



THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2022

LOCAL NEWS

## May Mornings

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**Field Taking Shape. Gendreau, Merner  
Declare Runs For State Senate. Page 2**



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# Gendreau, Merner Declare Runs For State Senate

## Gendreau Enters Race With Hennessey's Support

BY PAUL HAYES  
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — Businesswoman and Select Board member Carrie Gendreau is throwing her hat in the ring.

The North Country native has announced a run for the District One State Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Erin Hennessey, R-Littleton, who won't be filing for re-election.

Gendreau, 61, is seeking the Republican nomination and already faces one known primary challenger, three-term state Rep. Tory Merner of Lancaster.

She enters the race backed by Hennessey, who described Gendreau as "the best candidate for the job."

Said Gendreau, "I am very proud to have Sen. Hennessey's endorsement. She has been an absolute superstar for the North Country for nearly a decade. I promise to do my best to continue her legacy and her fight to ensure that our region is properly represented down in Concord."

A first-time candidate for state office, Gendreau's campaign platform will focus on several key issues.

In a statement on her campaign website, [www.carrieorsenate.com](http://www.carrieorsenate.com), she wrote, "Family, faith, hard work and commitment to my community are my guiding principles. Protecting our personal freedoms, improving education, school choice, parental rights, and standing up for small businesses in order to strengthen our economy are my top priorities."

Reached on Monday, Gendreau elaborated on those priorities.

Drawing on her experiences as a small business owner and a college educator, Gendreau said she views vocational training and workforce development as top priorities.

"We know we have a workforce shortage and strain. And I'd like to be part of the solution," she said.

Gendreau also wants to tackle the regional housing shortage, uphold the quality of local healthcare, address issues that are affecting mental health, and protect and preserve the region's natural resources.

Beyond that, she wants to focus on constituent services and problem-solving.

"I view [serving in the state Senate] as a situation where I can be of help," she said.

Born and raised in Littleton, Gendreau boasts a resume with extensive private sector experience.

She owned and operated Emma and Co. Consignment Boutique in Littleton from 2009 to 2020 and was named 2018 Retailer of the Year by the New Hampshire Retail Association.

The store was named for her and her husband Bill's daughter, Emmalee.

Gendreau continues to run two businesses: The Training Connection, which offers corporate training programs, and B&C Home Improvements, a property redevelopment venture she co-owns with her husband.

Gendreau has also held appointed or elected positions at the local and state level.

As a Select Board member, she has guided the town through two important decisions in the hiring of a new town manager, Jim Gleason, and the formation of an in-house Littleton EMS service.

She described them as difficult choices, made in the face of dissenting opinions, that resulted in positive outcomes.

In addition, Gendreau is an advisory board member and a longtime professor at White Mountains Community College, a director at Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank, a certified

See **Gendreau**, Page 13

## Merner Looks To Move Up From House

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

Days after State Sen. Erin Hennessey, R-Littleton, announced she will not be seeking reelection, a state representative from Coos County has announced his candidacy for the New Hampshire Senate seat.

On April 29, three-term State Rep. Troy Merner, R-Lancaster, outlined his goals if elected and highlighted the legislation he has advanced this year as a state representative and what he would support if he becomes the next senator of Senate District-1, which encompasses all of Coos County and towns in northern Grafton County.

"My priorities are to keep doing what I've been doing the last couple of terms, filing bills that are important to the North Country and being a strong voice for the North Country," he said.

In the New Hampshire House of Representatives, Merner serves on the Judiciary Committee and the Science, Technology and Energy Committee, making him one of only a handful of state representatives who serve on two full-time House committees, a workload he said has helped prepare him for the Senate, where senators often end up on three committees.

He also fills in on House committees when needed, such as this week on the Municipal and County Government Committee.

"And I wrote a lot of bills that were quite successful this year, three or four big ones for the North Country," said Merner.

He was among a group of lawmakers to write the amendment for Senate Bill 271, which authorizes the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission to amend its previous orders regarding the Burgess Bio-Power in Berlin and keep the biomass plant going until November 2023, as part of the effort to meet renewable energy goals in New Hampshire, support the health of the

state's forests and the timber industry, and boost jobs and the economy in the North Country.

Another piece of legislation will establish a committee to study the assessment of power generation and utility transmission and require that the utility companies now owning generating plants that Eversource Energy sold five years ago report the information needed for accurate property tax assessment.

"We have nine major plants in the state that haven't been reporting since 2017," said Merner. "There's a lot of money missing. We will form a commission to fix the problem."

One successful bill he didn't think stood a chance was a cost-of-living increase for state employees making less than \$30,000 a year. It involves a one-time \$500 payment that Merner, citing inflation as a primary catalyst behind the bill, called a good start.

A bill he didn't sponsor but said he fought hard for, was to require the state to pay 7.5 percent toward the New Hampshire Retirement System.

It comes after the state used to pay 35 percent before that state contribution was completely eliminated, putting the burden on schools and municipalities.

"The cities and towns have been stuck paying that full freight contribution to the state pension," said Merner.

He was also a successful sponsor of House Bill 1005, which seeks to establish a New Hampshire Low-Grade Timber and Wood Emerging Market Commission to study the state of the existing low-grade timber and market economy, and new and emerging markets for low-grade timber and wood products.

In addition to being able to continue focusing on the North Country, Merner said he was also attracted to run for the Senate because he has had the experience of working with New Hampshire Senate members on a lot of the legislation.

See **Merner**, Page 13

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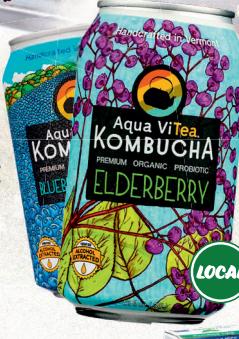


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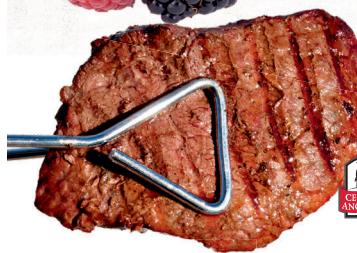
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## News Briefs

## School Board Preps For Lakeway Study, To Hold Listening Sessions

LITTLETON — Lakeway Elementary School faces an uncertain future.

A feasibility study aims to provide some clarity.

Slated to begin this summer, the feasibility study will recommend whether to renovate or replace LES, and determine if Grades 5 and 6 should be relocated to the middle/high school.

If all goes according to plan, the School Board will consult the feasibility study, choose a proposal, and put it forward for 2023 town meeting approval.

In anticipation of the study, the Littleton School District is already gathering feedback on the Grades 5 and 6 relocation proposal to determine its viability and public support.

Superintendent William Hart recently met with PreK-12 faculty to discuss the matter, and the School Board will hold public listening sessions later this year, with dates and times to be determined.

School Board Chair Matthew St. John called for two sets of listening sessions — one before the feasibility study begins and another after it's underway — to give the community ample opportunity to weigh in on grade relocation, and ensure that the option selected has maximum public buy-in.

In doing so, the School Board hopes to increase its chances of success in March.

The Littleton School District is taking a deliberate approach because, in their opinion, they have to succeed this time around.

The 70-year-old Lakeway Elementary is long past its life expectancy, past efforts to address the building's many shortcomings and structural deficiencies have been unsuccessful, and proposals to build a new elementary school failed in 2009, 2019, and 2020.

St. John said "doing nothing" was no longer an option.

Noting that the feasibility study offered three paths for LES — renovation, new construction and grade consolidation — he said, "The only path we should not go down is the 'Do nothing, keep Lakeway as it is' path. That is an increasingly untenable position."

