



Maura Murray Disappearance. Haverhill Home Search Comes Up Empty. Page 4



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In This Issue

News Briefs

Page 8

Obituaries

Page 14

Get Out

Page 20

Classifieds

Page 23



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What's Inside



Murray Search Comes Up Empty

On Wednesday, a stone's throw from where Maura Murray was last seen on the night of Feb. 9, 2004, N.H. State Police and FBI investigators searched a home for possible evidence related to her disappearance.

See Coverage Page 4

Looking At State Education Aid

As school districts across New Hampshire grapple with rising education costs, a new group is making presentations across the state to inform districts and residents about measures being floated to increase state support for public education and create fair local property tax rates.

See Coverage Page 5

Senate Eases Bill Targeting Clinics

A Senate bill that sought to make it more difficult for urgent care clinics to set up near critical access hospitals like Littleton Regional Healthcare passed the N.H. Senate last week with an amendment that waters it down.

See Coverage Page 6

FYI

Carve-Out For Student Voters Clears New Hampshire Senate

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire Democrats on Thursday continued their push to reverse what they consider to be voter suppression laws with Senate passage of a bill aimed at college students from other states.

A new law that takes effect in July will end the state's distinction between domicile and residency for voting purposes, which means out-of-state college students who vote in New Hampshire would also be subject to residency requirements such as getting New Hampshire driver's licenses or registering their cars.

But the Senate passed a bill Thursday to create an exception for college students, members of the military and others living in the state temporarily. The bill now goes to the House, which has passed a similar bill aimed at reversing the new law.

"These citizens reside in New Hampshire, pay tuition, rent, have mortgages, buy groceries and support our local

economy," said Sen. Melanie Levesque, D-Nashua. "If they choose to vote in the state where they temporarily reside, it is their right to do so without triggering motor vehicle charges."

Sen. Lou D'Allesandro, D-Manchester, said the debate reminded him of that around the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, which sought to remove barriers preventing African Americans from voting.

"How long did it take this country to recognize the fact that everybody has the right to vote? Now, we're curtailing it," he said. "We've been denying the right to vote decade after decade after decade. What's going on here? No wonder why nobody votes. You know why they don't vote? Because there are restrictions everywhere."

Opponents of the bill countered that New Hampshire is a national leader in voter registration and turnout, and that the new law doesn't prevent anyone from voting.

"We do a great disservice to the rights of all people to vote by carving out exceptions for certain particular groups that

See FYI, Page 3

On The Cover



Kaycee Reagan of Haverhill performs at The Caledonian-Record's 3rd Annual Rising Star Search in the Alexander Twilight Theatre at Northern Vermont University in Lyndonville, Vt., on Saturday, March 30, 2019. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

TURNING RIGHT IN THE CENTER LANE

The Lost Ones

I grew up with a girl who was very “animal savvy”. Her knowledge of animals—both domestic and wild—had depth and accuracy. She understood their genetics and history, their feeding habits, hunting habits; all that primitive and scientific lingo. She just “got” it. I always thought that she would have been a great veterinarian.

I wasn’t like her. Animals didn’t excite me like that. Their habitats and livelihood weren’t in the front of my mind as concern or interest. I grew up with cats and dogs. I loved them, but that kinship was superficial. My understanding and care was juvenile, as was I.

All of that changed when Maci came into my life. I was 19, and at the time, I had no business adopting a dog. But then I saw her blurry little picture online—this miniature-tailless-Dachshund from Lancaster in need of a home. I was smitten. When I picked her up for the overnight-test-run, I asked her then-owner, “What if I fall in love with her overnight?”

“Then she’s all yours.”

Maci came home with me that day and stayed until her last days on Earth.

She died suddenly and unexpectedly. I had her for just two-and-a-half short years. Her death was, and still is, the most difficult thing I have ever experienced. That loss hardened a part of my heart and matured me in a matter of minutes in the most bitter of ways.

Although losing her was beyond painful—it was gut-wrenching—I’d go through it all over to spend those two-and-a-half years with her. I’d go through it again if it meant I could be with her for just a second more. She changed me in so many ways. She showed me what it meant to love an animal; to love a dog. She filled such a gigantic part of my heart, and her death left an even bigger hole.

A few months after I brought Maci home, I found four female Chihuahuas on Route 116 in Easton while on my way home from the movies. They were huddled together inside of a hollowed-out log, trying to stay dry during one of the craziest thunder and lightning storms I’ve ever seen. I managed to get one of them in my car, while the other three retreated into the woods. Those three somehow survived the night. The



BY PAIGE ROBERTS

next morning, I managed to get two more into the car, and with the help of the animal warden in Easton, the fourth was successfully rescued, too.

This seems like an out-of-the-ordinary kind of story, but it’s not. Those Chihuahuas were just the beginning. Then there was Sullivan, the emaciated, tick-riddled, worm-infested stray cat I captured in a Hav-A-Hart trap last year. Most recently, I tracked Sparky (actually named CJ), a senior Rottweiler, a mile into the woods. He was lost and tired, laying down in the trees, ready to be dead meat.

I can’t tell you how to stimulate a dog’s reflexes. I don’t know how to test their deep-pain response. Give me a book on the anatomy or history of any animal, and although I can read it, maybe even pass a test, that information won’t stick to me.

But I can tell you everything about the look in a lost animal’s eyes. How their fear and confusion burns into me. How although they might not trust me at first, with enough persistence, I can get them to take a treat, and another, and another. How although I have work, and errands, and life, and appointments, I will and do drop everything in an instance to make sure they’re okay—especially when I know they aren’t.

I’ve been the person that has said, “Oh, that cat is probably on his way home. He’s not lost.” Then I met Maci. Then I loved Maci. Then I lost her. And that was it.

The cats are never on their way home. The dogs are never just running loose. Not anymore. Now, they are always lost. They are always scared. They are always somebody’s beloved creature, and if they aren’t, then in that moment they are mine.

I could never be a veterinarian. I’d be too emotionally invested; unable to sanitize my love down to a rational level. But I still drive around with a box of Milk Bones, a leash, and a Hav-A-Hart trap in the trunk of my car, because I know the lost ones will find me. They always do.

Paige Roberts has a degree in Creative Writing. She is the Eastern Region Manager at U.S. Ski & Snowboard. Recently, her creative-nonfiction has appeared in the Henniker Review.

FYI

Continued from Page 2

allow them to not comply with the rest of the laws of the state,” said Sen. Bob Giuda, R-Warren. “Our obligation is not to ensure that everyone who sets foot in our boundaries has a right to vote, it’s to ensure that those legally qualified and constitutionally qualified to vote do so.”

Both the residency law and another new voter law are being challenged in court. The second law

requires additional documentation from voters who register within 30 days of an election. Supporters argue it will increase trust in elections by requiring people to prove they live where they vote, but opponents argue it is confusing, unnecessary and intimidating. A judge allowed the law to take effect but blocked penalties of a \$5,000 fine and a year in jail for fraud while the court challenge is pending.

Both were enacted by Republican Legislatures, but Democrats who now hold majorities want to restore the previous rules.

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Fred Murray, left, and Associate Attorney General Jeff Strelzin, right, address the media outside the Grafton County Courthouse on Wednesday, April 3, 2019. Earlier in the day members of the New Hampshire State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation searched a residence on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 in connection with the disappearance of Fred's daughter, Maura, who was last seen on Route 112 in Haverhill on the night of Feb. 9, 2004. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Maura Murray Disappearance: House Search Comes Up Empty

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

HAVERHILL — On Wednesday, a stone's throw from where Maura Murray was last seen

on the night of Feb. 9, 2004, N.H. State Police and FBI investigators searched a home for possible evidence related to her disappearance.

Like other homes in the vicinity, the single-family home called Riverstone Cottage at 92 Wild Ammonoosuc Road/Route 112 had been

searched on the outside, with dogs and teams, in the days after Murray's disappearance, with no evidence turning up.

This week, 15 years later, after private citizens several months ago brought in two cadaver dogs and ground penetrating radar, the NHSP and FBI investigators, who now had the invitation of a cooperating property owner, searched the inside of the house, in the basement.

But after a team of more than a dozen investigators dug and combed the area for several hours, they found no human remains or any evidence connected to Maura Murray, Senior Assistant New Hampshire Attorney General Jeffery Strelzin said during a press conference outside Grafton Superior Court.

Not that they expected to, he said.

"It was really done to cross something off the list," said Strelzin. "We try to be as methodical as possible ... The search today is based on many allegations that somehow there might be evidence in that house."

In the last several months, the home had become the target of increased speculation by a group of private citizens, said Strelzin.

The theory there was a body in the basement is based on their searches with the dogs and the radar, the videos and results of which were reviewed by the New Hampshire attorney general's office and NHSP, he said.

"Based on that review, we determined there was no credible evidence, any evidence connected to that case in that home, and certainly no evidence of human remains, and no probable cause to do any search in that home," said Strelzin. "Despite that, we did contact the homeowners and they graciously gave us consent to search that home."

In February, NHSP dog teams were brought in for a preliminary search that resulted in no evidence, he said.

In March, the state police and FBI returned to the home for a further survey of the basement, and on Wednesday, a team of FBI agents and NHSP detectives went back for a deep search of the basement, he said.

"They did that by cutting and removing the concrete in the area where the ground penetrating radar had detected a disturbance," said Strelzin.

The radar detected not an object or piece of evidence, but an area of disturbed ground, he said.

After removing the concrete, the team searched several feet down and covered the entire area and beyond of the disturbed ground, he said.

"They discovered absolutely nothing other than a piece of what looks to be a piece of pottery or piece of old piping," said Strelzin. "That is all they found."

There was no basis to enter the home after Murray disappeared in 2004, and to do so, investigators would have needed probable cause, which they did not have, he said.

"I want to be clear," said Strelzin. "We certainly did not believe there was any credible evidence in this house that was connected to Ms. Murray's disappearance ... Based on our search, Maura Murray is not in that house."

After Strelzin spoke, Fred Murray, Maura's father, said he doesn't know what to think.

The investigative team could have dug farther, he said, to the corner of the wall and under where the heater and water tank had been installed on that home."

See Search, Page 15



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North Country School Districts Study Fairness In School Funding

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

As school districts across New Hampshire grapple with rising education costs, a new group is making presentations across the state to inform districts and residents about measures being floated to increase state support for public education and create fair local property tax rates.

Last week at Littleton High School in what was dubbed a School Funding 101 Forum, John Tobin and Doug Hall, of the N.H. School Funding Fairness Project, visited Littleton High School to meet with the school boards, school staff, administrators, and residents of Littleton School District SAU 84, White Mountains SAU 35 (Profile School, Bethlehem Elementary School, Lafayette Regional School, and Lisbon Regional School), and White Mountains Regional School District SAU 36 (White Mountains Regional High School, Lancaster Elementary School, and Whitefield School).

On Monday, SAU 84 Superintendent Steven Nilhas gave the issue perspective.

"When you have students attending a re-

gional school and one comes from a low tax base town and another from a higher tax base town, they could sit side by side in class and one student is costing twice as much as the other," he said.

The crux of the problem, said Tobin and Hall, is that although the New Hampshire Constitution requires that the state has a duty to pay for the cost of an adequate K-12 public education and that the taxes New Hampshire uses to pay for it must have a uniform rate across the state, the reality is that the amount of aid the state provides to meet the standards is insufficient.

More than 70 percent of the cost of public education is footed by local taxpayers at rates dramatically disproportionate from town to town, they said.

Towns with much property wealth can raise enough money to spend on students while their tax rates remain low, but taxpayers in property-poor towns make greater financial sacrifices and struggle to raise enough money to pay for schools' needs, they said.

The 2017-2018 local and state equalized education tax rate was \$12.70.

Littleton's rate for that time was \$15.78.

Lancaster's rate \$22.51, Bethlehem's rate \$17.27, Lisbon's rate \$19.05, and Franconia's rate \$8.97.

The average cost per pupil in New Hampshire is \$15.865.

Some North Country districts are thousands of dollars higher, including Littleton's cost, at \$19,682, and Bethlehem's cost, at \$20,328

"The current school funding system hurts students, their parents, local homeowners, and businesses and it works directly against the efforts to attract and keep young people, enlarge the workforce, and encourage new businesses in all regions of the state," Tobin and Hall said in their presentation.

In 2019, the N.H. Legislature began addressing the issue of school funding in several pieces of legislation, some sponsored by a local lawmaker, state Rep. Rick Ladd, R-Haverhill

Tobin and Hall advocated supporting legislation to require the state to update its adequacy grants to realistic levels, supporting legislation that will make school property tax rates fair and equitable across the state, building coalitions with legislators across New Hampshire to increase state support for public

education, and, in a more immediate measure, supporting a moratorium on further cuts to state stabilization grant aid and restoring the amount that has been reduced since 2015.

Nilhas said restoring the cuts to stabilization grants – currently being reduced by 4 per cent annually – would be a big step forward.

"This has cost us \$60,000 a year," he said.

House Bill 177, which seeks to restore stabilization aid to the poorest districts to 2012 levels, passed the N.H. House.

Another proposal SAU 84 supports is to increase the current \$3,636 statewide base rate of adequacy aid per pupil to \$7,500, said Nilhas.

About 50 area residents attended the presentation at LHS on Thursday.

