

Warner, state police looking for convicted felon

WARNER – A Croydon man who was allegedly involved in a shooting in this small town in August is now the subject of an intensive police search in the area.

Douglas C. Smith Jr., 31, was arrested in early September at the Warner Police Department building after he allegedly used a handgun to shoot at a vehicle that had two Webster men – a father and son – inside, as it sped away following a violent altercation.

Smith has an extensive criminal record with more than 20 convictions dating back to 2008 including burglary, assault, harassment and criminal threatening. A registered sex offender, Smith was convicted of tampering with public records as



Douglas C. Smith, jr.

well as two other crimes shortly after turning himself into the Warner police late last year.

In addition, Smith and his wife Ashley Smith have been questioned by authorities regarding the disappearance and homicide of 26-year-old Trish Haynes. Haynes's body was found stuffed inside a washer-dryer that was pulled from a pond in a remote section of Grafton in September 2018. The young woman was allegedly living with the Smiths shortly before her disappearance.

A bulletin released by New Hampshire State Police earlier this month announced the authorities were looking for Smith due to two recent felony level domestic violence arrest warrants. Sgt. Benjamin Tokarz

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A rare treasure needs state protection

By ALAN SHULMAN
InterTown News Service

NEW LONDON – A rare treasure awaits on Mount Sunapee. It's in plain sight, yet very few people know about it even though it has existed there for centuries, even millennia. "Impossible," you say. "I've skied there; I've hiked there. What kind of treasure could there be?"

On Jan. 21 at Tracy Library, Steve Russell, President of Friends of Mount Sunapee (FOMS), not only revealed what the treasure is, but where you can find it. Because right in the heart of our Mount Sunapee State Park is an ancient forest that probably dates back to the end of the last ice age, 11,000 years ago. It is such a rare treasure it is the only documented forested system of its

type within New Hampshire.

How did this forest come to exist, to be unaffected by man's activities and regulated by natural forces alone? Russell traced the history of its discovery, from the early preservation efforts of Herbert Welsh and local residents near the mountain to prevent its forest from being clear-cut by lumber companies over a century ago, to its rediscovery through the onsite research project of Antioch graduate student Chris Kane some 20 years ago, and finally to its documentation by the state of New Hampshire in 2004 as an exemplary forested system.

In FOMS' slide presentation of this history, Russell identified the characteristics which make this region of Mount Sunapee an Exemplary Natural Community System (ENCS). Those characteristics include the ancient forest and the mature surrounding trees and other vegetation that protect and sustain it. Our state has so far documented 484 acres of this system which contains this unique primeval forest. Russell repeatedly stressed when you visit this area of Mount Sunapee, you not only see this irreplaceable ancient forest with its many species of marvelous, centuries-old trees, you're also witnessing a self-sustaining system of plants and animals that all work together to help the system, and the ancient trees within it, thrive.

Hiking into such a forest is spiritually uplifting and environmentally important. Russell pointed out how this kind of forest can survive insect, disease and non-native species invasion, as well as weather disasters and erosion much better than do young forests that grow up after such forest systems are fragmented by cutting and development. This kind of system we find on Mount Sunapee also protects local watersheds, animal populations and sequesters carbon dioxide far better than those young forests do. Such a beautiful, irreplaceable and biodiverse area deserves to be protected.

To date, the State of New Hampshire has failed to officially designate this 484-acre area of its state park for protection in perpetuity, as has been recommended by its own agency. Friends of Mount Sunapee seeks that permanent protection. To that end, Russell urged the attendees at the Tracy Library presentation to become involved to help preserve this forest treasure in our own backyard for all future

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ICE SKATING FUN – Fred Olive from New London and his sons Patrick and Owen enjoy skating on the Bob Andrew's ice skating rink in New London January 25. (Paul Howe Photo)

STREET TALK

What is your favorite emoji?

Photostory by Abby Peel



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Warner fire department gets new chief

By RAY CARBONE
InterTown News Service

WARNER – As citizens prepare for the upcoming annual town meeting in March, members of the Warner Fire & Rescue department are adjusting to changes in the hierarchy of their operation.

Last year the 40-plus member department moved into its first new building since 1962. This year they've started off the new decade with a new leadership team.

In December Ed Raymond, the department's longtime chief, announced to the town's budget committee his intention to step down from the top spot. He introduced Sean Toomey, who has served as one of his deputy chiefs, as the new chief, effective Jan. 1. Raymond will continue serving in the department as a deputy chief, but Toomey is now the man in charge.

On Saturday Toomey admitted it was a tough decision, taking over the primary position, especially because his fulltime position is serving as a deputy fire marshal with the state department of safety.

"I have a very busy job so it was a big discussion for my wife and I when Ed told us that he was stepping down," Toomey said. "He gave John France (another deputy chief) and I a couple of weeks' notice before he told everyone else. And my wife and I had several discussions about how we're going to handle things.

"It's additional responsibilities," he said, but in the end, the couple decided to take it on because of the department's strong staff. "It's such a great group," he concluded.