Key to the decision-making process will be whether Grades 5 and 6 are relocated or not.

The number of elementary school students will determine the size, scope and cost of renovating or rebuilding Lakeway.

Hart told the School Board on May 2 that relocating Grades 5 and 6 could lower elementary school project costs by potentially millions of dollars.

Of course, dollars are only one consideration.

The School Board, with input from the public and faculty, must determine if the middle/high school can accommodate roughly 100 fifth and sixth graders, whether it supports those students' educational and social needs, if it poses physical or behavioral risks to students, and if grade relocation is cost-effective.

During their meetings with Hart, faculty members said the middle school was a more developmentally appropriate setting for Grades 5 and 6, but they worried about staffing issues and exposing younger students to more mature actions and conduct.

Such a move would impact everything from parking to lunch scheduling to recess at both schools, in different ways, they said.

Grades 5 and 6 would benefit from additional resources, but their interactions with older students would have to be monitored and controlled, they said.

According to the School Board's timeline for the feasibility study, a Request For Proposals was published on April 21, proposal submissions are due on June 1, and proposal selection will take place on June 6, with a contract being approved at the School Board meeting on either June 6 or 20.

Whoever is hired will determine facility conditions and deficiencies and recommend corrections for those deficiencies, along with cost estimates and project timelines.

For more information see the RFP at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1wS2Oo9SCn1VwfizDZlkXz9jSKdWEjJ5A/view>

## Old Man Remembered At Profiler Plaza

Nineteen years ago Tuesday, Brian Fowler — current president of the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund — was sitting in his office in Laconia when a Union Leader reporter called him, asking if he knew that the Old Man of the Mountain had fallen from the side of Cannon Cliff.

Fowler's reaction? Disbelief.

A few seconds later, the state geologist called to confirm what happened and Fowler was told by the Governor's office to get up to the site of the former state icon to see what had happened via helicopter.

"It was gone, all gone," Fowler remembered on Tuesday at Profiler Plaza, the memorial to the Old Man in Franconia Notch State Park. "I was astonished to see all the rotten granite left on the cliff up there, meaning the Old Man had deteriorated from the inside out and toppled forward instead of sliding off."

Fowler and other members of the Old Man of the Mountain Legacy Fund, now considered a "Friend" group to the state park that

manages the completed memorial site, gathered on Tuesday to remember the former natural landmark and provide updates on the activities happening within the site.

Fowler explained that an effort to link Profile Lake to a trout breeding pond with a fish ladder has "morphed" into a research project since non-native fish species, capable of devouring fledgling trout, have been discovered in the lake.

"Everyone seems to recognize this as a problem," Fowler said, noting that concerned parties will be meeting at the site near the end of the week to try and figure out a solution. "I think the right people are going to talk to each other and smooth out the wrinkles."

Another tentative project is an AmeriCorps detail that will be assigned to the site this summer to complete design and rehabilitation work on the Pemi trail, located on the west side of Profile Lake. The trail work will create a hiking loop that Fowler says will be a nice addition to the site for visitors.

As far as next year's 20th anniversary of the Old Man's fall from Cannon Cliff, a "crystal clear" plan has not been made yet, said Fowler.

"We're sort of stirring the pot and seeing what we can do," he said. "But it's not going to pass without something special happening."

More information, including granite stone pavers still for sale, can be found at [oldmannh.org](http://oldmannh.org)

## Littleton Community Raises \$13K To Support First Friday Arts Concerts

The morning after Littleton voters narrowly rejected a warrant article that would have

See News Briefs, Page 8

ON THE COVER: Multiple departments battle a fire at 4 Corey's Mobile Home Park in Littleton, N.H., on Monday, May 2, 2022. No one was injured. (Photo by Paul Hayes)



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Sale Price \$23,679. Payment calculated with \$2,995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% APR for 84 months to qualified buyers.

**2016 LINCOLN MKC RESERVE AWD SUV**  
Stk.#J22026A – 68,111 MILES  
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Sale Price \$23,590. Payment calculated with \$2,995 cash or trade equity down at 4.20% APR for 75 months to qualified buyers.

**2020 FORD ESCAPE SE AWD SUV**  
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Sale Price \$26,497. Payment calculated with \$2,995 cash or trade equity down at 4.20% APR for 75 months to qualified buyers.

**2019 JEEP CHEROKEE LIMITED 4WD SUV**  
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**2019 RAM 1500 CLASSIC EXPRESS QUAD CAB 4WD**  
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Sale Price \$32,345. Payment calculated with \$4,995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% APR for 84 months to qualified buyers.

**2019 DODGE DURANGO GT AWD SUV**  
Stk.#DT21222B – 37,189 MILES  
**\$465** /MO

Sale Price \$37,629. Payment calculated with \$4,995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% APR for 84 months to qualified buyers.

**2018 CHEV SILVERADO 2500HD EXT CAB 4WD**  
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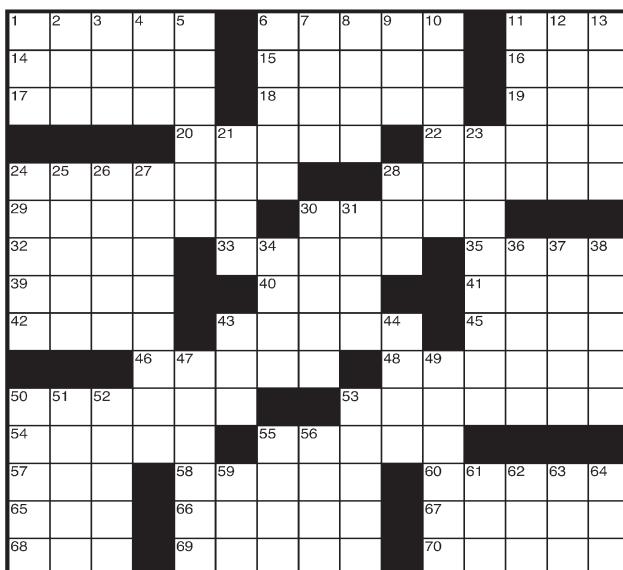
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54 Chinese  
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55 Stern  
57 Tiny spasm  
58 Furry tree-  
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67 Snare  
68 — Moines

## PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED



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28 Charge it  
30 Tea biscuit  
31 Burglar's "key"  
34 Filth  
36 Once-common  
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47 Darth Vader's  
real name  
49 Flammable gas  
50 Decided on  
51 Cultivate  
52 Cuzco builders  
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## Obituaries

## Seth Goldblatt

Our beloved Seth Goldblatt, known locally as bluesman "Lefty Yunger" died peacefully in his sleep on April 25, 2022. Seth was born in London, England in 1973. He attended Littleton High School until his junior year and then early admission to Simons Rock College, and attended two years. He married Jennifer Wells of Lancaster, and years later they had an amicable divorce and remained lifelong friends.

Seth lived in Barcelona, Spain for 14 years, returning back to Concord, Vt. in 2012 where he lived in a cabin on his mother's property. He had a lifetime career as a blues musician and played with bands locally as well as internationally, including playing keyboards on one tour with the well-known band, The Animals.

Seth had a passionate love of gardening, was an amazing cook, and he graciously shared the fruits of those labors with family and friends on many occasions. He grew over 40 varieties of hot peppers and made and bottled his own hot sauce under the label of Lefty's Passionate Hot Sauce. He also kept a variety of chickens, quails, and animals which he loved. His chickens would often sit on his shoulders as he worked in his beautiful, thriving gardens. Seth had a sincere generosity of spirit and was wildly funny and charismatic. His joy for life and his humor were contagious. He was a sweet, kind, playful fellow who will be missed by so many. Tragically, Seth struggled with alcohol addiction, which was the final cause of his untimely death.