"We thank everybody for coming out," said Nilhas. "We did have several communities represented and I think that's important."

At the end of the day, a student's town of residence should not be a driving force behind the kind of education he or she receives, he said.

"No matter, where a student lives, they should get the same educational opportunities," said Nilhas.

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LITTLETON: Senate Eases Bill Targeting Urgent Care Clinics

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

A Senate bill that sought to make it more difficult for urgent care clinics to set up near critical access hospitals like Littleton Regional Healthcare passed the N.H. Senate last week with an amendment that waters it down.

In fact, it's nothing like the bill proposed, state Sen. David Starr, R-Franconia, a former co-sponsor of the bill who came out opposing it, said Monday.

"The part that had my constituents up in arms, putting a 15-mile radius around every hospital and saying they are it and nobody else can compete, that language was completely removed," he said. "At this point, the bill simply requires that they get a license from the health commissioner."

Senate Bill 97, sponsored by state Sen. Jeb Bradley, R-Wolfeboro, and co-sponsored by lawmakers that include state Rep. Erin Hennessey, R-Littleton, originally sought to require an applicant seeking to construct certain health care facilities to submit a report showing how the proposed project would affect health care services offered by a critical access hospital.

In Littleton, ConvenientMD, a for-profit company founded in 2012 and expanding its network of clinics across New England, seeks

to put a for-profit urgent care clinic on Meadow Street, just a few miles from LRH, a designated nonprofit organization.

On Thursday, Bradley offered an amendment on the Senate floor to SB 97 that is relative to special health care services licenses and would establish a committee to study providing certain health care services while ensuring increased access to affordable health care in rural parts of the state.

The bill as amended passed in a N.H. Senate voice vote and now moves on to the N.H. House of Representatives, where it could be further amended.

There are more patients in the North Country than there are people connected with hospitals and those patients want services that are far less expensive than emergency room visits to treat non-life-threatening conditions, a difference of \$100 or \$200 for a service at an urgent care clinic versus \$1,000 or more for the same service at a hospital emergency room, said Starr.

"The urgent care facilities make sense," he said.

LRH representatives have said LRH is advancing a plan that has been several years in the works to establish an urgent care clinic on the hospital campus, possibly to open this spring and offering competitive prices lower than emergency room prices.

For a for-profit clinic like ConvenientMD, Starr said SB 97 as amended no longer carries onerous conditions for another clinic wanting to establish itself near a critical access hospital.

"That was essentially the idea," he said. "We wouldn't vote against it, but would water it down to the point where it didn't make any difference."

The urgent care clinics just have to get a license like every other health care facility, said Starr.

Under the amended bill, the committee, which would include two members of the N.H. Senate and four members of the N.H. House of Representatives, would study all issues related to providing emergency medical services, essential inpatient and obstetrical service and outpatient services while ensuring the increased access to affordable health care services in rural New Hampshire.

Representatives of LRH were not immediately available to comment Monday afternoon about the amendment to SB 97.

Representatives for ConvenientMD, which was granted a height variance for the building in Littleton and is applying for a building permit, said they hope to break ground on their proposed clinic along Meadow Street, some time this spring.

Following the amendment to SB 97, ConvenientMD co-CEO Max Puyan, in a statement, said "We are grateful to the senators for paying close attention to North Country residents, who overwhelmingly provided feedback that they did not support legislation which prevented affordable health care alternatives from opening in the North Country."

As a result, the floor amendment deleted the section of SB 97 that would have prevented ConvenientMD from opening in Littleton and Belmont, and replaced it with language creating a legislative study on the subject, he said.

"This was a wise decision, as more input is

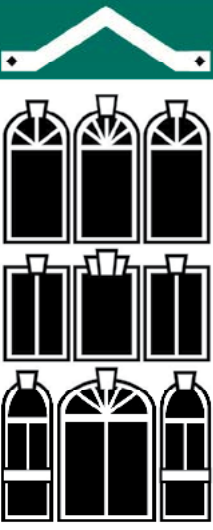
needed to come up with a solution that allows for affordable health care providers in rural areas of New Hampshire, and it also ensures that rural hospitals continue to have the opportunity to thrive," said Puyan. "The bill now moves to the House, where it will be subject to further review and amendments. It's important to support the study committee and provide information on this difficult subject to representatives in the House."

If the bill passes the House as is without modification, it would not prevent ConvenientMD from opening in Littleton, where Puyan said the company wants to open to provide high-quality and affordable health care in the North Country.

In a statement citing concerns about ConvenientMD and its impact on LRH services, Gail Clark, spokesperson for LRH, said, "Littleton Regional Healthcare has supported SB 97 which sought to further strengthen the Legislature's intent – under SB 481 a few years ago – to protect vital health care services offered by critical access hospitals. If enacted, the recent amendment to create a study committee would provide an important opportunity to examine the direct financial threats faced by critical access hospitals in New Hampshire's rural communities."

Clark said, "LRH stands ready to demonstrate to state and local leaders the serious adverse impact that a proposed for-profit health care facility in Littleton would have on health care services in the region. We are prepared to make a compelling case for denial of the application based on the criteria already established under current law. If such a for-profit facility is allowed to enter Littleton, it would threaten the hospital's continued ability to offer essential services like obstetrics to the communities it serves and have provided for more than 110 years."

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Drawings of a ConvenientMD Urgent Care facility planned for Littleton. The proposed clinic would be located on Meadow Street, one highway exit away from Littleton Regional Healthcare.

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2011 SUBARU FORESTER

STK.#J18263A – AWD, SUV, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, GREEN, 94,610 MILES

\$132 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$8,555**

Payment reflects \$995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% for 66 months.



2017 HYUNDAI ACCENT

STK.#CCP927 – FWD, SEDAN, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, RED, 43,008 MILES

\$158 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$11,255**

Payment reflects \$995 cash or trade equity down at 4.64% for 75 months.



2015 SUBARU LEGACY

STK.#J19154A – AWD, SEDAN, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, MAROON, 57,415 MILES

\$185 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$13,955**

Payment reflects \$1,995 cash or trade equity down at 4.64% for 75 months.



2018 CHEVROLET CRUZE

STK.#CCP925 – FWD, SEDAN, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, SILVER, 38,662 MILES

\$189 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$15,255**

Payment reflects \$1,995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% for 84 months.



2014 MINI PACEMAN COUPE

STK.#J18262A – AWD, 4 CYL, MANUAL TRANSMISSION, BLACK, 49,219 MILES

\$193 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$14,555**

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2017 VOLKSWAGEN TIGUAN

STK.#DT19139A – AWD, SUV, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, BLACK, 26,914 MILES

\$206 PER MO

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2018 JEEP RENEGADE LATITUDE

STK.#CCP929 – 4WD, SUV, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, RED, 15,491 MILES

\$263 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$20,455**

Payment reflects \$1,995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% for 84 months.



2015 HONDA CR-V

STK.#J19134A – AWD, SUV, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, WHITE, 43,775 MILES

\$266 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$19,225**

Payment reflects \$1,995 cash or trade equity down at 4.64% for 75 months.



2018 JEEP COMPASS LATITUDE

STK.#CCP923 – SUV, 4WD, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, BLUE, 19,098 MILES

\$269 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$20,855**

Payment reflects \$1,995 cash or trade equity down at 5.24% for 84 months.



2016 CHEV. SILVERADO 1500

STK.#DT19076A – DOUBLE CAB, 4X4, V6, AUTOMATIC, GRAY, 59,569 MILES

\$292 PER MO

SALE PRICE: **\$20,995**

Payment reflects \$1,995 cash or trade equity down at 4.64% for 75 months.



2018 JEEP COMPASS LIMITED

STK.#CCP922 – SUV, 4WD, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, GRANITE, 7,598 MILES

\$299 PER MO

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News Briefs

St. J Resident Hired As Haverhill's New Town Manager

After the former town manager resigned in November and the manager who served before her was brought back on a temporary basis, Haverhill selectmen announced they have hired a resident of St. Johnsbury as Haverhill's new town manager.

Brigitte M. Codling, contract manager and construction management business lead with the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT), begins the job April 24.

"I look forward to developing a positive and productive relationship with the residents of Haverhill where we establish collective goals for the future and work together to achieve those goals," Codling said in a statement. "I intend to continue [interim Haverhill Town Manager] Glenn [English]'s open door policy

and welcome the insight and input of residents. I am very excited to begin this new journey."

Codling, who has a B.A. in architectural studies from Vermont College of Norwich University and is currently enrolled in a master's of science program in management and leadership at Western Governors University, has worked for nearly two decades at the AOT, where, in 2000, she began as an asphalt binder technician and since then accumulated experience in program and project management, contracting, highway construction, and electronic bidding.

Since 2017, she has held the post of contract manager and construction management business lead with the VAOT.

Outside of her career with AOT, Codling, who lives in St. Johnsbury with her husband, Mark, and three children, has served as a selectman in the town of Cabot and interim road agent and as the program manager for the area snowmobile club.

She and Mark also own and run a small con-

struction and property management company in St. Johnsbury.

A meet and greet with Codling, whose annual town manager salary will be \$93,000, is in the process of being scheduled and the date and time will be advertised.

In a statement, Haverhill Board of Selectmen Chairman Darwin Clogston said, "The select board is very excited about hiring Brigitte Codling as the town manager of Haverhill. We look forward to her taking the reins on April 24. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank interim Town Manager Glenn English for his service and patience."

In November, after two years as Haverhill's town manager, Jo Lacaille resigned, citing in an exit interview that she was dissatisfied with the then-Board of Selectmen at that time and that board's management methods and she will now be retiring and relocating.

English, who served as Haverhill's town manager for 20 years until his retirement in 2016, expressed interest in serving as a temporary town manager until a permanent manager could be found. Selectmen hired English on a part-time basis and stated they were looking to have a permanent manager in place after the March town meeting.

On Tuesday afternoon, English, who will be going back into retirement, said he will be working with Codling for a week or two to help her transition into her new job.

"I told her and the board I'll stay around as long as they need me," he said. "I'll think she'll do great."

Judge Rejects Sex Offender Request To Vacate Criminal Record

NORTH HAVERHILL — A Grafton Superior Court judge has rejected a request by a registered sex offender, formerly of Littleton, to have his criminal convictions for possessing child pornography and sexually abusing the family dog vacated and sealed.

Ryan Taber, 28, now of Weare and who is represented by attorney Donna Brown, of Manchester, argued that at the time of his pleas of guilty in 2009 he was 17, which, after a law change in 2014, is now considered a juvenile and no longer an adult under the amended New Hampshire statute that raises the beginning age of an adult to 18.

In an order issued last week, however, Judge Lawrence MacLeod wrote "the court finds that it would not be in the interest of justice to apply the 2014 amendment to RSA 169-B:2, IV [the statute on delinquent children] retroactively to every individual similarly situated as the defendant, meaning those individuals who were convicted of crimes at 17 years of age during the period when a 17-year-old was deemed to be an adult under the criminal code rather than a 'delinquent' ..."

In denying the motion to vacate convictions, MacLeod said, "This issue is more appropriately left to the Legislature than to the court."

In 2008, Taber, then 17, was arrested for soliciting sex through an instant messaging chat room with what he thought was a 14-year-old boy. The boy turned out to be a detective from the Keene Police Department.

After police seized Taber's computer, they found images of child pornography as well as a video showing Taber sexually abusing Roscoe, his family's Golden retriever.

The discoveries led to multiple counts of child pornography possession and two misdemeanor counts of animal cruelty.

In a plea that involved felony charges reduced to misdemeanors and no time behind bars, Taber pleaded guilty in October 2009 to six counts of possession of child pornography and one count of cruelty to animals at Grafton Superior Court.

The sex solicitation charge to which he pleaded guilty in 2011 was suspended on the condition of good behavior.

The sentence requires him to register as a sex offender for 10 years

In her motion, Brown wrote that Taber's conduct "was impulsive, juvenile behavior and not indicative of his character ..."

In 2008, Taber was a typical senior at Littleton High School, respected by his teachers, helping to organize the junior prom, working and saving money, and looking forward to graduating and working in the field of medicine, she had argued.

Filing an objection to Taber's motion to vacate and seal his convictions, Assistant Grafton County Attorney Antonia Barry wrote that Taber was considered an adult under the law in 2009 and he "continued to engage in criminal behavior after high school, post-adolescence, when, at age 22, he was convicted of indecent exposure and lewdness. Thus, as an adult, he violated the terms of the conditional no prosecution agreement, resulting in the charges remaining on his record."

In his denial of Taber's request to vacate and seal the convictions, MacLeod, citing case law, wrote that when an amendment to a law is procedural, as in the case raising the legal age of adult to 18, it is presumed to apply retroactively to cases that, on the effective date of the statute, had not been resolved at the court, and Taber's cases at the time of the 2014 statute change had been resolved and closed through pleas of guilty.

State's Highest Court Prepares To Hear Northern Pass Appeal

The nearly decade-long marathon known as the proposed Northern Pass Transmission line is nearing the finish line, its fate to soon be decided by the highest court in New Hampshire.

