Auto Road. Due to all the applicable information provided, lack of preparedness, and unwillingness to initially cooperate with State Park personnel, James Murrin will be recommended to receive a bill for the cost of this rescue conducted by the State Park.

Property Values Could Impact Education Aid

Rising property values may affect state education aid for Jefferson. Jefferson's property value increased by 23.5% from 2022 to 2023. If it continues to increase, the town could lose state extraordinary needs funds. In 2024-25, Jefferson received \$55,000 of those funds, which helped towns with a value under \$6.8 million for each student receiving free

or reduced lunch. Jefferson's current value is \$6.24 million. Mark Mangiello, the state Bureau of School Finance administrator, warned that "Jefferson is close to losing extraordinary needs grant funding if property values keep rising," during a White Mountains Regional School Board meeting on Nov. 21.

Extraordinary needs funds represent 10 percent of Jefferson's \$543,000 state funding for education costs. Mangiello stated that all families who qualify for free and reduced lunch need to complete the necessary paperwork to protect Jefferson's eligibility for those funds. "You don't want more child poverty, but if there is child poverty you want to make sure you have systems in place to get students to fill out those applications," Mangiello said, suggesting the school district could issue a "public service announcement about how important that money is, and how important filling out that application is to your school district."

Four of five towns in the White Mountains Regional School District currently get extraordinary needs funding: Dalton, Jefferson, Lancaster and Whitefield. Carroll exceeds the \$6.8 million per free and reduced student, and does not.

During COVID, fewer families filled out the free-and-reduced forms because they were not required during the pandemic. To view Mangiello's full presentation visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASIT1BIO9EA> For more information on state funding in WMRSD visit: https://core-docs.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/2001/WMRSD/5043074/School_Finance_Training_Handout_November_21_2024.pdf

Cross-Border Trade & Tourism Highlighted at Economic Summit

LITTLETON, N.H. — Strengthening economic ties between New Hampshire and Canada was a key focus at recent events, in-

cluding the New Hampshire-Canadian Trade Council's annual conference and the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce's economic development summit.

Held Nov. 18-19 at the Mt. Washington Hotel, the trade conference featured presentations from state officials, including New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs Commissioner Taylor Caswell. Attendees included Benoit Lamontagne, industrial agent for BEA, and District 1 Executive Councilor Joe Kenney. State Rep. Linda Massimilla, D-Littleton, is also a council member.

Former state Rep. Tim Egan, D-Sugar Hill, delivered the keynote at the 32nd annual economic summit in Littleton. Egan emphasized the council's role in fostering cross-border trade and highlighted the historic and economic significance of the New Hampshire-Canada relationship.

Generations ago, north-to-south routes facilitated Quebecois migration and trade, laying the foundation for economic and cultural ties that persist today, Egan said. Canadian companies now operate in Littleton and Berlin, and Canadian tourists and businesses continue to bolster the local economy.

"Canada relies on New Hampshire for aerospace and precision manufacturing, while softwood and aluminum from Canada support local industries like brewing and construction," Egan noted.

Tourism is also a growing sector, with Quebecois visitors frequenting attractions like Kingdom Trails in Burke and PRKR MTN in Littleton. Egan added that 20% of Dog Mountain's audience comes from southern Quebec.

Efforts are expanding beyond Quebec, with Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and British Columbia exploring partnerships in areas like modular homes, hydrogen power, and biotech.

Egan underscored New Hampshire's advantages for Canadian businesses, including no sales or payroll tax and streamlined border crossings. Annually, over 500,000 Canadian tourists visit New Hampshire, contributing to both the economy and the state's cultural heritage.

"Our cross-border relationships are vital to the economic health and history of New Hampshire," Egan said.

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WHITEFIELD

VETERANS HONORED WITH QUILTS OF VALOR

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

WHITEFIELD — Three local veterans were honored with Quilts of Valor during a ceremony at the American Legion Post 41 on Sunday.

John Tholl, of Whitefield, served as a staff sergeant in the Air Force.

David Marcotte, of Bethlehem, served as a sergeant in the Army.

Philip Fournier, of Littleton, served as a master sergeant in the Army.

"A Quilt of Valor is an expression of gratitude meant to comfort and thank you for your service while serving our nation," said Jane Graham, member of the Littleton-based Sew Far North Quilts of Valor group, which creates the handmade quilts for area veterans.