He is survived by his mother Eleana Sussman, father David Goldblatt, stepmother Michele Walsh, brother Noah Goldblatt and his sisters Jessica and Rose Goldblatt; also his niece Tess Barber, nephews Leonardo Barber, Rowan Goldblatt and Wilson Goldblatt, sister-in-law Hilary Goldblatt, brother-in-law Francis Vidal.

There is also a long list of an extended family of aunts, uncles and cousins. Seth had many friends around the world who loved him but special mention of his beloved friend and musical mentor, William Flick.

Seth has been cremated and his remains will be interred at a private cemetery on his mother's property. Sometime over the summer there will be a service for family and friends, to be announced.



Seth Goldblatt

## Allen E. Holmes

A graveside service for Allen E. Holmes, 75, of Lost Nation Road, Groveton, N.H., who died Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, will be held Saturday, May 7, 2022, at 1 p.m. in the Forest Vale Cemetery, Jefferson. Reverend Richard Boyden, pastor of the Christ United Methodist Church, Lancaster, will officiate.

Arrangements are under the direction of Bailey Funeral Home, Lancaster, N.H. For more information, please go to [www.baileyfh.net](http://www.baileyfh.net).

## Tamira L. Crawford

A reminder that a graveside service for Tamira L. "Tammy" Crawford will be held in Summer Street Cemetery, Saturday, May 7, at 10 a.m. Reverend Richard Boyden, pastor of the United Methodist Church, Lancaster, will officiate.

Arrangements are entrusted to Bailey Funeral Home. For more information or to send an online condolence, please go to [www.baileyfh.net](http://www.baileyfh.net).

## Joyce "Marilyn" Mason

Joyce "Marilyn" Mason, 83, of Guildhall, Vt., was called to Heaven, on April 15, 2022,

after a long, courageous battle

with cancer.

Marilyn was born in Groveton, N.H., on July 20, 1938, the third child of James and Dorothy Peers (Cook-Wheeler).

She was raised in Groveton and attended the Groveton Schools.

Marilyn was active in the Stark Woman's Club catering weddings, and the club's suppers. She also helped with Sunday School.

She married her soul mate, Harley E. Mason Sr., and lived the life of an Air Force wife raising her children as they traveled the country. The family moved back to New England in 1978 and settled in Guildhall, Vt.

Marilyn was an artist though she would never boast about being so talented. She painted numerous seascapes over the years which were inspired by living near the Pacific Ocean in Hawaii and California. She also painted the Great Redwoods of California. Additionally, Marilyn left her mark on the ceramic world by producing many beautiful pieces of pottery.

She was also an avid reader spending any free time immersed in a novel when



Joyce Mason

she wasn't making homemade donuts or her fabulous apple pies.

Surviving family members include her husband of nearly 69 years, Harley E. Mason Sr., and her children, Harley E. Mason Jr., and wife, Carmen of Milan, N.H. Her daughter, Cheryl (Mason) McVetty, and husband Brad of Maidstone, Vt. Grandchildren, Corey Mason, and wife, Jamie, of Groveton, N.H. Bryan Mason, and partner, Melinda Lang of Milan, N.H., and Jason McVetty, and partner, Olivia Frable, of Maidstone, Vt. Great-Grandchildren, Mathew Mason, Riley McVetty, and Kenley Mason. Many nieces and nephews. A sister, Juanita Benway, of Stark, N.H., two brothers, James (Reggie) Peers, of Stark, N.H., and Wayne Wheeler of Concord, N.H.

Marilyn was predeceased by her son, Steven Mason in 1982, and a grandson, Harley E. Mason, III in 1998.

A celebration of Marilyn's life will be held at the Ridgewell Cemetery in Guildhall, Vt., on Saturday, May 7, 2022, at 3 p.m.

Donations in lieu of flowers may be made to the St. Jude Children's Hospital <https://www.stjude.org/> or to a charity of one's choice.

Arrangements are entrusted to Bailey Funeral Home, 210 Main St., Lancaster NH 03584. For more information or to send an online condolence, please go to [www.baileyfh.net](http://www.baileyfh.net).

## Peter Laurent Roy

Peter Laurent Roy, 46, of Monroe Road, Bath, N.H., passed away unexpectedly on Wednesday, Jan. 19, 2022. A public committal service will be held at the St. Joseph's Catholic Cemetery on Friday May 20, 2022, at 1 p.m.

For more information or to offer an online condolence, please visit [www.rickerfh.com](http://www.rickerfh.com).

Ricker Funeral Home & Cremation Care of Woodsville is in charge of arrangements.

## Nancy Carlisle Beaton

A reminder that a Mass of Christian Burial for Nancy Carlisle Beaton will be celebrated Saturday, April 30 at 11 a.m. in All Saints Church, Lancaster. Reverend Matthew Schultz, pastor, will officiate. Burial will follow in St. Francis Xavier Cemetery, Groveton.

Arrangements are entrusted to Bailey Funeral Home, 210 Main St., Lancaster, NH 03584. For more information, please go to [www.baileyfh.net](http://www.baileyfh.net).

# Founders: New Christian School Has Strong Pilot Year

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — The founders of a new Christian academy in Littleton said the school's 2021-2022 pilot year was better than anticipated after more parents quickly showed an interest.

Currently housed on the upper floor of Elevate Church, at 70 Redington St., is the Epic Christian Academy, a private pre-kindergarten through eighth-grade school founded by husband-and-wife team, Kevin and Anjali Reagey, who are two of the four current teachers.

Last year, Kevin had been a public school teacher at the Haverhill Cooperative School District and Anjali was home-schooling their children.

Kevin Reagey said they both saw problems with their individual situations, with Kevin wanting to make a switch from a public school teacher and Anjali wanting to leave what can be the isolation of home-schooling.

They decided to establish their own school.

Coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, Reagey said they didn't know what to expect.

"We thought it would be the three of us and didn't think we'd have more than a dozen kids," he said. "Here we are with 30 and we've hired an additional teacher and we're hiring another teacher for next year. Next school year we are planning for 48. We're looking to grow."

An open house on April 21 drew nearly 10 families, said Reagey.

"People are looking for alternatives," he said. "They are looking for what we're offering, and that is a place that is built for the kingdom of God. We provide a whole learning environment that is structured around building an understanding of what the biblical worldview is and being able to celebrate and centralize godly concepts and values."

The academy is a separate entity from Elevate Church (Kevin and Anjali both serve on the church's leadership team) and it has its own board of directors and is working on obtaining its nonprofit status.

For the 2022-2023 school year, there will be an additional classroom downstairs, where the goal is to eventually move the school into a 10,000-square-foot space eyed for renovation.

Epic's 2021-2022 pilot year began by using the Prenda micro-school learning model, adopted by New Hampshire as a response to the pandemic, that is aligned with state academic standards and adapted to individual student academic levels and has a focus on project-based learning.

Reagey said the initial timeline was to take 2021 and 2022 as a planning year, but the Prenda curriculum model (that Epic has since moved away from) allowed Epic Christian Academy to gain momentum and open earlier than expected.

Because Epic Christian Academy is a private school, parents need to pay tuition, but Reagey said the academy was given an

other boost through the Education Freedom Accounts, which also helped lead to the earlier opening.

The freedom account program was passed into New Hampshire law beginning with the 2021-2022 school year and it allows New Hampshire families to use some of the state education funding for their child to pay for tuition at the school of their choice.

Epic is currently open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Thursday.

"We eventually want to go pre-K through 12, but a lot depends on when we move into the new space," said Reagey.

He called the demand for the school "remarkable."