On Friday, the N.H. Judicial Branch announced that the N.H. Supreme Court, at 10 a.m. May 15, will hear oral arguments by attorneys from Eversource Energy, parent company of Northern Pass, and attorneys representing

See News Briefs, Page 10

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\$188 PER MO

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2015 SUBARU FORESTER

STK.#AP566 – LIMITED, 4 CYL, AUTOMATIC, PWR
ROOF, LOADED, WHITE, 96,228 MILES

\$218 PER MO

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\$16,991

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2018 FORD ECO-SPORT

STK.#AP415 – 4 CYL, PWR ROOF, ALLOY WHEELS,
AUTOMATIC, LEATHER, BRONZE, 11,524 MILES

\$225 PER MO

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\$19,994

\$3,999 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2017 FORD TRANSIT E350

STK.#AP484 – V6, AUTOMATIC, PWR PKG,
12 PASSENGER, BLUE, 80,555 MILES

\$241 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$19,441

\$2,910 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 5.99% for 84 months.



2011 ACURA MDX

STK.#AP557 – V6, LOADED, PWR ROOF, LEATHER,
WHITE, 80,604 MILES

\$256 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$17,991

\$3,598 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 66 months.



2016 RAM 1500 SLT

STK.#AP511 – V8, AUTOMATIC, PWR PKG, TOW,
ALUM WHEELS, 51,469 MILES

\$269 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$23,951

\$4,790 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2017 FORD EXPEDITION

STK.#AP395 – XLT, V6, AUTOMATIC, PWR PKG,
ALLOY WHEELS, WHITE, 43,395 MILES

\$275 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$24,442

\$4,888 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2014 RAM 1500 EXPRESS

STK.#AP448 – V8, AUTOMATIC, PWR PKG, TOW,
ALUM WHEELS, MAROON, 86,358 MILES

\$282 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$21,332

\$4,266 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 5.90% for 72 months.



2013 RAM 1500 EXPRESS

STK.#AP468 – V8, AUTO, PWR PKG, GRAY,
40,225 MILES

\$286 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$21,551

\$4,310 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 5.99% for 72 months.



2018 NISSAN FRONTIER

STK.#AP422 – PRO 4X, V6, AUTO, ALUM WHEELS,
GREY, 11,507 MILES

\$313 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$27,851

\$5,570 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2017 RAM 1500 EXPRESS

STK.#AP424 – V6, AUTO, ALLOY WHEELS,
BLUE, 19,701 MILES

\$314 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$27,991

\$5,598 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2016 TOYOTA 4RUNNER

STK.#AP505 – SR5, V6, AUTOMATIC, PWR PKG,
TOW, PWR ROOF, ALLOYS, WHITE, 22,084 MILES

\$359 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$31,991

\$6,398 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2015 TOYOTA TUNDRA TRD

STK.#AP507 – V8, AUTOMATIC, PWR PKG, ALLOY
WHEELS, BLUE, 38,484 MILES

\$371 PER MO

SALE PRICE:
\$32,991

\$6,598 down payment plus tax, title and registration. 4.80% for 84 months.



2017 TOYOTA TACOMA TRD

STK.#AP478 – OFF ROAD, V6, AUTOMATIC, PWR
PKG, ALLOY WHEELS, 27,831 MILES

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SALE PRICE:
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News Briefs

Continued from Page 8

intervenor against the project that include a number of North Country towns.

It won't be a normal Supreme Court proceeding, where each side is allotted 15 minutes to argue their case.

Instead, each side on the Northern Pass divide will be given 50 minutes to present their case, meaning oral arguments could run up to nearly two hours.

Legal brief were due by the parties on March 21.

The North Country towns intervening against the project that filed to participate and present their arguments in the appeal process are Littleton, Bethlehem, Easton, Franconia, Northumberland, Sugar Hill, and Whitefield.

"I am hopeful that the Supreme Court will deny this appeal," Cheryl Jensen, chair of the Bethlehem Conservation Commission, who represented and informed the town on Northern Pass, said Friday.

Residents across the state, many without legal experience, spent years of their lives learning about the project and the legal process, and disrupted their lives to testify before the SEC, which unanimously denied a permit for Northern Pass, she said.

"We convinced the SEC members that this was a bad project, financially and environmentally, for the towns, and I hope the Supreme Court will look at all that evidence and make the same decision," said Jensen.

The Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust and the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire are also intervenors against the project.

"Only with blinders on and working in their own silos were [Eversource's] witnesses able

to conclude that the 192-mile transmission line would not have any discernible undue interference," Amy Manzelli, attorney for SPNHF, wrote in a legal brief.

The proposed 192-mile transmission line that would run through 32 communities, have overhead towers about 100 feet tall running through Coos County and 52 miles of line buried along state roads through Bethlehem, Sugar Hill, Franconia, Easton, and other towns, began its public process in late 2010.

After a project revision in 2013 that incorporated the buried line, Eversource, in late 2015, filed its application for a certificate of site and facility with the N.H. Site Evaluation Committee.

In February 2018, after two years of hearings involving 154 witnesses, more than 20,000 pages to review, and comments by more than 1,500 state residents - the vast majority opposed - the SEC denied the application, stating Eversource did not bear its burden of proving that Northern Pass would not unduly interfere with the orderly economic development of the region.

Although it would be a moneymaker for Eversource - \$10 billion in revenue during the 40-year term of the line, according to its federal filings - opponents argued New Hampshire would have in effect subsidized a for-profit venture through reduced property values and scarred scenic landscapes, negative impacts to tourism, and small businesses impacted during the burial portion of line in the roadways.

Eversource appealed the SEC's decision in August, arguing the project would carry benefits and property tax revenue for communities and reduce energy costs.

The New Hampshire Supreme Court will review the case to determine if the SEC erred within its own rules in its denial of Northern

Pass and if there is a reversible error.

The high court could issue its decision before the end of the year.

Littleton's Future In Airport Agreement Uncertain

Whether Littleton will remain a member town with the Mt. Washington Regional Airport remains to be seen, but the town won't be using money in its budget to pay its annual share after the failed article at town meeting.

"I think the issue now is no means no," said Littleton Town Manager Andrew Dorsett.

In a 383-725 town vote, Littleton residents rejected Article 22, which asked them for the town's annual \$6,000 appropriation to support the Mt. Washington Regional Airport, which is based in Whitefield.

Until this year, that appropriation had been a line item in the budget with no voter approval needed, but that changed when the budget committee, questioning if Littleton receives a benefit from the airport, asked selectmen to move the \$6,000 from the budget and put it on a warrant article.

Under the MWRA's inter-municipal agreement (IMA) with its member towns, a town not paying its share could constitute a breach of the agreement it has with the airport and that municipality can be ejected as a member.

Regarding the failed town meeting article, there is a court ruling that once a town votes against something, for instance the dog park that also failed in Littleton, its governing board cannot use money in the budget to pay for what voters opposed, said Dorsett.

That isn't to say the town of Littleton won't work with the MWRA Commission, he said.

"I plan to reach out to the airport and talk with the board and see if there is some middle ground and see what they want to do," said Dorsett.

Littleton budget committee members would like to see more tracking of the benefits the town of Littleton receives from the airport to ensure the town is getting a good return on investment, he said.

Perhaps there can be a multi-town community work session that involves the airport and the parties can strategize, said Dorsett.

"It is an important asset to the community and adds a lot to the economy," he said.

According to state data from the N.H. Bureau of Aeronautics, the MWRA generates an estimated annual economic output of \$1.1 million to the North Country region and its towns.

A state study estimates the airport sees about 7,000 flight operations annually, including several dozen jet operations.

Commission members said the airport sees people who fly in and then visit local towns and their businesses and restaurants, all providing an economic benefit, and said the airport is used by owners of primary and secondary homes that contribute to the tax bases of North Country towns.

The focus now for Littleton would be to track the benefits specific to the town, said Dorsett.

"It would be great if we could get all of the stakeholders and communities in the same

room," he said.

The MWRA Commission met Wednesday, but did not discuss the status of Littleton, Dayton Goudie, Littleton's representative on the commission, said Thursday.

In the near future, Goudie said he will be contacting the Littleton Board of Selectmen to determine their thinking Littleton's MWRA membership and role with the airport.

The MWRA operates on a tight budget of \$93,811, about half of which goes to purchase fuel that it sells, leaving the airport itself, overseen by an all-volunteer commission, running on about \$46,000 a year.

The commission has expressed concerns about the other member towns dropping out or not funding their shares, said Goudie.

One possibility is for the airport to form a nonprofit group that could ask any entity for support, including businesses, he said.

"That is in the future and I don't think it would happen right away," said Goudie.

Member towns of the MRWA have dwindled through the decades and today include Littleton, Lancaster, Dalton, Sugar Hill, and Whitefield.

Each town's share is based on a formula that factors in its population.

Under the IMA, if any member town does not pay its portion of the airport budget the commission can terminate that town as a member.

In the alternative, the commission can make an agreement with the governing body of the member town for temporary participation on some agreed basis.

Any member town that does not appropriate its apportioned share of the budget for two consecutive years, however, shall be terminated per the agreement.

Residents Say Planners Should Follow Will Of Voters In Filling Vacancy

BETHLEHEM — After some residents voiced concerns earlier in the month about a candidate for the planning board having a possible conflict of interest, a recent vacancy on the planning board has caused another split in town regarding the board.

Some residents want planners to appoint to the board a write-in candidate who nearly won the March 12 town vote and who they said is more than qualified.

Planners, though, say they want to advertise the position to attract more candidates.

The discussion about how to fill the vacancy, as well as how to proceed with getting alternate planning board candidates, lasted more than an hour during Wednesday's board meeting, which saw Jonathan Stevenson appointed chairman in a unanimous board vote, and Michael Bruno, a past planning board chairman, appointed vice-chairman in another 6-0 vote.

Planners on Wednesday voted to accept the resignation of former planning board member and chairman David Rodrigues, who tendered his letter of resignation on March 6, after tak-



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LITTLETON: As Bears Emerge, Town To Enforce Dumpster Rules

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

LITTLETON — As bears emerge from hibernation, town officials will be checking to see if solid waste management companies, restaurants, businesses and apartment building owners are in compliance with the dumpster ordinance, which is entering its second year.

Failure to comply can result in a fine.

On Friday, Littleton Health Officer Milton Bratz, who enforces the ordinance, said he will not be immediately slapping people with fines if they demonstrate they are working to get their dumpsters bear-proof.

This year, though, could see more fines beyond the first one issued in 2018 if there are persistent issues of non-compliance.

In a 784-281 vote at the 2018 town meeting, Littleton residents adopted a dumpster ordinance requiring all food matter to be placed in a bear-proof container or dumpster and requiring open dumpsters to be covered with a waterproof cover to prevent the buildup of water, which during warm months can be breeding ground for mosquitoes that can carry several diseases.

"It's a public health issue and also a safety issue," said Bratz. "We have to get past this next phase. A lot of people have been notified by warnings, and one was fined."

The ordinance requires that all domestic and commercial refuse, i.e. animal and vegetable food matter, be placed in a building, house, or

garbage container inaccessible to wildlife, or in a bear or wildlife-proof dumpster, or at an appropriate town disposal site.

Violators face a \$100 fine, and three offenses in one year can land the offender in district court and subject to court proceedings and additional fines.

Selectmen can also enforce the ordinance through superior court action and are entitled to recover court costs and attorney's fees from violators.

A letter recently went out to 48 dumpster companies and Littleton business owners informing them of the hazards of wildlife getting into dumpsters that include bear-human conflicts that can lead to injury (Littleton ranks number four in the state on bear-human encounters), people being near animals with rabies, and, from mosquitoes that lay eggs in stagnant water, diseases that include West Nile Virus.

Mothers with cubs can be dangerous to humans if someone inadvertently gets between a mother and a cub, said Bratz.

For enforcement, Bratz approaches the dumpster companies first (there are seven or eight in Littleton), and once they are in compliance, it then becomes the responsibility of the restaurant owner or a property owner to ensure dumpsters are kept wildlife-proof.

There is even a state statute, RSA 540, which states uncooperative tenants renting apartments or homes can have actions taken against them in terms of eviction.



"This becomes very complex because dumpster companies might abide by this ... but tenants may not," said Bratz.

Because bear-proofing dumpsters comes with a cost - it can be several thousand dollars or more depending on how many dumpsters a company has in Littleton - the town is sensitive to the cost and will take time to work with companies toward compliance, he said.

In terms of enforcement, Bratz said, "I don't want people to feel we're running around at night to see where a violation."

Although the town is still operating in a grace period, at some point repeat offenders need to be addressed to protect the integrity of the ordinance, he said.

In the short term, as the process toward compliance advances, pouring some bleach in dumpsters will help keep mosquitoes, bears, and other animals out of them, said Bratz.

"Bears aren't going away," he said. "In fact, the population is getting bigger, as far as my understanding. To protect families and health, we have to bear-proof."

On Friday, Andy Timmins, the state's bear biologist with the N.H. Fish and Game Department, expects a lot of bear activity right after they come out of hibernation and go on the prowl for food.

"I think it will be for the primary reason that food conditions are no better right now than they were last fall," he said. "We are expecting to be pretty busy initially, but I'm also hopeful that we are looking at better food conditions this year."

Natural food should be available for bears by mid-summer, said Timmins.

"We can't expect much of a change until the latter part of June," he said. "We are asking people to be extremely vigilant this spring. I hope that once the bears start getting active here, it's a rapid green-up to give them something to munch."