"We understand your commitment and acknowledgment that freedom is not free," she said. "We can never know the extent of your sacrifice while keeping us safe. On behalf of the American people, the Quilt of Valor says that your service

to our country is honored. The quilt is a reminder that those of us who quilt them are remembering all who made the sacrifice of service and it is our way of offering comfort and thanking them."

Tholl joined the Air Force in August 1964 and served during the Vietnam War.

His duty stations included Homestead Air Force Base in Florida, Bien Hoa AFB in the Republic of Vietnam, Eglin AFB in Florida, and Pease AFB in New Hampshire.

“John’s accolades include two Good Conduct Ribbons, Vietnam Service Ribbon, Vietnam Defense Ribbon, Marksman’ship Ribbon, Air Force Longevity Award, and the National Defense Ribbon,” said SFNQOV member Elaine French.

Tholl was honorably discharged in January 1972.

Marcotte joined the Army in 1984 and completed infantry school at Ft. Benning, Georgia.

“He then went to Ft. Devens, where he trained constantly, with patrols, firearm skills, and first aid,” said SFNQOV mem-



Three local veterans were honored with Quilts of Valor during a ceremony at the American Legion Post 41 in Whitefield on Sunday. Left to right: Army Master Sgt. Philip Fournier, Army Sgt. David Marcotte, and Air Force Staff Sgt. John Tholl, with members of the Sew Far North Quilts of Valor group. (Photo by Robert Blechl)

ber Donna Isherwood. "After being injured, he was assigned to Ft. Knox as a transportation NCO. He served our country until 1992 and rejoined 2003 until 2007. During his time in the Army, David received two Army Achievement Medals, two National Defense Medals, one Global War on Terror Medal, and the Armed Forces Medal with M device, and the Good Conduct Medal."

Fournier began his military career at 28, completed training

discharge in 1992.

The next day, Fournier enlisted in the New Hampshire Army National Guard, where he maintained Huey helicopters and was deployed to Bosnia for a 10-month peacekeeping mission in 2002 and 2003.

"In 2005, Phil was deployed to Iraq, where he served as production control and maintenance operations for the home base and three other forward operating bases," said SFN-QOV member Mary Ellen Carmen.

In his final role, Fournier was as an equal opportunity advisor for the Army National Guard staff.

“Enlisted soldiers are required to retire at age 60, forcing Phil to leave a job and brothers that he loved to begin a new journey, re-identifying himself as an excellent contractor in ci-

vilian life and spending happy times with his understanding and supportive wife and family and friends. He is a steadfast leader, a true NCO who always put his soldiers first.”

Recognized as Vietnam veterans and honored with Vietnam veteran lapel pins were Tholl and David Hannan, the chaplain for Post 41.

The Quilt of Valor Foundation was founded in 2003.

SFNQOV member Karen Locke asked those at Sunday's ceremony to reach out to a veteran who has been touched by war and nominate them for a quilt.

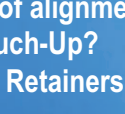
"Each and every veteran that has been touched by war deserves the comfort of a healing quilt, if not for themselves, for the ones left behind as a reminder that they are not alone in their sacrifice," she said.



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Advocate Encourages Local Arts Expansion

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — The arts are an economic driver.

That was the message from Jessica Bahrakis, founder of the White Mountain Arts Syndicate and NOCO Mural Project, who spoke of the power of public art in a rural economy during the 32nd annual Littleton Area Chamber of

Commerce economic development luncheon at the opera house on Monday.

As a featured speaker, she highlighted ways to leverage the growing number of arts tourists entering the region.

“When we think of economic development, the arts and culture sector is not usually the first thing that comes to mind,” said Bahrakis. “However, the components of this sector, like public art, cul-

tural activities and entertainment, are indeed a significant driver of economic prosperity in our community.”

Locally, the creative economy employs 13.6 percent of the workforce, she said.

Statewide arts employment totals 21,021 people, making for \$1.9 billion in state arts worker compensation, \$3.4 billion worth of value added by the arts, and 3.2 percent in value-added as a share

of the state’s economy and gross state product.

“When we compare the arts and culture to other sectors of the economy, we see that it ranks second in the state per value-added,” said Bahrakis.