"Families are coming in and they are loving that we are providing something that celebrates discipleship in a school system, and also promotes Christian values and the development of a biblical worldview, and creates a place that protects that and promotes the development and the teaching of those things," he said. "We don't want to be a school where we are just pouring out knowledge. We want to be a place of teaching and training and how do we train people to live a life of faith ... The spiritual life, the academic life, and social life — we want to put equal emphasis on all of those."

The school, said Reagey, also has a focus on providing a rigorous academic experience through individualized education, project-based learning, collaborative group efforts, and small group instruction that keeps each class at no more than 12 students.

Classes consist of multi-age groups, with grades kindergarten through second grade in one class, third through fifth grades in another class, and sixth through eighth in another.

The original objective was to make the academy into a regional Christian school in three years, but the high demand has led it to become a regional pre-K-8 school in just three months, said Reagey.

"We have students coming all the way from Jefferson, to St. J and Lyndonville and Waterford, then we have Haverhill, Littleton and Bethlehem," he said. "It's been word of mouth. We haven't done anything. My wife and I met with all the parents, met with all the kids, and they said this is something they want."

John and Tori Fouch, of Littleton, enrolled their 5-year-old daughter, Tori, in kindergarten at Epic Christian Academy.

"I would say the prompt would be that my wife and I are passionate about following Jesus and we had a big desire in our hearts to be in a school environment where Christ is at the center and we can invite God into our learning experience," said John Fouch. "That has been an absolute must for us. It's been amazing."

Reagey said there can be two approaches to Christian schools, one an evangelistic approach that is open to all, and the second a more closed approach that is about discipleship and demonstration of commitment and dedication.

Epic Christian Academy is based on second, he said.

"One of the reasons we named it Epic Christian Academy is

because the epic is about the hero's journey," he said. "We know that every student and person who comes into this school has an opportunity to do something amazing in this world. We want to create an environment that nurtures that."

Anjali said the academy recognizes that students are a hero in their own stories and the aim is to champion students in their journey and to help them discover their talents and abilities and what they love and who they are.

"We want to speak what parents are speaking at home, we want to partner with them to help them raise their children," she said. "It's a partnership versus a drop-off. I think parents are really hungry for that in this day and age."



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# News Briefs

Continued from Page 4

raised \$12,000 for main-stage concerts during First Friday Arts events this summer, the Littleton Cultural Arts Commission started receiving messages from individuals and businesses offering their own financial support.

"Hours later, we were getting people reaching out on Instagram, saying they wanted to support us with donations of all sizes," Adam Reczek, LCAC member and Littleton's opera house manager and cultural arts coordinator, recalled on Monday.

On March 22, the commission formalized the process, offering tiered sponsorships ranging from "high fives for life" to business logos on the four concerts' stage banners and social media shout-outs.

After two weeks, the local community had already pledged over half of the stated \$13,000 goal (the commission realized the concerts' actual costs were slightly higher than the figure included in the warrant article). Last Thursday, the commission announced that the pledge goal had been reached.

"Thank you to all of our sponsors — we quite literally could not have done this without you," they posted on Instagram. "It takes a special community to make things like this happen, and the North Country is the real deal."

Reczek said, however, that he wasn't surprised that the community came together to support the event series.

"I think what last year's First Fridays really set in stone is that this community is a bunch of people who really care about the place they live in, who really care about the arts community here and what it drives for local businesses," he said.

"I was surprised by the overwhelming generosity and the expediency with which [the \$13,000] was funded, from individuals all the way up to businesses offering thousands of dollars," Reczek added, noting how helpful it was to have the donations pour in to be able to line up the fast-approaching summer events.

The main portion of First Friday Arts — planned for the first Friday of this June, July, August and September — is totally

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free, consisting of businesses and public spaces all over town staying open later than usual and hosting pop-up booths of local artists, musicians, makers, demonstrators and chefs. Each event culminates in a large, open-to-all main-stage concert hosted at Riverfront Commons — across the covered bridge from downtown Littleton.

Reczek explained that each concert runs about \$1,000 for artist fees, \$1,500 for stage rental, \$250 for private security and \$200 for portable toilets in addition to marketing costs and other smaller details. This summer, snow fencing to separate out a beer garden serving rotating brews from North Country breweries will also be a cost.

Last year — First Friday Arts' pilot year — the concerts were jointly hosted by Littleton Main Street, Inc., and funded through an LMSI-won grant and a private donation.

This year, however, the Cultural Arts Commission wanted to become a little more independent. Their original thought process was sponsorships, but then they figured it would be worthwhile to try and emulate what neighboring Bethlehem does each year, raising \$9,000 for concerts held at their gazebo.

"We were kind of ambitious and went all out, trying to raise the entirety of our necessary funding through that," Reczek said. "We honestly didn't expect it to go through, we were just hoping that it might."

More information about the summer events, including local sponsors and a sign-up form to participate in a variety of ways in this year's First Friday Arts events, can be found at littleton-firstfriday.wordpress.com.

## Hearing Planned Amid Worry About Welcome Center

A public hearing is being scheduled to update residents on the progress of the new welcome center under construction and to address ongoing concerns by some residents that were most recently expressed in an open letter to Franconia residents.

"We're going to schedule another public hearing just to bring everybody up to speed and try to address anybody's concerns," Kim Cowles, administrator for the town of Franconia, said Friday.

The hearing is tentatively scheduled for May 16.

In the meantime, Cowles said the anonymous donor funding the project has agreed in writing to double the amount needed to cover what is roughly a total \$500,000 project.

(On March 21, the Select Board authorized signing a contract with Conneston Construction for a maximum price of \$425,000).

While some residents have told town officials they are supportive of the new welcome center being built between the

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library and town hall, others have expressed opposite views.

The letter of concern by resident Jim Walker, that was forwarded to town officials on Wednesday, opens with a reference to the Select Board and asks, "Do you want your town transformed by 3 people without your consent? ... This is the project we voted down last year, however, this project is going forward on shaky grounds."

At the 2020 town meeting, residents added \$100,000 to the buildings maintenance expendable trust fund to renovate the public restrooms and warming hut by the skating rink beside town hall.

At 2021 town meeting, voters rejected, in a 31-36 vote, a total of \$275,000 for the construction of the new welcome center on the spot of the warming hut, which was then slated for removal and was removed several weeks ago.

Soon after the 2021 vote, an anonymous donor contacted the town and agreed to pay for the welcome center's construction.

Walker, in his letter, had questioned if the town can legally use the \$100,000 to renovate restrooms in a building that no longer exists because the money is now being used for the new construction of a different building.

He said the project also appears to be a violation of RSA 31:95-b,V which prohibits any town funds being used in conjunction with funds received as a gift.

"There are also other projects possibly in the works for Franconia from this donor — and they could all happen without your approval or consent," he wrote. "We are very grateful for the many generous donations made to our town including this one, but major projects should not appear like mushrooms after a rain, but rather from careful planning and consensus. These could be good projects for Franconia and it may not be, however, it was rushed through and is proceeding on shaky grounds without your consent."

"The Select Board should obtain the approval and consent of the town to build a \$500,000 Welcome Center ... The town must secure a commitment to the additional gift and hold a hearing for the same ... There should be an article in next year's town meeting to require approval by the town for donations by a warrant article passed at a town meeting."

He encouraged residents to contact the Select Board, as well as the local state senator and state representatives and the New Hampshire Department of Revenue Administration.

Following concerns brought to town officials in early April by Walker, town legal counsel Laura Spector-Morgan provided a legal opinion that concludes the Select Board can legally proceed with the current plan and the town can expend the \$100,000 added to the town building trust fund for a new welcome center.

On Friday, Cowles said construction is moving forward and the donor has since committed to giving more money.