Timmins said, "I'm excited about the efforts Littleton is putting into their ordinance. That will pay dividends, for sure."

News Briefs

Continued from Page 10

ing a job in Boston. Rodrigues had one year left on the board, and whoever is appointed will serve a one-year term before the seat goes up to a town vote in 2020.

On March 12, before a March 22 recount, two candidates for two seats, Kevin Roy and Stevenson, were elected to the board, with Stevenson landing 221 votes, Roy 216. Dann (no last name), who was also on the ballot, received 46 votes. Write-in candidate Kim Koprowski received 211 votes.

After the recount, Stevenson landed 222 votes, Roy kept his 216, Koprowski had 209, and Dann, 47.

On March 6, after the vacancy left by Rodrigues was posted and soon removed because planners hadn't yet accepted it, Koprowski, who was elected to the Profile School Board on March 21, wrote a letter of intent saying she's interested in filling the planning board vacancy or serving as an alternate.

The first to voice support for appointing Koprowski on Wednesday was new Selectman Chris Jensen, an ex-officio member of the planning board, who said it was a close contest between her and Roy.

"Obviously, the voters wanted her on the board," said Jensen. "There was a lot of support from voters. That's one way to solve it very quickly."

Roy, however, who came under the spotlight during candidates night when some residents said his position as district manager with Casella Waste Systems would make for a conflict of interest if he votes on Casella-related matters, said planners just accepted Rodrigues' resignation so the vacancy hadn't become public until Wednesday.

In fairness to other potential candidates, a one-year seat might draw more interest and be more attractive to residents as opposed to a three-year seat, and other residents should be given the opportunity to apply, said Roy.

Bruno agreed with Roy, saying Koprowski has her application packet in, but in fairness to the town more residents might be interested in the open seat.

"In fairness to the town, Kim had 209 votes," said Jensen.

Resident Teresa Wood said, "Clearly, it shows the will of the voters. Give it the weight it deserves."

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Resident Betsy Phillips said if the planning board appoints someone else and not Koprowski it would be akin to overriding the votes at town meeting.

Resident Andrea Bryant said she thinks the process of posting
See **News Briefs**, Page 12



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News Briefs

Continued from Page 11

the vacancy and then appointing a candidate is a waste of time because the board already has a candidate in Koprowski. She asked what qualifications the planning board will look for at it determines a candidate.

To serve on a town board, a resident must be over 18 and a registered voter.

In considering an appointment, Stevenson said he, as a board member, will look to see if a candidate served on a board in Bethlehem or another town and if he or she is an active community member.

The vacancy does not have to be posted by law, but the N.H. Municipal Association, which was told it was a close planning board race, recommends it, especially given the contention in town, said Deb Bayley, Bethlehem planning and zoning assistant.

The board voted 5-1, with Jensen casting the nay vote, to post the vacancy on the town website, and in the library and post office until April 5 and to move forward and make an appointment during its next meeting on April 10.

They also voted to post vacancies for two alternate seats on the planning board and close it on April 19.

Roger's Rangers Bridge Replacement Prompts Landowner Concerns

As the state prepares to replace the 70-year-old Roger's Rangers Bridge that spans the river between Guildhall and Lancaster on Route 2, a Lancaster property owner is trying to slow down the process, saying his concerns about the new bridge changing the flood pattern have not been answered.

Shane Beattie, who enlisted Lancaster attorney Jonathan Frizzell, has filed a preliminary objection at Coos Superior Court to the state's plan. He's made a request for discovery and a hearing to address his concerns; the state has filed a motion to dismiss.

They are now waiting on the judge to issue an order.

Under eminent domain, Beattie said the state took just under an acre of his property in September as DOT prepares to move the road 70 feet upriver, closer to his house.

"The whole purpose of them justifying what they are doing is they want to save \$3 million by not putting a temporary bridge in," he said. "They want to put a new bridge in and use the old one until the new one is up."

But Beattie said he has serious concerns about how the new bridge 70 feet north of Route 2 will impact the river when the season of high water comes.

"That will act as a spillway for us," he said.

DOT landed an excavator on site to begin taking trees down, said Beattie.

But Beattie said the state has not responded to his questions about changed flood patterns as a result of a new bridge closer to his property, and about impacts from higher elevations of Route 2, or to his request to see DOT's com-

puter modeling of flooding after the new bridge is built.

"It's just a continuing version of what's been going on for the last three years," said Beattie.

Raising Route 2 is unacceptable because it will, in effect, create a dam that will impact his property, he said.

The 70 feet of spillway and highway raising would come when Beattie said his property is just six inches from the level of the flood of 1998.

The property is in a floodway and requires increased scrutiny and analysis, he said.

The first public information meeting on the bridge replacement project — which carries a total estimated project cost of \$11.545 million, with New Hampshire to pay \$10.162 million and Vermont \$1.284 million — occurred in November 2012.

Beattie has owned his property, which is surrounded on three sides by the Connecticut River, since 2006, and his parents lived on it for the previous 24 years.

"I'm all for the new bridge, but I just wish they put the bridge back in its original place," said Beattie. "Then, nothing will be being fooled with. We know what it is now. We lived there long enough so everyone knows what to expect. But don't know what to expect when the state starts filling it in."

When the state makes a decision to take a piece of private property for a project, it files first at the N.H. Board of Tax and Land Appeals, said Frizzell.

A property owner then files a preliminary objection, after which the case is sent to a local judge, who can deny a request for a hearing or hold a hearing and either issue a ruling favorable to the property owner or not.

With the oxbow nature of the land and the likelihood Beattie's property will be flooded, the state should simply use a temporary bridge as it tears down the old bridge and puts the new one in its place, said Frizzell.

The state says its computer model concludes a new bridge won't change the flood pattern, but Beattie wants the opportunity to see that computer model, he said.

In his filing, Frizzell wrote, "As to the merits of the case, the state has not met its burden, and the taking of [Beattie's] property should not be condoned."

On Wednesday, DOT bridge administrator Bob Landry said his department will be releasing some materials requested.

"We will be providing Mr. Beattie the second hydraulic analysis and some other items requested by his lawyer," said Landry.

Lancaster Woman To Plead Guilty In Gun, Meth Cases

A Lancaster woman who was indicted in two counties and pleaded guilty for possessing meth at the Casella Waste Systems transfer station where she worked in Bethlehem, has announced her intention to plead guilty in another felony case involving a gun fired in the direction of a family member.

In January, Michelle Dewitt, 49, was indicted at Coos Superior Court on a Class B felony

count of domestic violence criminal threatening with a deadly weapon and two Class B felony counts of reckless conduct.

On Dec. 2 in Lancaster, prosecutors said Dewitt purposely placed a family member or household member, known as K.D. in the indictments, in fear of imminent bodily injury by pointing a gun and firing it in his general direction.

The second felony count of reckless conduct charges her with placing another family member known as S.D. in danger of serious injury by firing the gun in his vicinity.

On March 15, Dewitt filed a notice of intent to plead guilty in the case, and a plea and sentencing hearing is scheduled for April 15 at Coos Superior Court, according to a check with the N.H. Judicial Branch.

Specifics of the plea and terms of the proposed sentence were not available Tuesday.

In February at Grafton Superior Court, Dewitt was indicted on a Class B felony count of unlawfully possessing a quantity of methamphetamine in Bethlehem on Nov. 20.

On Feb. 26, Dewitt agreed to a plea agreement that would reduce the felony drug charge to a misdemeanor count that involves no time behind bars, according to Grafton Superior Court documents.

According to the plea, she received a 12-month sentence in the Grafton County House of Corrections, all suspended for two years, and one year of probation.

According to the probable cause affidavit filed by Bethlehem police, Bethlehem police officers went to the Casella transfer station in Bethlehem on the morning of Nov. 20 to speak with Dewitt about a verbal argument and drug activity.

The visit, they said, came after officers in Bethlehem received a call from Littleton Police Dep. Scott Powers regarding a man, Patrick Whittum, and his girlfriend, Dewitt, who had been arguing, and Whittum reported that Dewitt had methamphetamine in her purse and was using it in the restroom at the transfer station.

Dewitt initially denied the story and claimed Whittum was lying, according to the police report.

She then consented to a police search of her purse and bags, and police found crystals in a plastic bag in one of them, according to the affidavit.

In her statements to police, Dewitt said she used a dollar bill to snort the drug, had used in the restroom at the transfer station, and said Whittum had obtained the drugs for her.

Before the case went to a plea, Dewitt's public defender, James Brooks, filed a motion requesting that the court suppress her statements to Bethlehem police.

Dartmouth Develops Website On Global Menstrual Health

HANOVER, N.H. (AP) — Dartmouth College has developed a website to provide information about global menstrual health.

The site, which debuted Tuesday, provides educators, entrepreneurs and nonprofit groups with a central place to tap into existing educational resources and connect with other in-country and global organizations.

In the United States and other countries, advocates are working to ensure that girls and women are getting affordable access to feminine hygiene products in schools and other institutions.

Daniel Benjamin of Dartmouth's Dickey Center for International Understanding said it's a project that aims to promote human dignity.

Deborah Jordan Brooks, project leader of the site, the International Menstrual Health Entrepreneurship Roundup, is scheduled to testify Wednesday at the Statehouse on a bill requiring feminine hygiene products in school restrooms.

Online:

International Menstrual Health Entrepreneurship Roundup: <https://imher.net/>

Committee Debates Decorum After Complaints About Pearls

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Are pearls proper? Are hats harmful? Both questions came up Tuesday as New Hampshire lawmakers discussed the delicate issue of decorum as they do their jobs.

The House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee drew attention recently when some members who opposed a gun control bill wore strands of fake pearls to a public hearing. They said they were showing support for the Women's Defense League of New Hampshire, but members of the Moms Demand Action advocacy group said they felt mocked.

At another recent hearing, the pearls were back and a lawmaker displayed a hat with President Donald Trump's "Make America Great Again" campaign slogan. The sponsor of a gun control bill testified wearing red, to match the Moms Demand Action colors. A lawmaker called a colleague a "snowflake."

Noting that "tensions have arisen," Chairman Renny Cushing on Tuesday opened a discussion of decorum, saying he won't tell members what to wear but asking them to consider how they appear to members of the public, particularly crime victims.

"People are coming here and talking about the worst thing that ever happened to them," said Cushing, D-Hampton. "If we can't set the example of making the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee a safe space for victims of crime, who is going to?"

Rep. John Burt, R-Goffstown, held up the pearls he has worn to past meetings and insisted he wasn't trying to mock anyone. He said Democrats also have worn stickers, pins and certain colors to show their support for various causes and said while he agrees people need to be treated with respect, he won't be "shut down" when it comes to asking tough questions during hearings.

"When someone sits there and says, A, B, C,

See **News Briefs**, Page 13

Balsams Withdraws Tax Abatement Requests, Looks Toward PILOT Agreement With County

BY ROBERT BLECHL
Staff Writer

The developers of the Balsams Grand Resort have withdrawn their request to reduce their property taxes through abatements and seek instead to focus a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILOT) agreement with Coos County.

First, though, House Bill 540, which would authorize a redevelopment, or tax increment financing (TIF), district for the unincorporated place of Dixville, needs to pass and pave the way for the county to issue and administer a \$28 million bond that would be bought by a private lender before all financing is in place and construction can begin, project spokesman Scott Tranchemontagne said Wednesday.

On March 13, the three-member Coos County Commission was presented with property abatement requests for 12 parcels for tax year 2018 by four Balsams-owning entities.

In Dixville, the total assessed value of Balsams property, for which a total of \$43,404 in property taxes was due in 2018, is an estimated \$5.841 million, according to county figures.

In Colebrook, which includes the Panorama Golf Course property, the total assessed value, according to the tax card in that town, is \$1.675 million, which brings the total value of the Balsams property in Colebrook and Dixville to about \$7.7 million.

Tax abatement requests for Colebrook were also withdrawn this week.

"In looking at the situation, it became clear

to us that as we go forward with the project and initiate the TIF district, we'd be negotiating a payment-in-lieu-of-taxes agreement after all," said Tranchemontagne.

How much the county will receive through a PILOT, how it would compare to property taxes currently paid, and what the length of a PILOT will be has not been determined, said Tranchemontagne.

Until the bond is paid off — it could take up to 20 years, an average length of PILOT agreements and possibly the length of a Balsams PILOT — Coos County would not be collecting property taxes on the TIF district.

"We want to be a great corporate neighbor and want to create jobs for the county and also for the state meals and rooms tax," he said. "We would certainly want to negotiate a PILOT that is fair to all sides and fairly compensates the county"

The resort, which closed in September 2011, is entering its eighth year of sitting idle.

Lead developer Les Otten came on board five years ago.

He seeks a \$175 million investment that involves the reconstruction of the Hampshire, Dix and Hale houses, a new 400-room Lake Gloriette House hotel, a new conference center and marketplace, condominiums, a revamped Panorama Golf Course, and a quadrupling in size of the Wilderness Ski Area, all to make the Balsams a four-season destination.

After the N.H. Business Finance Authority in 2018 passed on a request that would have had the state guarantee the \$28 million bond loan,

Otten took an amended request to the Coos County, asking its commission and delegation to administer the loan without the county guaranteeing it.

Tranchemontagne was asked if the \$28 million is the last piece of financing or seed money to attract investors.