Arts and culture include advertising, independent artists, writers, performers, architectural services, educational services, and arts promoters.

It also includes parts of other

sectors, such as construction and retail trade, relevant to producing arts and culture.

The growth trend in New Hampshire dipped sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic but is bouncing back just as sharply. It increased by 7 percent in 2022 (in line with the 7.8 percent increase in the overall U.S. arts economy) and remains steady.

“We are looking at a skilled workforce providing our region with human capital,” said Bahrakis. “Internally, this sector provides our area with creative and cultural capital, a significant addition to our region’s economic assets. It’s essential to think of the arts and culture sector not just as an artistic entity, but also as a business that provides cultural commodities ... At the end of the day, the creative sector contributes to our region just like a business. So how do we use this opportunity to increase our cultural capital?”

Arts travelers, she said, are ideal tourists.

“They stay longer, they spend more money, and they look for authentic experiences,” said Bahrakis. “The arts drive commerce to local businesses.”

Breaking down the numbers for event-related spending, she said that for 2022, an average of \$48 was spent per non-resident attendee and \$28 per local event attendee, equating to a total of \$8,736,557, with more than 1.5 million statewide attendees at local arts events.

“There’s so much potential to

use the economic multiplier effect, which essentially means that for every dollar spent on arts and culture a ripple effect generates additional revenue for the local economy,” said Bahrakis. “By incorporating arts and cultural activities into planning, development, and even our own organizational structures, we have a solid opportunity to increase this sector’s gross state product, worker compensation, and overall revenue growth for the area. So how do we get there?”

She said the community has historical, natural, cultural, and creative capital to draw on.

“Working with the economic assets of our area, we can use these collaboratively to build growth, sustainability, and resiliency,” said Bahrakis. “Littleton’s master plan, written in 2020 and specifically chapters 5 and 9, outlines ways to incorporate creative place-making and strategize growing a creative sector.”

She said the Littleton Cultural Arts Commission’s ongoing efforts have been a key driver in the growth of the creative economy.

“We can all collectively increase the area’s economic output by utilizing this commission, working together with businesses and organizations, and implementing arts and cultural activities into planning and development,” said Bahrakis. “Together, we can build an area rich in economic drivers, such as the arts and culture industry, forging a prosperous future.”



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LOCAL

Boys & Girls Club Expanding Childcare To Address North Country Needs

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON, N.H. — The Boys and Girls Club of the North Country is taking a significant step to address the region’s critical shortage of licensed, affordable childcare facilities by expanding its services with a \$1.9 million grant.

During the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce’s 32nd annual economic development summit on Monday, Executive Director Sandy Brackett outlined plans to remodel the club’s 18,000-square-foot clubhouse in Lisbon. The project, funded by federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) stimulus money, will create 39 new childcare slots for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

“We’re going to break ground in February, I hope,” Brackett said, emphasizing the urgent need for affordable childcare in the area.

She credited the club’s merger with the Boys and Girls Club of Central New Hampshire for enabling access to additional expertise and resources.

Brackett noted the childcare expansion will not only support families but also bolster the local economy. “Childcare is a necessary aspect of any growing economy,” she said. “Working families need affordable childcare to remain in the workforce.”

According to the Coos Coalition for Young Children and Families, the region currently has 1,813 children under five, but only 721 are enrolled in childcare programs, leaving 1,092 without access. Brackett said while the additional slots are a start, they only “scratch the surface” of the region’s needs.

The remodel will include three new classrooms—one each for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers—at the clubhouse near Evergreen Sports Center. However, Brackett cautioned that the \$1.9 million grant will not cover staffing costs, highlighting the need for qualified teachers and early childcare educators.

“This isn’t just babysitting; it’s early childhood education,” Brackett said.

The expansion follows the club’s recent licensing approval from the New Hampshire Bureau of Childcare Licensing, which opened up state scholarship opportunities for families. Eligibility limits have increased, allowing families of three earning up to \$89,000 to receive cost-sharing assistance.

Brackett expressed gratitude for local businesses’ ongoing support. “You need our working families to work for you, but they need childcare to do that,” she said. “Together, we’re building the workforce behind the workforce.”

Construction is expected to begin in early 2024, with a vision for additional community efforts to address the growing childcare crisis.

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