"We have a committal letter from the New Hampshire Charitable Association saying that the donor will commit up to \$1 million for this project, so we're covered financially," she said.

If Spector-Morgan needs to issue another legal opinion addressing Walker's letter or any new concerns, she can do that, said Cowles.

Conneston Construction is planning to complete the project within a 12-week time frame.

The goal is to have the restrooms open for Old Home Day and complete the landscaping and paving in July or August, she said.

On Friday, Walker said it appears that with the donor's renewed commitment there won't be any town expenditures for the building of the welcome center, which was a problem before because it was a violation of RSA 31:95.

It also appears that the use of the \$100,000 for the renovation of the restrooms is in the clear because new restrooms will be built and it will be good to hold a hearing on the new gift to remove that uncertainty, he said.

However, Walker has doubts about the overall town authori-

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# Littleton Select Board Member/LWL Commissioner To Recuse During Lawsuit Talks

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — The town's newest member of the Select Board is in a unique position.

It's not because she serves as both a board member as well as commissioner for Littleton Water and Light.

Other Littleton residents have simultaneously served in both roles.

What makes her situation stand out is that Linda MacNeil, appointed to the LWL commission in 2021 and elected to the Select Board in March, is serving at a time when both the town and LWL remain locked in a lawsuit that, at least for the moment, shows no signs of being resolved any time soon.

To avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest, MacNeil announced this week that she will be recusing herself as both a Select Board member and an LWL commissioner whenever each body takes up discussion of the litigation.

"I want it noted on record, and it needs to be specific in the minutes, that any time the board goes

into nonpublic or even public session to discuss any of the litigation with Littleton Water and Light, I will be recusing myself from that discussion," MacNeil told her fellow Select Board members during the April 25 board meeting. "I will physically leave the room so that I will not be involved in that. I have also recused myself as a Littleton Water and Light commissioner on any of those discussions, so I have no knowledge of any of the litigation going forward."

On Thursday, she said she sought legal counsel (not town legal counsel) about her situation.

"Eddy Moore and Schuyler Sweet have served on the board commissioners and the Select Board, and Eddy Moore for years, so there is no conflict there," said MacNeil.

Legally, she said she could be involved in the litigation as either a Select Board member or LWL commissioner, but thought it better to recuse herself from both bodies during lawsuit talks.

"The counsel that I sought said it puts me in a rather tenuous position," said MacNeil. "Then I said I will just recuse myself from both boards when they discuss the litigation."

Both the LWL commission and Select Board

agreed to hold any litigation discussions at the end of their meetings, and that will enable MacNeil to leave either meeting and let the remaining two members of each (LWL has three commissioners and the Select Board three members) discuss what they need to discuss, she said.

In December 2020, the town of Littleton filed a petition at Grafton Superior Court, alleging that LWL is not complying with the Municipal Budget Act.

The town asks the court to declare that LWL is a department of the town and to compel LWL to turn over its year-end financials to the town for consideration and approval at the annual town meeting and turn over any excess LWL funds to the town.

LWL argues that it is not a town department and is an independent entity under its 1903 charter.

According to the case summary, the litigation is scheduled for a trial management conference in September.

In her other roles serving the town, MacNeil, who for two decades served as a Littleton planner and for a number of years chaired the Littleton Planning Board, also serves as the Select Board's ex-officio member of the planning board.

She does not vote on the planning board, but is present for meetings and brings information back to the Select Board to keep the board aware of planner activities and decisions.

MacNeil is also the Select Board's liaison to the Riverfront Commons Committee, and as a committee member, she recently voted to select the engineering group to advance the town commons project.

"We will probably be facilitators on any public meetings," she said.

Since her election in March, MacNeil has reached out to the town's departments.

"I have met with all of the department heads to get a lay of the land, to understand how their departments run and how many employees report to them, so I know more details of what their function is," she said. "I've known the departments for years, but to actually spend some time with each of the department heads and ask them questions about how they function and how they get stuff done was very informative for me. They were all more than willing to answer all of my questions. It hasn't even been two months [on the Select Board] yet, but I feel I've learned a lot."

## News Briefs

Continued from Page 8

zation of the welcome center.

"I think they went back and addressed one component of the problem, but the overall approval of this project I'm still not convinced is authorized," he said.

In an email on Friday to town officials, Walker said while the denied appropriation in 2021 legally lapsed that year, he believes the purpose of that warrant article does not lapse and remains in effect.

"Admittedly, this is a gray area as discussed by the New Hampshire Municipal Association," he said.

In an excerpt he included, the NHMA advises towns to be careful.

The association said that while a legal argument can be made that such an action is appropriate, "on a practical note the voters at town meeting said 'no' to the purpose" and "the conservative advice will be to take the issue back to the voters to try again."

"Recommended best practice is to take the issue back to the voters, however, there was nothing in this year's town meeting to approve this project," Walker wrote to town officials. "I would welcome to hear arguments that indicate this is a legal undertaking. I am not yet convinced and fear we are spending and building something that is not authorized."

On Friday evening, he said he is not aware of any residents enlisting an attorney to look into the legality of the town's process or anyone mulling legal action against the town.

## Firefighter Airs Complaints About Department

HAVERHILL — The Haverhill Fire Department has denied allegations that the department ignored safety concerns.

Assistant Chief Keith Charpentier told the Select Board on April 25 that claims made by firefighter Anthony Smith were unfounded and were rooted in Smith's continued opposition to the merger of North Haverhill and Haverhill Corner Fire into a

single town department.

Attending the Select Board meeting remotely, Charpentier told Smith, "If you cannot put some things behind you, I think it's time that we had a serious conversation on whether or not you continue with us."

Smith, a firefighter with over 20 years of experience, presented the Select Board with a list of complaints.

Among other things, he claimed that HFD vehicles and equipment were not properly maintained, damaged vehicles went months without repairs, and that Haverhill Fire Chief once failed to provide station coverage when a Haverhill Corner crew was called out to a structure fire.

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[about it]. That's why I'm here," Smith said. "There will probably be emails about insubordination but I don't care. I want it to stop, I want things to run smoothly. This is ridiculous."

Town Manager Brigitte Codling and Assistant Town Manager Jennifer Boucher said it was their first time hearing the complaints.

They promised to take Smith's claims to Human Resources and the Fire Department's leadership.

When asked why he approached the Select Board instead

**See News Briefs, Page 11**



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# Sudden Abortion Focus Shakes Midterm Election Landscape

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leaked draft of a Supreme Court abortion opinion that would overturn the landmark Roe v. Wade decision is shaking the U.S. political landscape in what has been expected to be a difficult election year for Democrats.

While the Democrats decried the draft, they suddenly have a clear, unifying message. The real possibility that abortion could be outlawed in dozens of states in the coming months could animate their dejected base — especially young voters, people of color and suburban women, who are unhappy with the pace of progress under Democratic leadership in Washington.

Republicans, meanwhile, are struggling to contain their excitement at the prospect of winning a decades-long fight, even as they suggest Democrats are exaggerating the likely real-world impact of a Roe reversal.

The draft opinion surfaced just as the most competitive phase of the primary season was beginning, with races unfolding Tuesday in Ohio and Indiana. While the political fallout will take months to settle, this much is clear: Rarely in the modern era has a Supreme Court case had the potential to so dramatically reshape American life and politics.

"I hope that women across this country are going to rise up and realize this isn't theoretical anymore," warned Michigan Sen. Debbie Stabenow.

Republicans have been fighting to ban abortion since before the Supreme Court's 1973 Roe ruling, but on Tuesday many offered only modest estimates of the political impact of a decision eliminating the legal guarantee of the right.