"When you are lining up financing and funding for a project of this size, everything is happening concurrently, but every piece needs to fall into place for other pieces to follow," he said. "The \$28 million bond would be the first piece to close. We are constantly talking to investors, and we have identified other sources of funding, but the \$28 million bond needs to close to first for the others to close."

All the other pieces of financing to complete the \$175 million project have been identified, and the great hope and expectation is all of the financing can be completed this year, he said.

On March 20, HB 540, which would allow the county to establish a redevelopment district in an unincorporated place and issue bonds for revitalization projects, passed the N.H. House of Representatives in a 287-60 vote.

The bill, which states the county would not be obligated in any way to pay the bond principal or interest, now moves to the N.H. Senate.

If it passes the Senate and is signed by the governor, it will go before the Coos County Commission and county Delegation, which would ultimately decide whether to issue a bond.

"My assumption is if HB 540 becomes law then we would move very quickly into nego-

tiations with the county on establishing a TIF district and negotiations with the PILOT agreement," he said.

Critics of the county becoming involved argue that if the redevelopment fails, the county and its taxpayers would be on the hook and the county's bond rating would take a hit.

Tranchemontagne said, "It's extremely unlikely, if you have all your construction financing in place, the project would fail during construction. Once the project is built, you now have real tangible assets and it's worth much more than \$28 million."

"We are not asking for the county to guarantee the bond, so there is no liability to the county or the county taxpayers," he said. "The independent counsel [Greg Im, of Drummond Woodsum Law] hired to review this for the House subcommittee testified for that."

In a Feb. 25 email to Coos County Administrator Jen Fish, Im wrote, "I think there should be no impact on the county or state bond ratings if a TIF revenue bond defaults because it is not a general obligation of the county (or obligation of any kind) and the state is not guaranteeing the bond."

The private lender who would buy the bond would be liable, would be in first position on the property and own it, and be liable for any existing debt and taxes, said Tranchemontagne.

The county will be compensated for administering the bond, he said.

The development team has begun the process to find a buyer for the \$28 million bond, he said.

News Briefs

Continued from Page 12

I want to be able to call them out. Now, when children get up there or somebody that's testifying for the first time, I think all of us agree, we don't go after them," he said. "A lobbyist sits there, or somebody else like that, or an anti-gunner? I'm gonna beat the tar out of them, because that's what they need."

Rep. Ray Newman, D-Nashua, said he had worn a sticker in the past to show his support for a bill to repeal the state's death penalty but will no longer do anything like that.

"When the public is testifying I don't want anything to indicate that I'm not listening to both sides," he said.

Sununu Defends Idea For Stand-Alone Secure Psychiatric Unit

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Gov. Chris Sununu on Tuesday defended his proposal for a stand-alone secure psychiatric unit, insisting he's not battling for his budget but trying to be a voice for families.

Sununu, a Republican, has proposed spend-

ing \$26 million on a 60-bed facility for mental health patients who haven't committed crimes but are held in prison because they are deemed too dangerous for treatment at the state psychiatric hospital.

But in crafting their budget, House Democrats argued that more planning is necessary before committing to construction. They focused instead on transitional housing beds for people leaving the state mental hospital, early intervention programs and a mobile crisis team for children.

Sununu responded with a news conference Tuesday at Concord Hospital, considered "ground zero" for people waiting for days in emergency departments for psychiatric care due to its proximity to the state hospital. He was joined by hospital officials, state agency heads and Republican state senators who urged Democrats to reverse course.

"This is about us standing here and just being a voice for these families who have asked for action now. To be honest, they asked for action years ago, and they deserved it," he said. "So when we hear folks in Concord say, 'It's too soon?' It's 20 years too late, for goodness sake. It's really time to get on the ball and make sure these families have a voice."

The state, he said, is facing an unprecedented crisis that demands action that rebuilds the

state's treatment infrastructure.

"Can you cite an instance in history when we've had a crisis of this level with families that are sitting the hallways of this very building being warehoused, maintained for days, weeks on end?" he said. "So yes, are we taking drastic measures? You bet we are. Are we taking the right measures? Undoubtedly."

Jeffrey Meyers, commissioner of the Department of Health and Human Services, called Sununu's a thoughtful and well-considered approach that supports the state's new 10-year mental health plan. Sen. Chuck Morse, R-Salem, echoed Sununu's attempt to take politics out of the debate.

"We can talk about income taxes, we can talk about capital gains taxes, we can talk about raising business taxes, but this is about people. That's why we're here today," he said. "We're letting the public down today by voting on anything less than what the governor proposed because these are real people right now who are sitting in hospitals that can't transition anywhere right now."

While Democrats and some mental health advocates say renovating existing space at the state hospital would be a better move, supporters of Sununu's plan argue that there isn't enough room even once the children's unit is moved elsewhere as planned. And they say the

target population requires a significantly different environment and staff.

Critics argue that the building will divert money and workforce from where they are most needed — community-based mental health services that help people avoid hospitalization.

"The governor should work with us on lowering the need for new admissions in the first place, which we can accomplish through funding for community health efforts," said Rep. Mary Jane Wallner, D-Concord, chairwoman of the House Finance Committee.

Sununu said that while he supports adding more mobile crisis teams, doing so now doesn't make sense when the workforce isn't there to staff them and the state got no bidders the last time it tried to create one.

But Michael Skibbie, the center's policy director, said the stand-alone facility would strain the state's workforce significantly more than mobile crisis teams or some of the other community-based services, and said the state should put out contracts for mobile crisis teams with provider rates that are high enough to attract bidders.

"It's understandable that everybody wants to waive around the tragedy of the emergency room waiting population, and we absolutely are outraged about that. But, you don't need to

Obituaries

Louise Minnie (Hart) Darling

Louise Minnie (Hart) Darling, 70, of Darling Drive, of Groton, Vt., died on Monday, April 1, 2019, at Portsmouth Regional Hospital in Portsmouth, N.H.

Louise was born in Haverhill, N.H. on Oct. 1, 1948, to Ernest and Lillian Mae (Moses) Hart. On Sept. 29, 1967, she married Kenneth Darling.

Louise was a stay-at-home mom who enjoyed her family and her home. In her spare time, she enjoyed crocheting and tended her wild flower garden. She liked to go berry picking and collecting wind chimes. Her bird feeders were always full so she could watch the birds and the squirrels. She loved attending the Hart and Moses family reunions.

She is survived by her husband of 51 years, Kenneth Darling of Groton; two sons, Brent Darling and wife Erin and Jeremy Darling and wife Naomi, both of Groton; three grandchildren, Kristi, Rose, and Dylan; two great grandsons, Orison and Archer; a sister, Mavis Bruleigh of Topsham, Vt.; three brothers, James Hart and wife Pat, Lawrence Hart, Sr., and Robert Hart, all of Topsham; along with nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Calling hours will be on Monday, April 8 from 6-8 p.m. at Ricker Funeral Home, 1 Birch Street, Woodsville, N.H.

A graveside service will be on Saturday, June 1 at 11 a.m. in the Groton Village Cemetery.

For more information or to offer an online condolence, please visit www.rickerfh.com.



Louise Darling

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

Ellen Cady-Bussey

Ellen Cady-Bussey died on March 18, 2019. She was born in Littleton, N.H. to Robert Cady & Eunice (Harrigan) Cady on Oct. 12, 1953. She graduated from Littleton High School.

Ellen started working at Burndy's in Littleton before moving to Massachusetts. She was a hardworking woman who loved her family dearly and was an avid fan of the Bruins and Patriots.

She leaves behind her husband Donald Bussey, her son Josh Morton, his wife Kathi and son Noah, along with her brother Robert Cady, wife Gail and son Ken.

Ellen was predeceased by her father and mother Robert and Eunice Cady, a sister Wanda Kelley and daughter Kasey Stark.

A service will happen later in the spring. An announcement with details will follow.



Ellen Cady-Bussey

Rita was predeceased by her husband, Raymond Frederick Nickles, Sr. on Sept. 8, 2012; a son, Raymond F. Nickles, Jr. on Dec. 7, 2014; and a sister, Bette Hudson.

Survivors include her daughter, Laura Rodimon and husband Frank of Piermont; two sons, Mark Nickles and wife Shirley of North Haverhill, and James Nickles and wife Beulah of St. Johnsbury, Vt.; a daughter-in-law, Laura Nickles of Haverhill, N.H.; seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren and one expected this summer; a brother-in-law, Raymond C. Nickles and wife Georgia of Benton, N.H.; and several nieces and nephews.

There will be no calling hours.

A memorial graveside service will be on Thursday, May 30, at noon, at the Sawyer Cemetery, Bradford, Vt. with Rev. George Hemway from the Trinity Church of the Nazarene officiating.

For more information or to sign an online condolence please visit www.rickerfh.com.

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



Rita Nickles

Nancy Ann Bellefeuille Hennessey

Nancy Ann Bellefeuille Hennessey, of Berlin, N.H. passed away on March 24, 2019 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center after a short illness surrounded by her family. Born May 14, 1934 in Berlin, N.H., the daughter of the late Julius and Louise (DiProspero) Porretta, she attended public schools in Berlin, N.H. and graduated Berlin High School in 1952 as the class Valedictorian. She attended Plymouth State college to study business administration, and after one year transferred to Boston University and graduated in 1956. She later obtained a Master's Degree from Lyndon State College in 1980.

Nancy married Richard Bellefeuille in 1957 and together they raised two sons, David and Paul in St. Johnsbury, Vermont. She taught business administration (typing, shorthand, and book keeping) at St. Johnsbury Academy from 1970 to 1995. Her hobbies included playing clarinet in the St. Johnsbury Town Band. In the winter she enjoyed skiing and, in the summertime, playing tennis and golf, as a longtime member of the Androscoggin Country Club. She also enjoyed traveling, especially in Europe and Russia. She was active in her Catholic faith by serving as a Eucharistic minister at St. John the Evangelist Parish in St. Johnsbury, St. Kieran Parish and St. Anne Church of Good Shepherd Parish in Berlin, N.H.

She was pre-deceased by her first husband Richard Bellefeuille 1983, grandson Nicolas Bellefeuille 2005, and second husband Jim Hennessey 2018. Survivors include son David Bellefeuille and wife Sherryann Bellefeuille of Morrison, Colorado; grandson Aaron Bellefeuille and wife Trisha Bellefeuille, great-grandson Lyric Bellefeuille, of Hot Sulfur Springs, Colorado; granddaughter Brittany (Bellefeuille) Moore and husband Nich Moore of Escondido California; son Paul Bellefeuille and wife Lise Bellefeuille of Waterford, Vermont; several nieces and nephews.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Saturday March 30, 2019 at 10 a.m. at St. Anne Church of Good Shepherd Parish. Interment will be in the Holy Family Cemetery. Relatives and friends may call at the Bryant Funeral Home, 180 Hillside Ave., Berlin on Friday evening from 5 to 7 p.m. Donations in her memory may be made to a charity of one's choice. Online guest-book at www.bryantfuneralhome.net.



Nancy Hennessey

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New Hampshire State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigation searched a home at 92 Wild Ammonoosuc Rd. in Haverhill, left, on Wednesday, April 3, 2019 in connection with the disappearance of Maura Murray. The residence was located nearby the place where Murray was last seen on Route 112 at 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 9, 2004. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Search

Continued from Page 4

what was a cement floor put in after his daughter’s disappearance. Based on what he heard about the people who lived there at the time, early on, right after his daughter disappeared, Murray said he thought he and his family had a good shot of finding evidence connected to his daughter’s disappearance in the house. “I don’t know whether the police are right or if we could look further in the corner,” he said. Murray said, “I still think we need to get under the devices that have been placed there ... Then they will have looked at it completely. I’m not satisfied they got anywhere near close to the corner.” Murray, a critic of NHSP, encouraged the FBI to take a more active role in the case. “Otherwise, it’s a half dozen of us doing the best we can,” he said.

Going forward, Murray said he’ll continue to ask for the public’s help and will “stick my nose back on the trail. That’s all I can do.” Of his daughter, he said, “She wants to come home and be buried in her hometown. She can’t. She’s buried up here.” He said he can’t find out what happened to Maura alone. “I need all the help I can get,” said Murray. “Please help. Please help my daughter.”

Strelzin said the last credible sighting of Maura Murray, 21, of Hanson, Mass., was around 7:30 p.m. on Feb. 9, 2004, after her 1996 Saturn, eastbound on Route 112 and on a sharp curve, crashed into a snowbank near the Weathered Barn in what police said was a single-car accident. She had been a nursing student at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst and had driven north into the White Mountains after emailing her college instructors, falsely, that she was taking time off because of a death in the family. At the accident scene, a school bus driver reported finding a woman at the car, and told police he asked her if she needed help, but she declined. When police arrived, Murray was gone. Investigators, who said there were bottles of alcohol and signs Murray had been drinking in the car, reported no evidence of a struggle or footprints leading into the woods. Her destination remains a mystery, and theories abound as to whether she staged the accident and ran away to create a new life, was suicidal, fled into the woods and succumbed to the elements, or met with foul play and was murdered. Strelzin declined to say if there are suspects in the case, and said

the NHAG does not name suspects. Several years ago, the Murray case was added the N.H. Cold Case Unit, which is listing it as a missing person case and treating her disappearance as suspicious. NHSP and the attorney general’s office continue to follow up on leads generated by the public and other sources and by additional investigative measures police generate on their own, said Strelzin. “That will continue,” he said. “This has been a criminal investigation from the start. We simply don’t know what happened, but we are keeping our options open and that is why law enforcement is involved.” The house searched Wednesday has had several owners since 2004. The current owners are Michael and Joanne Huff, according to Haverhill property records.

