

History

Our yesterdays

125 YEARS AGO (1893)
from *The Laconia Democrat*

Mayor and City Council authorized the Special Committee on School Houses to finish off and furnish the third story of the High School Building on Academy Street, so as to provide two more classrooms for 100 school children, which would "relieve the pressure at this end of the city." It was thought that Ward 6 could "manage to get along another year without a new building," as they could continue to use the old school house on Pear Street.

A commercial, or business, course would be introduced, this fall, at Laconia High School. "The course will occupy a period of two years and the instruction will be thorough and complete."

In other business, the mayor and council voted to change the name of Elbow Street to Crescent Court.

The county commissioners had completed arrangements to extend city water to the Belknap County Farm. It was estimated the work would cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000.

100 YEARS AGO (1918)
from *The Laconia Democrat*

Enlistments, calls to military service, news and letters about soldiers were supplemented by reports from the home front. As of Sept. 15, no sugar could be purchased from any local grocer without a sugar card. Representatives of the Food Administration would be at the Armory on Court Street, Sept. 10-14, to issue cards. And a lengthy proclamation set forth new restrictions on consumption of wheat flour and prescribed use of various types of "Victory Flour," containing percentages of barley, corn, rye, graham or meal along with the wheat.

75 YEARS AGO (1943)
from *The Laconia Evening Citizen*

The School Board voted to appoint Rhoden B. Eddy of North Brookfield, Mass., as superintendent of schools, succeeding C.W. McDermith.

After 67 years without a sister organization, the New Hampshire Veterans' Association, at its annual reunion, Aug. 28, authorized the formation of a women's auxiliary. "The final authorization was voted only after a long and stormy session that was in sharp contrast to the usual tranquil business meetings of the association."

50 YEARS AGO (1968)
from *The Laconia Evening Citizen*

In the Urban Renewal area, six of 11 buildings had been taken down, with completion of that contract due in September. A \$600,086 contract for bridge and drainage construction had been signed and widening of the Main Street Bridge was expected to begin shortly. During August, the Weeks Dairy Garage and the Normandin, McIntyre, Cheney and O'Neill law firm had moved to new quarters and Belknap Industries had vacated two of its buildings. Meanwhile, four parcels of land were being advertised for sale, with bids to close, Sept. 17. It was "expected that there would be at least one interested developer" for each of the four parcels.

A crane, rising 210 feet into the sky, was being used on the Spring Street construction project of Lakes Region General Hospital. The five-story, 100,000-square-foot addition to the hospital was 15 percent completed and completion of the project was expected by spring 1970.

Paving was underway on the Laconia Bypass — under construction from Route 3, just over the Laconia city line. Work still remained on the shoulders and installation of guard rail. Work had begun,

Aug. 3, and completion date for the 1.35-mile link between Routes 3 and 106 was set for Oct. 18.

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50 YEARS AGO

LaFrance still skeptical on Winnisquam water

LACONIA — The state Water Supply and Pollution Control Commission issued a report, Aug. 26, 1968, on the results of testing of Lake Winnisquam water, *The Citizen* reported, 50 years ago this week.

In the report, the commission declared that "Winnisquam Lake water quality meets all standards for safe bathing and other

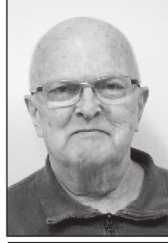
forms of water use and recreation."

Dr. Philip LaFrance Jr., who had rekindled controversy over the safety of the water a week earlier, was skeptical, however, saying that lye dumped into the sediment tanks at the State School had killed the bacteria.

"Only time will tell when the live bacteria will appear again. The conditions for it are still ripe."

Meanwhile, LaFrance also said that enough fertilizer is dumped into it to "make the whole lake a vegetable garden. It is now, one of algae."

(Note: It would be another 11 years before the Winnepesaukee River Basin Project would go on line, in 1979, bringing a real remedy to the pollution and algae problems.)



By WARREN D. HUSE
Local History Writer

25 YEARS AGO

Poole got through 'difficult times' at SAU 30

LACONIA — On the eve of his retirement, Aug. 27, 1993, as superintendent of schools for SAU 30, Frank Poole recalled the most difficult time in his superintendency, from 1990 to 1992, "during the Straight Arrow domination of the Laconia City Council," *The Citizen* reported, 25 years ago this week.

When the Council cut the \$12,100-million budget to \$12 million — seemingly a \$100,000

cut — increases in salaries, contracted services and utilities made it actually more than a \$500,000 cut.

"The difficult decisions the Laconia School Board made that year included the release of 20 teachers and support staff members, the elimination of the gifted education program for all elementary school students, the entire athletic and activities program for all students in the school district, and the kin-

dergarten program in Laconia."

Staff Writer Robert Cook's article attributed "one quality that helped Poole to get through those difficult times" as his ability "to avoid making enemies and maintain the same personable demeanor."

Poole said he believes his successor, Richard Ayers, "is the right person to lead SAU 30 into the next century and fully supports Ayers' plans to implement more technology in the classroom."

10 YEARS AGO

Belmont sewer and water talks end abruptly

BELMONT — selectmen voted, Aug. 18, 2008, to discontinue negotiations with the city of Laconia over extension of a sewer line into the Route 106 section of town, *The Citizen* reported, 10 years ago.

The town had hoped to trade a renegotiated water contract along Route 3 for expanded access to the city sewer line, thus permitting construction of Colosseum Indoor Sports, off Bishop Road.

Mike LeClair, who had spent two years planning the sports facility, had negotiated a sewer easement with Neil McGreevey, whose father had built a private sewer line 10 years earlier for what was, in 2008, Lakes Chrysler Jeep.

Laconia was willing to let LeClair run the additional sewage through its lines on its way to the treatment plant in Franklin if the town agreed to renegotiate the 1969 water contract, dating from proposals for development of the Belknap Mall on Route 3.

Currently, Belmont was buying about 7 million gallons of water from Laconia annually and reselling it to its customers.

"The city gets no money for any additional water hookups along Route 3 and has no control over how many people tie into the extended water line — so long as it doesn't exceed the amount of water that can flow through the 12-inch water main."

Laconia officials had long contended that the water agreement was unfair and challenged it in court in the late 1980s, but lost.

Belmont officials called the Laconia position "most definitely, completely unacceptable."

Laconia Water Commissioner Richard Breton said, "All we're trying to do is get equal."

Selectboard Chairman Ron Cormier believed one solution to the sewer hookup dilemma was to have Belmont purchase McGreevey's private sewer main — "a purchase he believes changes the nature of Belmont's sewer arrangement with Laconia and eliminates the need for the quid-pro-quo exchange."

Roger Ballantyne 'man of integrity and fun'

LACONIA — Roger Cochran Ballantyne, 65, vice president for Human Resources at Citizens Bank for 28 years until his retirement in 1998, and later at the Taylor Community, died, Aug. 29, 2008, *The Citizen* reported, 10 years ago this week.

Characterized as "a man of integrity and fun," after Marine Corps service from 1962-1968 and with a bachelor's degree

from West Virginia University, he taught "everything from U.S. history to American government" at Laconia Academy for 30 years, and also taught banking courses there through the American Institute for Banking.

"He was just an absolute master teacher and my students adored him and he understood them. There aren't enough acco-

lades to describe Roger Ballantyne," said Peggy Selig, Laconia Adult Education director.

Ballantyne also served as a member of the Laconia School Board and as a member of the Lakes Region General Hospital Board of Trustees, of which he was chairman in 2001-2002.

He was Kiwanian of the Year in 1983 and president of the Laconia Kiwanis Club in 1986.