The draft ruling, which the court emphasized was not final, would become the law of the land only after a formal announcement, which is expected in late June or early July. And privately, GOP strategists have worried that overturning Roe ahead of the election could trigger an anti-Republican backlash.

South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham acknowledged that a sweeping change in the nation's abortion laws might help Democrats in November, but he suggested the election would depend more on the state of the economy than the explosive social issue.

"They will have an issue to talk about. We will have an issue to talk about," Graham said of Roe being overturned. "I think it will be a new issue, particularly at the state level, but I think most people, quite honestly are not single-issue voters."

Voters in some states would be affected more

than others.

Twenty-two states in all, largely across the South, West and Midwest, already have total or near-total bans on their books — almost all now blocked in court because of Roe. They include deep-red states with elections this fall including Idaho, Missouri, North Dakota and Utah. But they also include high-profile swing states including Pennsylvania, Arizona, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin.

A White House adviser said a Roe reversal would serve as a galvanizing force for key segments of President Joe Biden's coalition, giving Democrats a clear message to link to the midterm elections. At the same time, the adviser, who requested anonymity to discuss internal strategies, acknowledged that an abortion change might not be enough on its own to overcome political headwinds come November.

Biden's popularity remains weak amid increasing concerns about inflation and the direction of the country. History also suggests that the party that controls the White House almost always suffers losses in the first congressional elections of a new presidency.

In one ominous sign, grassroots Democratic fundraising, usually a mark of enthusiasm, was noticeably sluggish in the hours after the draft decision

was leaked.

The Democratic fundraising platform, ActBlue, drew less than \$3 million in donations between 6:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesday. By contrast, the platform took in \$71 million in the 24 hours after former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg's death.

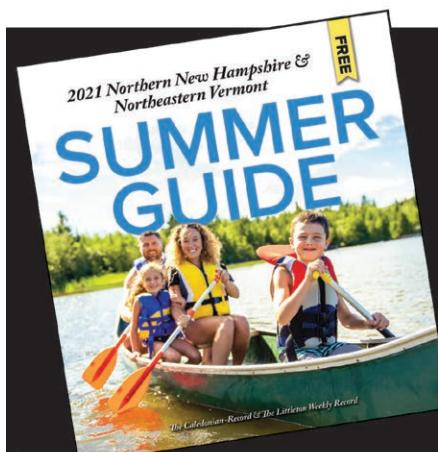
As Democratic officials across the nation tried to sound the alarm, Republicans were quietly confident.

"There are now three things in life you can count on: death, taxes and Dems overplaying any hand," said Republican strategist Chris Wilson, who is involved in several top elections this year. He noted that Democrats in states like New York and California wouldn't be affected by abortion bans in Republican-led states.

For most Democrats, Wilson said, "life goes on exactly as usual."

But there are several swing states with Republican-controlled legislatures where November elections for governor may ultimately decide a woman's right to abortion, Georgia, North Carolina, Arizona, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Michigan, among them.

See **Midterm**, Page 12



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# News Briefs

Continued from Page 9

of his superior officers, Smith said the chain of command had failed to address concerns.

"It's up to you guys, the chain of command doesn't move," he said.

Not so, said Charpentier, who oversees Smith at the Haverhill Corner station.

He said that Smith failed to follow the chain of command, and added that Smith's concerns have been acknowledged and taken care of.

"Okay, we had some obstacles with some of the issues that you are bringing up," Charpentier said. "[But] we corrected those issues, so I take issue with all of the things you're saying, and once again putting down the fact that we are now the Town of Haverhill Fire Department."

Charpentier described Smith's accusations as the actions of a disgruntled employee.

"You [Smith] have some skills, you brought a lot of things to the table in the past, but I am tired, tired, tired of this crap with you," Charpentier said.

HFD Capt. Renzo Chumbes, who also attended Monday's Select Board meeting remotely, supported Charpentier's version of events.

"This is not the first time that we've heard similar complaints or the same complaints," Chumbes said.

The Haverhill Fire Department began operations in March 2021.

Although hotly debated at the time, it was approved by Town Meeting in 2020 and annual precinct meetings in North Haverhill in 2020 and Haverhill Corner in 2021.

Chumbes said most department members were pleased with the single town department, and he called Smith one of the few dissenting voices.

"If there is one person that I think is not clicked on or connected with the merger, it is Tony. So it's understandable that he's upset," Chumbes said.

## Three Members Quit EMS Committee; Town Refines Committee Mission

LITTLETON — As the town refines the mission of its Emergency Medical Services advisory committee, three of what had been six committee members have quit, putting the Select Board on the search for new candidates to appoint.

Undetermined as of Wednesday is when those appointments will be made and when the committee, tasked with improving Littleton's in-house EMS and making it more cost-effective, will hold its first meeting.

As of Wednesday, Littleton Town Manager Jim Gleason confirmed that residents Art Tighe, Franco Rossi and John Godrich pulled out of the committee, leaving Scott Daine, Chad Stearns and Mike Scanlon remaining. Scanlon replied to an email from Gleason to confirm that he intends to stay on.

During the Select Board's April 11 meeting, some committee members said the committee's mission wasn't quite clear.

The resulting confusion could be responsible for some members subsequently bowing out, said Gleason.

The committee was authorized after an Oct. 25 Select Board vote and was followed by two warrant articles at town meeting in March, when voters approved the budget for the town's EMS, which began as a pilot project in August 2019 and was allowed to continue indefinitely after the October 2021 Select Board vote, on the condition that a advisory committee be established to find ways to improve the town's EMS and reduce its costs.

On Monday, the Select Board was presented with a refined seven-point mission for the EMS committee that was read by Board Chairman Roger Emerson.

"The budget committee, Board of Selectmen, and the citizens voted to make EMS a part of the town's fire department, so that is not up for debate," said Emerson. "The role of the advisory board is not to revisit or re-debate the decision of the citizens. The issue of in-house versus private EMS services can be reviewed at any time by the current BOS or any future BOS. The committee is tasked with reviewing the current structure in terms of the financial impacts of the EMS service. It is not to review day-to-day operations."

Emerson noted that the non-interference in day-to-day operations was one issue that had been raised and it had to be better clarified in the committee's refined mission.

The committee would also review and evaluate any expansion of services, such as possible transfers to Littleton Regional Healthcare, nursing homes or other facilities, to explore the pros and cons and cost impacts on the department and taxpayers.

The committee will also review agreements with the towns of Easton and Sugar Hill to assure that the amounts those towns pay to Littleton reflect the cost to the Littleton Fire Department/EMS as to personnel costs, overtime, and wear-and-tear impact on town equipment.

The committee can also look into the issue of Franconia, where Littleton's EMS has been responding more regularly through mutual aid after the Franconia Life Squad saw a steep membership drop that left it unable to effectively function, and advise if there is a short- or long-term solution to Franconia's dilemma that is paid for by Franconia to offset impacts to Littleton personnel costs, overtime and impacts on town equipment.

During the Franconia Select Board's April 11 meeting, Franconia town administrator, Kim Cowles said options were discussed about using Franconia Life Squad wages to pay Littleton's EMS per diem or to staff the Franconia Life Squad for a 12-hour shift per day using Life Squad wages, which would cost about \$63,000 from June 1 through the end of the year.

Through its mission, the Littleton EMS Committee could also review any other issues, such as the regionalization of services.

Emerson pointed out the nonprofit Colebrook-based 45th Parallel EMS as a good model of regionalization.

"They're a bunch of towns that got together to put together an ambulance service that seems to be working for them, and it might be something to look into to see if it could be regionalized that way for us," he said.