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19 Luge surface

20 See-through

22 Suite provider

24 Volga outlet

28 Toaster snack (hyph.)

30 Military units

31 Dispatch money

32 Less damp

33 Bugbear (2 wds.)

37 Lass

38 Port in a storm

39 Find fault

40 Big shock

43 Zenith opposite

45 Deep pink

46 — Dion

47 Spendthrift

50 Sub stabilizer

51 Transplant

52 Dads, to granddads

53 Jackie’s second

54 Leprechaun cousins

57 — and aahed

62 Shiny metal

63 Lunch times

64 Unwanted sound

65 Laugh syllable

66 Sharp dresser

67 Primitive weapon

PREVIOUS PUZZLE SOLVED

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| DOVE | CODED | HILO |
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| ETNA | MADRE | ACME |
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| EVE | LORDS | SONAR |
| NESTEGGS | ANGLE | |
| YOYO | YOGA | |
| VAMPS | GOVERNOR | |
| ALAI | ANODE | COKE |
| IMPS | SURER | HERA |
| LAST | KNELT | SLAP |

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DOWN

1 Bilko’s rank

2 Pint-size

3 Add- — (extras)

4 Nonsense!

5 More spiteful

6 Kind of letter

7 Sketch

8 Miscellany

9 JAMA subscribers

10 Bulletin board fastener

11 Watchdog breed

12 Kitchen gadget

13 Genuflected

21 Is down with

23 Dog in “Beetle Bailey”

24 Mooch

25 Panoply

26 Say cheese!

27 Dessert choice

28 Sellers or Lorre

29 Sign of the future

31 Make merry

33 Dull and ordinary

34 Buddha’s land

35 Monsoons

36 White heron

38 This place

41 VIII, to Virgil

42 Be a sign of

43 Ricky and Willie

44 Every one

46 Have the power to

47 Fury

48 Lofty abode

49 Cactus defense

50 Officious

52 Transmit

55 Mauna —

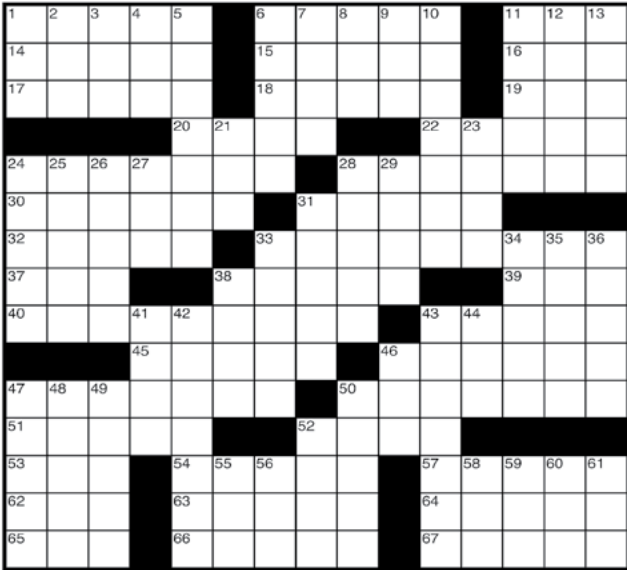
56 Wernher — Braun

58 Comic strip caveman

59 Hurry along

60 That, to Juanita

61 Van — Waals force



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House Democrats Put Final Touches On Proposed Budget

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — House Democrats are putting the final touches on a \$13.4 billion two-year budget that spends more and significantly departs from Republican Gov. Chris Sununu's proposal on mental health, education and other issues.

The New Hampshire House will vote next week on the plan being crafted by its Finance Committee. Top Democrats on the committee shared some details with reporters on Monday, saying their focus has been crafting a budget that provides property tax relief to towns and cities by boosting education aid.

"I think we have a good document to present to the House," said Rep. Mary Jane Wallner, D-Concord, chairwoman of the committee. "Every year for the last many years, we've heard how our schools and our communities are really struggling to fund our schools. And I think what you're going to see in our budget is a really good first step."

Sununu's proposal totals \$13.1 billion, about \$5 billion of which is general fund and education spending. The House finance proposal includes \$5.5 billion in general fund and education spending.

While Sununu has proposed using \$64 million in surplus money for school-building projects in property-poor commu-

nities, the House wants restore so-called stabilization grants to schools and adjust the formula used to send education money to towns and cities to benefit those with lower property values and higher percentages of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. That would amount to about \$150 million in the second year of the budget and would be paid for by extending the 5 percent interest and dividends tax to cover capital gains.

The House plan eliminates the \$40 million Sununu included for a new building to move the secure psychiatric unit out of the state prison and replaces the voluntary paid family and medical leave plan he has proposed with the governor of Vermont with the mandatory plan that Democrats in the Legislature are pushing. Republicans consider that an income tax, and Sununu will never support it, his spokesman repeated Monday.

"House Democrats have proposed over \$300 million in new spending that would have to be paid for by the hardworking taxpayers of New Hampshire. Governor Sununu's proposed budget smartly invests in targeted areas of need without creating new taxes or raising any existing fees," Ben Vihstadt said.

House Democrats said they rejected most of the one-off spending proposals for local infrastructure upgrades that critics called Sununu's pet projects. In a statement, Sununu urged the Legislature to reverse course, and defended his plan to use one-time surplus funds for one-time projects instead of trying to

expand government programs.

He also criticized Democrats for not including funding for the new secure psychiatric unit. Mental health advocates for years have been calling for an end to sending patients deemed dangerous to the prison unit, and the state has faced lawsuits over it.

"I am shocked that Democratic leadership went from applauding this initiative in my budget address to failing to fulfill New Hampshire's obligations in the state's 10 Year Mental Health Plan," he said in a statement. "New Hampshire families have waited over 20 years for a solution and it is unconscionable that House Democratic leadership is now telling them that it is 'too soon' to move forward with this solution."

Democrats said they still support the goal of moving the unit out of the prison, but more planning is necessary before deciding a new building is the answer. Their budget calls for moving the children's beds at the state psychiatric hospital to a new location and for creating 40 transitional housing beds, both of which would free up space at the hospital. Their plan also funds early intervention programs to treat mental illness and a mobile crisis team for children and youth.

"There are a lot of moving parts, and we just tried to start with what we thought would be worthwhile to start the process, going in all these different directions," said Rep. Sharon Nordgren, D-Hanover.

News Briefs

Continued from Page 13

solve the problem multiple times. You need to solve the problem once. And you don't need to solve it through a forensic hospital because just by moving the kids out, you've solved that problem," he said.

"If you want to go ahead and solve your secure psychiatric unit problem," he said, "we think they ought to at least be willing to carefully consider whether they can solve that problem

within the walls of New Hampshire Hospital."

Shaheen Introduces Health Care Affordability Package

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — U.S. Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire has introduced a health care affordability package to reduce patient costs and expand access to critical medical services.

Shaheen, a Democrat, says the goals are to lower premiums, reduce deductibles, drive down out-of-pocket costs and improve the health care system.

One part would reduce deductibles and co-pays for low-income and middle-income patients by expanding the cost-sharing reduction assistance that insurers are required to provide to indi-

viduals enrolled in marketplace coverage. It would appropriate funding to reimburse insurers.

Another part would increase the value of tax credits for families currently eligible for federal assistance and expand eligibility to include more middle-income families. A third part would establish caps on how much hospitals and doctors could charge enrollees in the individual market for services provided by out-of-network medical providers.

Construction Worker Dies While Doing Equipment Maintenance

CHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Police in New Hampshire say a construction worker has died while performing maintenance on a piece of equipment near a housing development.

WMUR-TV reports Chester police said the incident happened at about 9:30 p.m. Monday in the sand pits behind the Mill Pine Village housing development.

Authorities say the worker was doing maintenance on a dragline crane. His name has not been released.

The state medical examiner has been called in. Police believe the incident was an accident.

High school Students To Gather For 'Youth Summit'

LEBANON, N.H. (AP) — About 350 high school students from across New Hampshire are expected to take part at the start of a "Youth Summit" hosted by Dartmouth-Hitchcock.

Students will be gathering in Concord April 5-6. The first day's program, "Knowledge, Empowerment, Understanding," includes discussion groups focusing on mental health, diversity and respect, school violence, the pressure for success, and distracted driving. Each group will have a student facilitator, supported by an adult subject-matter expert.

The focus turns to adults on the second day with a program called, "They're Talking: Are We Listening?"

Speakers at the event include World Cup champion and Olympic gold medal-winning skier Hannah Kearney; actor, producer and director Jim Wahlberg; social media innovator Wendy Sue

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News Briefs

Continued from Page 16

Swanson; and Ford Racing driver, coach and instructor Mike Speck.

Lottery Lawsuit Looms Over Budget Writing

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire lawmakers are writing the state budget without knowing whether they can rely on a key source of revenue, but the state attorney general hopes the question will be settled soon in court.

The New Hampshire Lottery Commission sued the federal government last month over the U.S. Department's recent re-interpretation of the federal Wire Act, which was enacted in 1961 to target the mob and prohibits interstate wagering. In 2011, during the Obama administration, the department said online gambling within states that does not involve sporting events would not violate federal law. But officials reversed that in November, saying the law applies to any form of gambling that crosses state lines.

That raised concerns about the viability of multistate online poker agreements, as well as state lotteries like the one in New Hampshire, which is projected to bring in \$192 million in the next two years.

While only about \$5 million a year of that total comes from the "iLottery" platform the state launched in September, the broadest interpretation of the opinion would prohibit all lottery-related activities that use the internet, Attorney General Gordon MacDonald argued in the complaint.

A judge will hear the case April 11, MacDonald told lawmakers Tuesday, and he expects a ruling by the end of May. Lawmakers have until the end of June to pass a two-year state budget.

"In view of this important revenue item to the budget, we've made clear to the court that we respectfully would like an answer to the questions we posed in time for this body to make a decision," he said.

NeoPollard Interactive, which provides New Hampshire's iLottery hardware and software, joined the lawsuit as a plaintiff, and the states of New Jersey, Michigan and Pennsylvania filed briefs in support. But in their response to the lawsuit filed Friday, attorneys for the U.S. Department of Justice argue that the federal court lacks jurisdiction because the plaintiffs are seeking an advisory opinion about a law.

"The heart of the plaintiffs' claim in this case is not that the government is threatening to do something that would violate their constitutional rights, but rather that they disagree with the government about whether a federal criminal statute applies to certain commercial wagering activity," the lawyers wrote.

They also argued that the plaintiffs showed no evidence that they are at imminent risk of prosecution.

Nevada, New Jersey and Delaware legalized online gambling after the 2011 opinion, and the three states have agreements allowing poker players to compete online across the states. Pennsylvania became the fourth state to legalize

online casino gambling in 2017. New Hampshire is among at least nine states that allow lottery tickets to be purchased online.

Sununu Jabs Democrats On Taxes At Conservative Rally

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Republican New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu's calling out Democrats in his state over tax policies in the months before an expected budget showdown.

Sununu headlined a rally in the state capital Saturday. He told a crowd of hundreds that the state legislature, which is controlled by the Democrats, is threatening the state's longstanding opposition to income tax.

The Concord Monitor reports Sununu is opposing moves to roll back cuts to the business profits tax. He also characterizes the planned creation of paid family leave as a form of income tax.

Granite State Taxpayers put on the rally. Democratic Senate Majority Leader Dan Feltes says Sununu's mischaracterizing the nature of the state's tax trouble. Feltes says property taxes are going up in New Hampshire while taxes on corporations are going down.

Bill Would Halt Employers Asking About Criminal Convictions

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire employers would not be able to ask potential workers about past criminal convictions on their initial applications under a bill that has passed the state Senate.

Democratic supporters of the bill say employees shouldn't throw out a job application because of someone's criminal past until the person has a chance to be interviewed in person or by phone. They argued it would particularly help those in recovery from opioid addiction get a second chance.

Republican opponents said the bill would take away decision-making power from employers.

The bill now goes to the House.

State: Tech In Hep C Cases Took Too Long On Sentence Request

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — A traveling medical technician convicted of infecting patients with hepatitis C waited too long to ask a judge to vacate his sentence, New Hampshire prosecutors said Friday.

David Kwiatkowski was sentenced in 2013 to 39 years in prison for stealing painkillers and replacing them with saline-filled syringes tainted with his blood. In January, he acted as his own attorney and asked to be released, saying his former lawyer was ineffective.

In a response filed Friday, U.S. Attorney Scott Murphy said that such claims must be made within a year of conviction. While there are some exceptions to the requirement, none apply

in this case, he wrote.

Despite being fired numerous times over drug allegations, Kwiatkowski had worked in 18 hospitals in seven states before being hired by Exeter Hospital in New Hampshire in 2011. After his arrest the following year, 46 people in four states were diagnosed with the same strain of the hepatitis C virus he carries, including a woman who died in Kansas.