Toomey, who was a deputy chief with the Concord fire department before moving over to work in the

fire marshal's office, is now the chief and Raymond is his second deputy. France, who has formerly served as second deputy, has moved up to the department's first deputy position.

Toomey said he's been with the local fire-rescue department ever since moving to town in 2009. "When we got here, I knew I wanted to get involved and give back to the community," he said. "I really enjoy doing it and I had a skill, so I wanted to be of service."

Raymond said he's been with the local department since he was in high school, accumulating 46 years of firefighting service.

Warner's fire department is one of the oldest in the Kearsarge-Sunapee area, established in 1830. All the members have a minimum Fire-fighter 1 rating and the department chooses its chief by membership election, Raymond said.

Wilmot Town Hall project corrections

To the Editor:

The project to rehabilitate the Wilmot Town Hall is a complex one with a lot of contingencies, and not all its details were made clear enough for Ray Carbone ("Wilmot Old Town Hall project moves closer to voters;" January 21 issue).

First, the initial summary of the Jan. 12 listening session, which Ray used for his article, was inaccurate on one point and was corrected after you went to press. It is not true that LCHIP would be in favor of raising the building; the preservation ethos requires historic buildings ideally be left exactly where they are. The town may have a chance of state funding if regrading makes the raised building look exactly as it did before, but it counterintuitively has the best chance of funding if the building is left where it is. The poll taken at the Jan. 12 event indicated, by tally of 14-3, that those present believed the project should go ahead even if the town received no state grant money. This is just a poll of 45 people; the better canvass of local opinion will of course be found at town meeting in March.

Second, there are some misapprehensions or errors in the article that should be clarified or corrected. The earliest record of flooding was from a hurricane in 1938. Since then there have been several storm events, including those from 2010 through 2017 that have caused water to flow

into the hall's floor system.

The lab structure is a connection between the town hall and the library, which was only recently converted into a space for creative programming for children, book clubs and seminars.

The best way to save the building has not been decided. Several options are still in play. The point of the listening session was to present the options and find out what the public was likely to support. The poll represents preliminary opinion, not a final decision about what is best.

There were two options presented that would address a 500-year flood event, which is the basis for the facilities committee's recommendations. The first option is to raise the town hall and creativity lab 2.02 feet to the level of the library. The second option is to expand the bridge over the Kimpton Brook then leave the building floors at their current elevation.

Throughout the article Jeff Gill's statements are presented in quotation marks. In fact, the words were drawn from my summary of the event and do not represent Jeff's literal statements.

Sistering the joints of the failing floor is only one option presented to the facilities committee in the engineering study. Entirely replacing the joists is also an option. There are six separate rehabilitation options in

the feasibility study, three of which found favor with the facilities committee.

The other components that may be added to the rehabilitation (beyond fixing the floor) were not suggested by town residents. They were suggestions by the facilities committee presented to town residents. They all come with a price tag, so it is up to residents to decide whether to spend the money on them.

The town has been authorizing funds to be placed into a facilities reserve fund to work on town buildings for the past several years. There will be a vote at the upcoming town meeting to appropriate those funds for work on the town hall.

There is currently enough money in those funds to demolish the town hall floor and replace with a new floor system. The current fund value is about half of the funds required to perform all the rehabilitation scope, if the building is not raised and the replace-the-floor-system option is chosen. More funds will be needed to sister the floor joist and save the existing finish floor. Raising the building would require even more funding. Receiving LCHIP funding, local fund raising, or increasing the facilities reserve fund would allow for additional rehabilitation work to be performed.

Jeff Gill,
Chairman, facilities committee,
Town of Wilmot

Lake Sunapee's 2020 Watershed Management Plan nears completion

{SUNAPEE – After nearly two years, Lake Sunapee Protective Association's (LSPA) updated watershed management plan is in the final stages.

Last spring a watershed survey was completed by LSPA's Watershed Steward Geoff Lizotte along with consultants Don Kretchmer, DK Water Resource Consulting, LLC, and Gabe Bolin, Stone Environmental.

Approximately 40 sites were identified where Best Management Practices (BMP's) could be implemented to help control both erosion and stormwater runoff by capturing sediment before it enters a waterbody or stream within the watershed.

Work continued throughout the summer of 2019 with a build-out analysis completed and a water quality goal established. The 10-

year goal is to reduce in-lake phosphorus loading by 7.5%.

This goal will help to ensure that Lake Sunapee will maintain its current status as an oligotrophic lake, having low nutrient and plankton levels. LSPA is confident that it will meet this goal by continuing to educate citizens on ways to reduce their impacts to the lake. LSPA

will also collaborate with town and landowners to carry out the BMP's identified in the plan.

LSPA will be hosting a public meeting on January 28 at 7 p.m. (snow date is January 30) at the Newbury Town Hall to present a summary of the 2020 plan. All are welcome to attend. For more information call LSPA at (603) 763-2210.

Rare treasure on Mount Sunapee

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help preserve this forest treasure in our own backyard for all future generations.

Future presentations of Friends of Mount Sunapee's powerpoint presentation are planned for Gosh-

en and Claremont. For more information on how you can help with this preservation effort and for upcoming presentation dates, please visit www.friendsofmountsunapee.org.

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