Going back to the point about not reviewing day-to-day Littleton EMS operations, Emerson said if Littleton has to look at how many times a week it runs to Franconia, then that aspect of day-to-day would have to be studied because of costs to Littleton.

Gleason said it's not that such data can't be available to the committee, but the committee's role is not to begin micromanaging and the EMS is not answering to the committee.

Gleason said he will send the refined mission to what's left of the committee for the feedback of its remaining members.

Select Board Member Linda MacNeil said when the first committee was put together there were no women appointed and at least one woman should now serve on it.

"We're wired differently," she said. "I would like to see at least one or two women on that committee."

Former Selectman Milton Bratz, who supported moving to an in-house EMS, said he had been confused about the confusion of what the purpose of the committee was, and said Emerson on Monday spoke to it and addressed the issue of whether or not the committee could make a decision to keep Littleton's EMS or go with a contracted service.

"At the 10/25/21 Select Board meeting, the motion was to keep the program — and this was Roger's motion — as a public service general fund," said Bratz. "There were no additional conditions, no contingencies, no quid pro quo statements added to this motion. It stood as 'keep' ... That was a good motion and I gave the second to that motion."

Bratz said he also agreed to keep the EMS on the condition of forming the committee as an advisory body to the Select Board.

"My sense of our decisions made is captured in Roger's comment, to find out how to make it better and more cost-effective," he said. "It was never intended to task the committee with a binary continue or discontinue decision regarding EMS future here in Littleton. In this regard, the majority of those residents voting on March 8 supported Article 9, the operating budget, which contains the EMS cost, with a 53-percent affirmative vote, and even more so with Article 17, which was the ambulance revolving fund tax appropriation, with a 58-percent affirmative vote, signaling agreement with our actions regarding retaining this important service."

## Carroll Taking Applications For Select Board Opening

CARROLL — Want to help run the town?

Here's your chance.

The Carroll Select Board is now accepting applications to replace outgoing member, Robert Gauthier.

The board, on Tuesday, set a three-week timeline to appoint a replacement, who would serve through March. Town Meeting will elect someone to complete the remainder of Gauthier's three-year term through 2025.

The application window runs until 3 p.m. on Tuesday, May 10, and those interested will be required to submit a letter of interest and written answers to three questions.

Those questions ask candidates for their understanding of the Select Board's role, their views on Carroll's strengths and weaknesses, and why they want to serve.

Submissions can be mailed to hand-delivered in a sealed envelope to the Town of Carroll Select Board Office, marked "Attn: Select Board Vacancy."

Complete information will be posted to the town's web site on Friday.

The Select Board will unseal applications at their May 10 meeting and conduct interviews and make an appointment

See News Briefs, Page 15



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## New Hampshire Senate Rejects 2 Marijuana Legalization Bills

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The New Hampshire Senate on Thursday rejected two marijuana legalization bills, one that would've created a state-run monopoly for retail sales and another more modest plan to allow small-scale personal use and home cultivation of the drug.

Both bills previously passed the House, but the Senate once again stood as a roadblock, ensuring New Hampshire for now will remain a holdout surrounded by states that have approved recreational legalization. But opponents said the fact that marijuana is legal in Maine, Vermont and Massachusetts meant nothing to them.

“I’m not ashamed of that, I’m proud of that,” said Sen. Bob Giuda, R-Warren.

He and other opponents said they were concerned that legalizing marijuana would lead to increases in teen marijuana use and traffic fatalities. And they rejected arguments that polling has shown that most adults in the state support legalization.

“It may be what people want, but it’s not what we as a Senate should enable them to do because it will cause harm,” he said.

The more elaborate bill would have given the state Liquor Commission authority to regulate and administer the cultivation and sale of marijuana in at least 10 retail stores. That plan was rejected without debate on a voice vote, while the other bill was defeated 15-9.

The second measure would have allowed adults to possess up to 1/4 of an ounce of marijuana and to grow up to six plants. It could be traded or given away but not sold.

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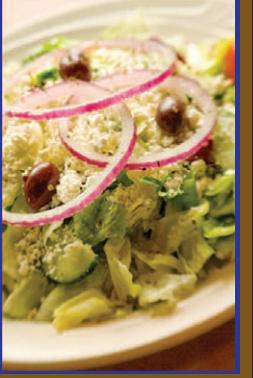
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### CLOSE TO HOME

## May Mornings



BY MEGHAN  
MCCARTHY MCPHAUL

By nature and my own design, I am almost always the first of my household to rise. When the kids were little, I got into the habit of rising earlier than they did, no matter how tired I might be. Those early mornings were often the only time I could rely on quiet; I cherished that bit of peace, however short, to sip my coffee and prepare for whatever the hours ahead might bring. As a morning person, I am attuned to the light early in the day — and how that light ebbs and flows through the seasons.

As September spins into October, summer’s yellow-white light fades, too quickly, to a subdued gray and I lament the morning dimness. No matter how bright an autumn day may become, with fall sunshine and all the colors of changing leaves, the steadily darkening mornings clearly indicate that summer has gone. By November, I am feeling my way down the hallway well before sunrise, shocked into wakefulness when my bare feet hit the chill of the kitchen’s tile floor.

Though I grow used to these dark mornings by the depth of winter — and even accept the coziness of the lamp-lit quiet, tucked warmly away from the snowy world outside — I wholeheartedly welcome the return of early morning light come springtime. Some morning near the beginning of March, I notice a faint glow through my window shades as I awaken, and I know that no matter how much snow there is on the ground or how icy the wind is outside, the light is returning. This happens not long before the bi-annual time change, which always seems like a cheap trick to me — to give me morning light, then snatch it away as a tradeoff for lingering evening brightness.

Daylight “savings” aside, come May, the morning light glows through those window shades earlier and brighter. Each day’s first wash of light gradually flows across a landscape whose color is expanding by the day. The newly green grass grows greener, dotted by happy yellow daffodils and dandelions. In the field, the lupine leaves on their slowly stretching stalks hold dew that sparkles in the morning sun. The pink-hued flowers of red maple trees and cascading pale green of willows tint yards and hillsides as leaves prepare to unfurl. The leaf buds on the lilac bushes swell daily, and I think if I had the patience to sit and watch, I could probably see them grow before my eyes. The fragrant flowers of those bushes will bloom this month, as will the shadblush at the edge of the driveway and the sweet pink and white apple blossoms in the fields beyond.

May is when early morning reclaims its light, and it is not only the leaves and flowers and returning birds who take note and adjust. I return to my weekend ritual of early morning porch sits, absconding outside with a blanket, a book, and the day’s first cup of coffee. I return to occasional early morning walks through the woods or slow, backroads runs. Even before the sun is fully up, the sky is filled with light.

Perhaps we morning people are, in a way, solar powered. This growing morning light corresponds with an exceptionally busy time of year for my family. These early May mornings allow me the bit of space and time — and brightness — I need to reset and recharge before I dive into each full day.

*Meghan McCarthy McPhaul is a writer, editor, and former staff reporter for the Caledonian-Record.*

Sen. Becky Whitley, D-Hopkinton, argued unsuccessfully that the bill was necessary to put the state more in line with its neighbors and with a more modern understanding of cannabis. She cast it as a racial justice issue, noting that Black people are disproportionately prosecuted for marijuana offenses.

“The so-called war on marijuana has not worked,” she said. “It does not make us safer, it wastes taxpayer dollars and it has needlessly ruined lives.”

Sen. Sharon Carson, R-Londonderry, said passing the bills would’ve put constituents in the middle of a conflict between state

and federal law.

“In that fight, we know who is going to win, and it’s not going to be us. And people are the ones who are going to be hurt,” she said. “Maybe they’re all going to smoke so much pot they won’t care — they’ll be oblivious — but we care, and we should care about putting our constituents in difficult situations.”