At his sentencing hearing, Kwiatkowski apologized to his victims, saying his crime was caused by an addiction to painkillers and alcohol. In the motion he filed himself from prison in Florida, he argued that his lawyer allowed him to plead guilty under extreme emotional distress and that his sentence was calculated incorrectly. He also said the sentence should have been much lower and that his mental state "should have been in question" for agreeing to the deal.

Hepatitis C is a viral infection that attacks the liver. In all, 32 patients were infected in New Hampshire, seven in Maryland, six in Kansas and one in Pennsylvania. Kwiatkowski also worked in Michigan, New York, Arizona and Georgia.

Senate Passes Independent Redistricting Commission Bill

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — The latest effort to remove partisanship from the process of redrawing New Hampshire's legislative districts cleared the state Senate on Thursday over the objections of Republicans who argued it would violate the state Constitution.

The Democratically controlled Senate voted 14-10 along party lines Thursday to create a 15-member independent commission to redraw the state's two congressional districts, five Executive Council districts, 24 state Senate districts and districts for the 400 House seats. The bill now goes to the House, which has already passed a similar bill. Republican Gov. Chris Sununu opposes the idea.

Supporters argued the current system that puts lawmakers in charge of redistricting allows for gerrymandering, in which boundaries are drawn

to benefit the party in power.

"Representatives and senators should not choose their voters, voters should choose their representatives," said Sen. Shannon Chandley, D-Amherst. "Please vote for Senate Bill 8, so we can say firmly to all our constituents that we respect you as a voter, we respect our democracy and we stand for fair elections."

Opponents argued that the Legislature shouldn't outsource its responsibilities to a commission and noted that the state Constitution requires the Legislature to set election districts.

"There is a legislative process. A committee is formed, their meetings are held in public, public input is taken. Nobody's voice has been quieted, in fact, sometimes those public hearings were quite contentious," said Sen. Sharon Carson, R-Londonderry.

The current district designations were approved in 2012, when Republicans controlled the Legislature. But the map was vetoed by Democratic Gov. John Lynch, who argued it was unconstitutional because it denied 62 towns and wards their own seats in the House and that it needlessly broke up municipalities. The Legislature overrode the veto, and the state Supreme Court later found the plan constitutional.

Lawmakers killed several bills in recent years that would have created an independent commission to handle redistricting. Another failed bill sought to take not just politics out of the process but people. It would have created a procedure to draw electoral districts using a computer algorithm. The House also considered a constitutional amendment this session to create an independent commission, but it was retained in committee.

Supporters of the Senate bill defended its constitutionality, noting that the commission would submit its recommendations to the Legislature for final approval.

"Are we just going to do nothing and wing it, and say, 'Whatever party's in control, have at it'?" said Sen. Dan Feltes, D-Concord. "Or are we right now, before the 2020 election, going to say, 'Let's be independent and fair, regardless of which party it is.'"

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Family Who Sought Privacy Found Terror Instead

BY EVAN ALLEN AND LAURA CRIMALDI
The Boston Globe

ALTON, N.H. (AP) — The boy was gone. Inside the farmhouse, where the Eckert family had come to start over, his parents lay bleeding.

Outside, snow covered the open land where they raised chickens and pigs and cows, home schooled their three children, and tried to lead lives pleasing to God. A sign posted at the top of the narrow dirt road that led to the farm forbade government agents from trespassing, at the risk of fines, prison, or force.

Clouds threatened rain. Someone called 911. The air was damp and cold and still, but just after 7:30 a.m. on March 15, it began to crackle with the radio broadcasts of the state and local police now speeding toward 76 Dobbins Way, trying to contain the horror spilling over the radio in fragments.

"Can we respond to Alton. . . 76 Dobbins. . . shots fired."

"The suspected shooter (unintelligible) is running off into the woods. He's wearing a bright, bright blue shirt with pajama pants and he is an 11-year-old."

"10-5 and he's presumable to still have the weapon?"

"Confirmed."

In the coming days, friends would remember how James and Lizette Eckert seemed to love the little boy they adopted from a Russian orphanage as a toddler along with his older brother, and wonder what they had missed. They would describe the child as happy but quiet, and thumb through the coloring books he scribbled in during Bible study meetings looking for clues. But on that gray morning, there were only the lights and the sirens and the dying breaths of James and Lizette.

Somewhere in the woods, the boy with the gun waited.

Before they retreated from the wider world into their Alton farmhouse, before they hung the "No Trespassing" signs at their property edge, the Eckerts owned a big house on a lake in Gray,



JESSICA RINALDI/THE BOSTON GLOBE VIA AP

The home of James and Lizette Eckert in Alton, NH is pictured on March 28, 2019. James and Lizette Eckert had fled to an isolated farmhouse, to home school their children and to keep the government at bay. They had steeled themselves against the world, but not against an 11-year-old boy allegedly with a gun. Police have declined to talk about the case, citing the age of the boy they have arrested and charged with second-degree murder. They have not confirmed that he is James and Lizette's son, though two people with knowledge of the investigation told the Globe that he is. Authorities have not detailed a motive, or answered questions about how the children were treated, or how an 11-year-old boy had access to a gun.

Maine, and ran a successful chiropractic practice in South Portland. Far from the quiet, self-reliant existence they would embrace later, in Maine they lived large, buying timeshares, a boat, and a Mercedes camper, and working endlessly on their house. Neighbors were amazed at how fast they seemed to spend money. But James and Lizette were popular healers, and for a while, they wrote later in court documents, they could afford it.

"They were straight-on chiropractic and trusted what we say is 'the power of the adjustment,'" said Kelly Worster, who met the couple in 1998 after a chiropractor in Boston sent her to see them for help with her migraines. "A lot of miracles happened in that office. As a result,

they changed a lot of lives."

The pair had met at the Palmer College of Chiropractic in Iowa, married in 1997, and opened their practice, Innate Chiropractic, the next year. They seemed to share a deep connection, said Worster, who was so inspired by their example that she abandoned her pursuit of a social work degree and became a chiropractor herself.

James co-wrote a book on wellness, and taught seminars on health. Lizette's passion was taking care of families, Worster said. She performed chiropractic adjustments on babies, pregnant women, and women in labor. "She was fearless," said Worster.

They had one biological child, a smart, pretty little girl who neighbors remember studying a second language at an early age and swimming

happily with her father in Little Sebago Lake. In around 2010, they adopted their boys, who were then about 2 and 4 years old, from Russia through KidsFirst Adoption in Indiana, according to agency director Inna Pecar.

James and Lizette were thrilled to have their little boys, Pecar said. Their neighbors in Maine remember all three children riding bikes around the neighborhood, picking blackberries.

There were cracks in the picture. James and Lizette were quietly running up almost \$100,000 in credit card debt; their student loans topped \$250,000. They bought luxury items they never seemed to use, neighbors said. And the Eckerts had never been considered particularly social in their lakeside neighborhood. They were standoffish and abrupt, and had dogs that always seemed to be outside barking in the middle of the night, said neighbor Ray Topar and a neighbor couple who asked not to be named. But up until the last couple years of their time in Maine, they kept a neat house. They had people over. They went to work.

Later, when they lived in Alton, James and Lizette would tell friends and clients that they had left Maine because life had become too full of things and they wanted something simpler, more meaningful. They spoke glancingly of troubles, or of a "court battle," but they were private people. There was no reason to pry.

The "court battle" stemmed from a 2009 IRS audit of Innate Chiropractic. The agency hit the Eckerts with an assessment of more than \$100,000.

It was the beginning of a financial and emotional crisis for the family that would drag on for years, pitting them against the IRS, federal bankruptcy court, and an ever-expanding universe of creditors.

The couple tried to challenge the audit but failed. They filed for bankruptcy in August 2011, hoping they could use the proceeding to fight the validity of the IRS assessment, which they considered "bureaucratic caprice," according to court documents. The same month, they dissolved their chiropractic business. In court documents, they listed their assets at a little less than \$600,000, and their liabilities at more than \$2 million.

They hoped to pay down debts and keep their property. But James and Lizette did not have a

See **Terror**, Page 19

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Thank you.

Terror

Continued from Page 18

lawyer representing them, and began skipping hearings and failing to file paperwork, or filing it incorrectly. They hired and then fired an attorney and refused to pay some of his fees.

By March 2012, they had stopped paying the mortgage on their house, according to state court documents. Their bankruptcy was moving, against their wishes, toward liquidation. They stood to lose everything.

They saw themselves as victims of a hostile judiciary, and in a June 2012 filing, accused the court of bad faith and bias. "The debtors object to producing anything further in this case based on their right to remain silent," they wrote.

In July 2012, the bankruptcy was dismissed at the Eckerts' request, and they were left underwater with all their debts — and a fierce and bitter disbelief in the existence of justice in America.

Years later, James would tell a good friend, Josh Youssef, that a "court battle" reshaped his perception of the world. Youssef, who owns a small computer repair business and was a Republican state Senate candidate, said he told James, "When you're in school they teach you, tell the truth, and liberty and justice will prevail, and that's a lie."

James agreed, Youssef recalled. He said he had been living that lie for years, but now he saw the truth.

In the Eckerts' last few years on the lake in Maine, as their legal and financial troubles mounted, their neighbors watched with growing alarm as they became more isolated. James stopped going to work. The children roamed with what appeared to be little supervision. The youngest boy often cried.

And in the little waterfront neighborhood, where residents swam and fished and boated, the family began farming — growing vegetables and raising chickens and goats. Their property smelled. People complained.

Then, late one night around the end of 2012, the neighbors said, they heard clanging at about 11 p.m. It was the Eckerts, packing up. They took everything: firewood, the generator, the water heater. In the morning, they were gone.

When the bank sued the Eckerts the next year, seeking nearly \$500,000 in missed mortgage payments, the deputy sheriffs couldn't find them to serve them the paperwork.

"The structure is vacant," one deputy scrawled on a court filing. "Snow undisturbed."

The farmhouse in Alton where the Eckerts moved, built in 1770, was purchased for \$140,000 in October 2012 by a man who appears to be Lizette's father, according to public records. It was a beautiful property, 19 acres, ringed by trees, and the Eckerts seemed happy there, tending the land and seeing chiropractic clients.

Alton seemed a good fit for the family, a town of just about 5,500 year-round residents that swelled in the summers with out-of-state visitors coming for the splendor of Lake Winnepesaukee, which flows into the heart of the town at Alton Bay. Winding roads lined by low stone walls cut through forests and turned to dirt on rolling hills. The local paper covered road races, meat raffles, and Rotary Club meetings. The town leans right, with a fiery streak of libertarian and Free State thought.

James and Lizette set about building a life based on Scripture and the Constitution, friends said. They believed in forgiveness, in loving God, and in loving their neighbor — which meant everyone, said Sue DeLemus, who studied the Bible with them.

DeLemus met James around 2010, when he began coming to meetings of The 9.12 Project, a group she cofounded with her husband and another couple after a call-out from right wing radio host and author Glenn Beck. The conservative group advocates principles of life, including the sacredness of family, and the idea that Americans do not answer to the government, the government answers to Americans.

"They wanted to be quiet and handle things," said DeLemus. "They were very self-sufficient and independent people."

Youssef said he used to have long political discussions with James, who he said wanted to rely on himself because he did not

trust that the systems in place would take care of him or his family. The Eckerts didn't have television, and home schooled the children.

But James wasn't a zealot, Youssef said: "He thought: Live and let live."

The family wasn't isolated from the community, friends said. They were a regular presence at youth soccer games, church events, and road races, and hosted an annual pig roast at the farm. Lizette had a job as a chiropractor at Sanctuary Body Works in Pittsfield. James ran his chiropractic business in Alton, calling it "The Big Idea."

"Now let me tell you a little more what I believe and why I do what I do. . ." James wrote in a March 2013 article for the local paper. "Because I desire to help the newborn, the aged, and those without hope. Because I choose to care for the patient with the disease, not the disease. Because I wish to assist rather than intrude, to free rather than control." He didn't take insurance, he wrote — which kept "the bean counters" out of his business.

The family's friends described James, Lizette, and their daughter vividly. James: gregarious, optimistic, generous. He taught an informal class on the US Constitution, had a dry sense of humor and a goofy chuckle, ran ultramarathons, and swore by FiveFinger running shoes, they said. Lizette: gentle, loving, patiently teaching the boys to cook pancakes and her daughter to knit. Their daughter: whip-smart, she sold homemade soaps and jewelry and saved up enough to buy herself a horse. DeLemus treasures a beautiful pair of boiled wool mittens in robin's egg blue the girl knit for her.

But in these stories, the boys are indistinct. Many people believed they were twins, though they were born two years apart. When they attended DeLemus's Bible study several years ago, they would color in the kitchen while their older sister sat with their parents. They were shy — but of course, DeLemus said, they were children. James's chiropractic patients remember seeing them when they arrived at the farm for treatment, but they didn't interact. But, then, why would they?

Russia requires annual updates about children adopted by Americans, said KidsFirst Adoption director Pecar, but the Eckerts stopped sending them after three years. Any child who comes from a Russian orphanage has trauma, Pecar said; there is often no way to know what they suffered. Sometimes, that trauma can resurface when a child hits puberty.