New Hampshire legalized medical marijuana in 2013. The House has approved recreational marijuana bills several times since then, but the Senate traditionally has opposed them, as has Gov. Chris Sununu.

## Midterm

Continued from Page 10

Even in states unlikely to outlaw abortions in the short term, Democrats are hopeful that a renewed focus on the issue will help their candidates overcome the party’s other political challenges.

New Jersey Democratic Rep. Tom Malinowski, a top target of Republicans, cast this year’s election as centering on abortion rights, arguing that a GOP majority in Congress could pursue a nationwide ban that would overrule New Jersey’s law on the right.

“That’s the stake in this election in November that all of us have to remember,” Malinowski said in an interview. “Are we going to preserve a majority in the House of Representatives, in the Senate that will protect 50 years of settled law in this country, that will protect a woman’s right to choose?”

Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and New Hampshire Sen. Maggie Hassan, among the nation’s most vulnerable Democrats this fall, also seized on the issue as critical in their upcoming elections.

“Do not underestimate what this decision would mean for women in Nevada and across the country,” Cortez Masto said in an interview. “If this court issues a ruling to overturn Roe vs. Wade, it will enraged

women across the country who have lived for the last almost 50 years the right to choose.”

From New Hampshire, Hassan said the leaked opinion clarifies the stakes this fall for voters in her state and beyond. She called a potential Roe reversal “devastating to women all across New Hampshire, all across the country and for all people who really believe in our individual freedoms.”

An abortion focus would also offer a sharp contrast with her Republican opponents, whom she described as “extremists” on abortion.

“This is really a difficult day for Granite State women, American women,” Hassan said.

Some Republicans welcomed the fight.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, who leads the anti-abortion Susan B. Anthony List, said her group’s fundraising has surged all year in line with excitement over a potential Roe reversal. Social conservatives have been waiting for this moment for decades, she said.

“It’s a potential cultural, political sea change,” she said.

Sen. Rick Scott, chairman of the Republican Senate campaign arm, was more cautious.

“I think this is an important issue to many people, but so is inflation, so is crime, so is the border,” Scott said.

## Merner

Continued from Page 2

In his candidacy, he said he has the support of former Republican Senate District-1 senator, John Gallus, of Berlin, as well as others willing to help, including local businesses he has assisted during his time as a state representative.

If elected, Merner said he will continue similar efforts, including making sure that the state follows through on providing strong benefit packages to state employees to attract and retain good people.

"I think the least we can do with the surplus money that we have is to make some investments into workers," he said. "The employees of our state do a great job."

Similar to the 7.5 percent municipalities will now receive from the state toward the state retirement system, Merner said he will also work toward maximizing the amount of money that goes back to towns.

"It will be the same approach if I get to the Senate," said Merner. "And obviously I want to stay with the energy if I can because I've been working hard on energy projects and learned a lot over the last six years on the different dynamics of energy, and probably learned most of it at the statehouse, and the judiciary, too. I really enjoy what I do."

Outside of the House, Merner serves on four different boards, as a trustee for the North Country Charter Academy, as a councilor on the New Hampshire-Canadian Trade Council, as the state representative liaison on the Coos County Planning Board, and, most recently, as a member of the board of directors for Northern Human Services.

He also serves as a selectman in Lancaster and is a selectman's representative on the Lancaster Planning Board.

The filing period for candidates seeking state office is in June.

The state primary election is on Sept. 13, followed by the general election on Nov. 8.

## Gendreau

Continued from Page 2

travel industry specialist, and holds a Granite State Ambassador certification.

She is also a past president of the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce and a former director of the N.H. Retail Association Board of Directors.

Although she earned a master's degree in organizational management and leadership, Gendreau, the oldest of three siblings, said she learned the most valuable lessons from her parents, Gerald and Mona Winn.

Her father owned and operated Century 21 Winn Associates for many years, served as the town moderator for a state-record 56 years, and was named the 2011 Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce Business Leader of the Year and 2021 Littleton Citizen of the Year. He died earlier this year at age 84.

Watching her father preside over the Littleton deliberative session, and visiting him at the polling station on election day, planted the seeds for her interest in public service, she said.

"I saw the impact that he had in Littleton and even the region. He really made a difference. That's where that love of public service started," she said.

In her endorsement, Sen. Hennessey expressed confidence in Gendreau.

"I want to ensure that the North Country would still have a strong voice to continue my work and keep pushing to improve the North Country's economy, education and health care needs. I was thrilled to learn that Carrie was interested in running for this seat. I have known Carrie for [many] years and we've worked very closely together on the revitalization of Littleton and other community needs," Hennessey said.

"She and I have the same vision for the future and commitment to do all we can to better the community."

"Carrie has my full and complete support and I plan to do everything I can to ensure that she becomes the next North Country Senator."

## 3 Injured As Blaze Rips Through Landmark New Hampshire Hotel

NORTH CONWAY, N.H. (AP) — Three people were injured in a windswept fire that ripped through a landmark New Hampshire hotel Saturday afternoon.

Two were firefighters who were battling the blaze at the Red Jacket Mountain View Resort in North Conway. None of the injuries were life-threatening according to the New Hampshire Department of Safety. There were no reports of any guests who were unaccounted for, officials said.

Guests could be seen fleeing the ho-

tel with some jumping from upper-level to lower-level balconies and then to the ground to escape the flames and smoke, officials said.

Seventy-five rooms were burned off of the hotel and part of the structure was in danger of collapsing, Conway Fire Chief Steve Solomon told WMUR-TV.

"It's a calculated risk," Solomon said of the dangers faced by firefighters trying to extinguish the fire and save lives. More than two dozen agencies, including many firefighting companies from nearby communities, aided North Conway in fighting the fire.

A section of Route 16 in North Conway was shut down Saturday as emergency crews worked to extinguish the fire. The

first report of the fire came in at about 2:47 p.m.

The road was reopened Saturday night, but safety officials urged motorists to avoid the area if possible.

In a statement hotel officials said the safety of their guests remained their top concern.

The resort is a large family retreat in New Hampshire's White Mountains and is home to Kahuna Laguna, an indoor water park. On its website, the hotel also advertises itself as an ideal location for weddings.

The New Hampshire State Fire Marshal's Office is aiding in the investigation. Officials have not said what might have caused the fire.

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# News Briefs

Continued from Page 11

during a public meeting on May 17.

Select Board Chair David Scalley and member Ken Mills called the 10-month appointment an opportunity for a political novice to dip their toe into the municipal government waters.

"This may give individuals that opportunity to try this," Mills said.

The Select Board could have appointed a replacement on Tuesday, and some in attendance suggested they do so.

They pointed to former Selectman Brian Mycko, who lost to Gauthier by a five-vote margin (132-127) last month.

Scalley and Mills responded that the application-and-interview process was recommended by legal counsel and provided the most transparency.

Noting that the Select Board has faced criticism in the past

for a perceived lack of openness, Scalley said, "I believe this is the best way. I think the transparency of the board for the townspeople is the way to go."

Mycko, who was in attendance, agreed with the Select Board decision.

"It's probably the best for clarity for the town. So I support it and I will be applying," Mycko said.

Gauthier, 54, was elected to a second term in March and has been at the forefront of the town's battle with White Mountains Regional School District over the apportionment formula that determines each town's tax contribution.

Carroll will have to replace him on the newly formed Carroll Apportionment Study Committee, where Select Board representatives from each town will re-examine the almost 60-year-old apportionment formula.

Gauthier's resignation is effective May 9 and the CASC meets next on May 11.

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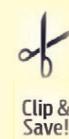
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