On Facebook, Lizette "liked" a TV show called "Disconnected Kids, Reconnected Families" and a page for "Beyond Trauma and Attachment," a group that supports parents raising children who have suffered complex trauma and have attachment difficulties. But there are few other clues about their life at home with the boys. The woman who runs the trauma and attachment group said she never spoke to Lizette. Neither James nor Lizette gave any hint of any trouble with either of the boys, friends said.

When DeLemus tries to puzzle it out now, she wonders if her friends' youngest son was having problems but they kept quiet to protect him. But she admits she doesn't know.

"It's what you project onto a blank screen," she said.

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Police have declined to talk about the case, citing the age of the boy they have arrested and charged with second-degree murder. They have not confirmed that he is James and Lizette's son, though two people with knowledge of the investigation told the Globe that he is. Authorities have not detailed a motive, or answered questions about how the children were treated, or how an 11-year-old boy had access to a gun.

In an undated family photo posted on Facebook, James and Lizette stand behind their three children, all wearing matching shirts with the word "Family" in a heart. The boys stand in front, smiling. They look happy.

When police arrived at the farmhouse on March 15, Lizette was already dead, a single bullet in her head. James was still breathing, but barely. The boy was headed toward the neighboring town of New Durham, they thought. Maybe a friend's house on Berry Road.

"If we could push a few more units up to the house so we can lock down an inner perimeter and get EMS in here, one of the victims is still alive currently," came the police transmission just before 8 a.m.

"OK 10-5 I'm uh, I'm en route to the house."

Officers requested backup and dogs and a patrol of the perimeters they'd set up. They checked the friend's house, but the boy was not there.

"Keep your eye when you're on that post," came the radio chatter. "He's in the woods. Unaccounted for." They took the Eckerts' remaining children, the girl and the older boy, to the fire department. They locked down the schools. They looked for footprints in the snow.

Police set up a command post about a mile from 76 Dobbins Way, in a 97-year-old woman's dining room under an amber glass lamp. She read an Erma Bombeck book while they worked. Outside, fog was rolling in.

"To the units in Alton, Berry, and Valley Road area, the Belknap County special ops team has seven, eight people going into the woods following tracks from the house towards the Berry and Valley Road Area," the radio announced. "All units be advised."

And then, a half hour later, and nearly two hours after the shots were fired: "The child's in custody."

The Eckerts had braced themselves against so many dangers, but not the boy in the bright, bright blue shirt, the boy with the gun. James died after Lizette. He, too, was shot once in the head.

The family's farm is quiet now. Signs still warn intruders away, still guarding the family's secrets. The snow clings to brown earth, black birds rise and disappear into the naked trees.

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Friday, Apr 05

COMMUNITY

Annual Chowder Luncheons: 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m., Littleton Methodist Church, Main Street, Littleton.

Time Travel: April 5, 1941 - The Bette Davis Birthday Bash: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Littleton Opera House/Tower Room, 2 Union Street, B, LITTLETON. Richard Alberini, alberini@roadrunner.com, 6034446052. <http://littletonnhmuseum.com>.

Saturday, Apr 06

CALENDAR

Littleton Opera House Craft Fair/Flea Market: 9 a.m.-2 p.m., Littleton Opera House, 2 Union Street, Littleton. Sue Pilotte, spilotte@townoflittleton.org, 6035755324. <http://www.littletonoperahouse.com>.

COMMUNITY

All Saints Episcopal Healthy Living Series: Awareness Through Movement: 10-11 a.m., All Saints Episcopal Church, 35 School St., Littleton. All Saints Episcopal Church, allst-littleton@allsts.org, (603) 444-3414. <http://www.allsts.org>.

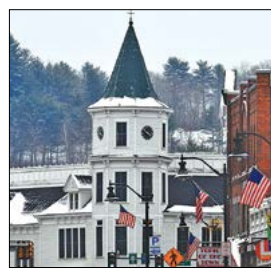
Lapsit Storytime: 10:30-11:30 a.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@stjathenaeum.org, 745-1391. www.stjathenaeum.org.

Saturday Stories: 10:30-11 a.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Laura Clerkin, lclerkin@bethlehemlibrary.org, 6038692409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

Afternoon Tea at the Littleton Community Center: 1-3 p.m., Littleton Community Center, 120 Main Street, Littleton. Littleton Community Center, littletoncommunitycenter@gmail.com, (603) 444-5711. <http://LittletonCommunityCenter.org>.

BETTE DAVIS CELEBRATION AT THE OPERA HOUSE

The Littleton Area Historical Society and Museum will celebrate the 1941 Littleton world premiere of Bette Davis' "The Great Lie." The party will be April 5 in the Tower Room of the Littleton Opera House from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. For info call 603-444-6435 or 603-444-6052.



Sunday, Apr 07

COMMUNITY

Open Meditation: 10-11 a.m., St. Johnsbury Shambhala Center, 17 Eastern Ave., St. Johnsbury. Caroline Demaio, cdemaio5@gmail.com, 8027489338. <https://st-johnsbury.shambhala.org/>.

CCSU Student Art Exhibit: 4-6 p.m., Gilmore Gallery, 656 Bayley Hazen Rd, Peacham. Abigail Bartell, abigail.bartell@ccsu-vt.net, 8026843651.

Monday, Apr 08

COMMUNITY

Mind Full of Cooking with Chef Adam Alderin/Beal House Inn and Tavern: 4:30-6 p.m., Littleton Food Co-op, 43 Bethlehem Road, Littleton. Becky Colpitts, bcolpitts@littletoncoop.org, 603-444-2800. <http://littletoncoop.com/events>.

Join the St. Johnsbury Band: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Caledonia County Court House, 1126 Main St., St. Johnsbury. Susan Gallagher, susgallagher@gmail.com, 1-802-626-5836. <http://stjohnsbury-band.org>.

Tuesday, Apr 09

COMMUNITY

Lancaster Homeschoolers: 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Lancaster Homeschoolers, lancaster-homeschoolers@gmail.com. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1788187137893480/>.

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

Braco - Silence and Science Meet: 4-6 p.m., Catamount Arts, 115 Eastern Avenue, St. Johnsbury. Michale Estar, 748-9545.

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

Brook Trout Habitat And Restoration Talk: 6:30-7:45 p.m., Burke Community Building, 212 School St., West Burke. **SPORTS**

Medieval Armored Fighting and Fencing Practice: 5:30-7:30 p.m., Miller's Run School, 3249 VT122, Sheffield. Bethany Creaser, chatelaine@panthervale.eastkingdom.org, 8028733028. <https://panthervale.eastkingdom.org/regular-gatherings/>.

Wednesday, Apr 10

COMMUNITY

Reading Buddies: 10 a.m.-12 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum,

1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@stjathenaeum.org, 802-745-1391. <http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

LCC Book Club: 1-2:15 p.m., Littleton Community Center, 120 Main Street, Littleton. Littleton Community Center, 6034445711. <http://LittletonCommunityCenter.org>.

Friendship Bracelet Making: 3-4 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Becky Hatfield, bhatfield@stjathenaeum.org, 8027451391. <http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

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

BRACO - A Healing Gift - Silence and Science Meet: 4-6 p.m., Catamount Arts, 115 Eastern Avenue, St. Johnsbury. Michale Estar, 802-748-9545. <http://www.braco.me>.

Tales from the Home of the World's Worst Weather: 6:30-7:30 p.m., Littleton Public Library, 92 Main St, Littleton. Meagan Carr, litlib@gmail.com, 603-444-5741. <http://www.littletonpubliclibrary.org>.

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

See **Get Out**, Page 22

INDIAN HEAD RESORT

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ACT's Shoes & Brews At Parker Mtn. & Littleton Freehouse

LITTLETON – Say hello to spring, walk some great trails and visit one of Littleton's newest restaurants with the Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust (ACT) at its 'Shoes & Brews' Saturday, April 13 from 2 to 5:30 p.m. in Littleton.

Wear hiking boots for the "shoes" portion of the event at the Parker (PRKR) Mountain trails near downtown Littleton from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The group will move in a slow to moderate pace along trails built for mountain biking but also open to hikers and skiers year-round. Plan for a loop of about 2.5 to 3 miles with light to moderate elevation gain. Children are encouraged to join and dogs are also welcome!

After the hike, the group will head down the hill to the Littleton Freehouse for the Brews portion of the event for snacks and refreshments. The Brews will officially run from 4 to about 5:30 p.m., and everyone is welcome to come and go as needed, whether or not they're on the hike. Consider staying to enjoy the delicious fare offered on the full Freehouse menu.

A big thanks to PRKR Mtn for partnering with ACT for this event.

Registration for the hike is required and is capped at 20 participants; be sure to register ASAP. Registration closes at noon on Friday, April 12. Once registered, an email will be sent with details about the meeting location.

Registration for the "Brews" is not required but is appreciated to help organizers plan. Join either portion of the event or both.

"Shoes & Brews" events this past winter have been well-attended. They're a great way to get outside and explore new places, meet new friends, and enjoy some delicious local fare. There will be a short mud season break

until getting back on track in June; check the ACT website or sign up for the monthly E-News.

The Ammonoosuc Conservation Trust inspires and leads private, voluntary action to conserve the land the North Country loves. Learn more and become a member at act-nh.org or by calling 603-823-7777.

Dana And Susan Robinson Return To Catamount Bluegrass

Favored folk duo Dana and Susan Robinson will return to St. Johnsbury on Saturday, April 20, when they'll join Bob Amos & Catamount Crossing for this month's Catamount Bluegrass Jam. The Robinsons are two guitar-playing, banjo-wailing, fiddle-sawing, harmony-singing purveyors of America's rich musical heritage. Known for their rich blend of contemporary songwriting and traditional Appalachian music, their live performances are an evocative journey through history.

Catamount Bluegrass Night, the Northeast Kingdom's well-established contribution to roots music tradition, is hosted by Bob Amos & Catamount Crossing, who will kick off the show with a 7 p.m. set in the Masons Hall, located on the third floor of the Catamount Arts Center at 115 Eastern Ave. Catamount Crossing will play 45 minutes or so of their best-loved hits before turning the stage over to Dana and Susan, scheduled to play an 8 p.m. set.

Dana and Susan Robinson played a private house concert last year to celebrate the release of their album, *Angel's Share*, the couple's fifth since their 2004 debut, *Native Soil*. The *Angel's Share* release concert was an intimate show with only a small number of tickets available, but Saturday's Bluegrass Night gives local music fans a second opportunity to hear the Robinsons' signature harmonies and textured influences.

"They can make an audience howl with laughter or hush with reflection," says Catamount Bluegrass host Bob Amos. The genius of a Dana and Susan Robinson performance lies in their ability to capture the audience's imagination, evoking a transformative experience, a poignant musical journey across America.

Following sets by Bob Amos & Catamount Crossing and Dana and Susan Robinson, both bands will take the stage together and invite musicians of all ages and ability to join in for a good old-fashioned bluegrass jam, perhaps the most beloved and authentic of all roots music traditions.

Admission to Catamount Bluegrass Night on Saturday, April 20, at Catamount Arts is free, but donations are always welcome, and refreshments are available for sale. For more information on this and other Catamount Arts events, go online to www.catamountarts.org or call (802) 748-2600.

'Cold Chocolate' Returning To Tillotson

Cold Chocolate, Boston's genre-bending Americana band that fuses folk, funk, and bluegrass to create a unique sound of its own, will return to the Tillotson Center in Colebrook, N.H. on Friday, at 7 p.m.

Known for original tunes that blend bluegrass with folk and a touch of funk, this high-energy band is also noted for its technical expertise. They play extensively throughout New York and New England entertaining audiences with their guitar, percussion, and harmony.

The group has released three albums and performed at numerous East Coast festivals, including the Grey Fox Bluegrass Festival, Floyd Fest, FreshGrass Festival, and the Osipee Valley Music Festival.

For more information, contact the Center at 603-237-8576.

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Get Out

Continued from Page 20

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

Milarepa Center? Who, What, When, Where, Etc.: 7-8

p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Scott Davis, sdavis@stjathenaeum.org, 8027451393. <http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

ENTERTAINMENT

PoemTown Noontime Poetry Readings: Open Mic: 12-1 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171

Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Scott Davis, sdavis@stjathenaeum.org, 8027451393. <http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

The Cooking Circle: 3-4 p.m., St. Johnsbury Athenaeum, 1171 Main Street, St. Johnsbury. Adele West-Fisher, awestfisher@stjathenaeum.org, 8027451392.

<http://www.stjathenaeum.org>.

Thursday, Apr 11

COMMUNITY

Creative Kids: 3-4 p.m., Bethlehem Public Library, 2245 Main St, Bethlehem. Bethlehem Public Library, lclerkin@bethlehemli

brary.org, 6038692409. <http://www.bethlehemlibrary.org>.

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

Meditation/Satsang: 6-7 p.m., Neskaya, 1643 Profile Road, Franconia. Christine Poli-

to, christinepolito@hotmail.com, 978-491-9499. <http://neskaya.com/meditation/>.

Craft Sampler: 1 Shape + 2 fabrics = Plenty of Possibilities: 6:30-8:30 p.m., Davies Memorial Library, 532 Maple St PO Box 56, Lower Waterford. Laura Abrahamsen, 8027484609.

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Please contact Krystle Dow, Administrative Assistant at 603-838-6376 or adminassistant@lisbonnh.org for more information.

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