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Biddeford Police identify dead body

FROM STAFF REPORTS

BIDDEFORD — Police have identified the man whose body was found in the parking lot of a Biddeford apartment complex early Monday morning as Devan Smith, 23, whose last known address was in Scarborough.

Smith's body was found at 24 State St. around 6 a.m. Monday, outside a multi-unit complex.

Deputy Police Chief JoAnn Fisk said Thursday that an autopsy has been ordered and the investigation into Smith's death continues.

"We hope to release more information in the coming days," said Fisk.

Earlier this week Biddeford Police Chief Roger Beaupre labeled the death as "unexplained."

Residents of the complex, a large, multi-level apartment building within the city's downtown area, said the body was found next to a black SUV at the back of the building's parking lot around 6:15 a.m.

Resident Tina Turner said she called 911 around 6:23 a.m. Monday.

Fire crews and Biddeford Police's Crime Scene Unit responded to the scene.

Several residents of the complex said the man was unknown to them, but they believed they'd seen him in the area before.

UNE students unearth Biddeford's history

BIDDEFORD — At the University of New England, a group of students is getting the "dirt" on Biddeford's history as a Native American trading hub through their work in a course on archeological field methods.

Three students, supervised by Visiting Assistant Lecturer Arthur Anderson, have taken residence along a strip of land at Freddy Beach, at the mouth of the Saco River, as part of an archeological exploration of land once occupied by the Alnouchiquois people at the time it was visited by French explorer Samuel de Champlain in 1605.

The goal of the dig, Anderson said, is to unearth Biddeford Pool's long history as an international Native trading post while educating students about archeology.

"We're trying to return to the area, get a little more information about that, get some students trained up in archeology and see what else can find out," Anderson said on a breezy Wednesday, after days of 90-degree temperatures. "This was part of a vast trading network of prehistoric times."

Over the past two weeks — they finish their work on Friday — the group has uncovered hundreds of stone, bone and ceramic fragments left behind by the Alnouchiquois, whose land was mostly destroyed in 1607 by local warfare. Later, in the 1620s, disease epidemics virtually wiped out the local population after what Anderson said could be more than 1,000 years of occupation.

Among the pieces found include stone tools used for cutting and scraping flesh from sea animals; bones left behind that offer clues into the



ALAN BENNETT/Journal Tribune

UNE students Mary Hollandbeck, left, and Kyle Brennan examine excavated dirt for potential Native artifacts at a site on Freddy Beach on Thursday.

Alnouchiquois diet; and stones from up and down the eastern seaboard.

Anderson said he's been able to identify stones from what is now Pennsylvania, northern Maine and the Labrador Peninsula in Canada.

Records indicate this summer's excavation is not the first the site has seen. Anderson said small excavations

took place in the 1950s and 1960s and, prior to construction of the Arthur P. Girard Marine Science Center in the early 2000s, other artifacts were unearthed at the site.

Despite last week's rain, this week's scorching heat and the rise of many a black fly, the students working with Anderson say the experience has

been worth it — and some have even changed their career goals.

"Based on doing this, I actually changed my career path," said sophomore Jessica Brewer, who studies marine biology. "I want to become

See UNE Dig
PAGE A3



LIZ GOTTHELF/Journal Tribune

C.K. Burns Literary Instructional Coach and Intervention Specialist Cathy Melanson sits at her desk Monday.

School's out for Melanson

By LIZ GOTTHELF
Staff Writer

SACO — Soon, the school year will come to a close, and Literacy Instructional Coach and Intervention Specialist Cathy Melanson will be packing up her books for the last time.

Melanson is retiring after 40 years in education. Over the years, she has worked as an educational technician, a second-grade teacher, and a gifted and talented coordinator, before taking the her current job at C.K. Burns in 2005.

She has served on the board of Maine Educators of Gifted and Talented, was co-chairwoman of the former School Union 7 District Development Team and in 1999 was

the Maine Special Educator of the Year.

In a recent interview, Melanson reflected fondly on her career and said she's always enjoyed teaching.

"Every single cycle from September to September brings so much promise," she said. After the school year ends in June, there are a few months to renew, relax and plan ahead for the next school year. She said each year is never the same, there are always new students and new initiatives.

Melanson said she's been fortunate to work in a forward-thinking school district, where there is

See Educator Retires
PAGE A3

Sanford's low turnout ends municipal budget vote

By TAMMY WELLS
Senior Staff Writer

SANFORD — Tuesday's validation vote on the municipal budget is the last of its kind. From now on, the City Council's vote will be the final step in the budget process.

A clause in the city charter says the ordinance that instituted the municipal budget validation vote is automatically repealed after five successive years if voter turnout is less than 25 percent of the turnout in the last gubernatorial election.

On Tuesday, 1,749, or 12 percent of the city's 14,396 voters cast ballots. To have met the 25

percent threshold, at least 1,867 people would have to have gone to the polls, according to figures supplied by City Clerk Sue Cote.

Cote said the action is automatic and referred to section 704 of the city charter.

Most municipalities in Maine have school budget validation votes — but most city manager/city council forms of government do not have municipal budget validation votes.

Sanford's charter commission, which wrote the city's 2013 charter approved by voters, included the municipal budget vote as

See Sanford Budget
PAGE A3

Negotiations for Unit 91 easement continue

By LIZ GOTTHELF
Journal Tribune

SACO — City officials have expressed frustration with unresolved easement and property issues related to Unit 91 that are prohibiting the city from selling the property, and an abutting owner said negotiations are moving forward and running their course.

In January 2016, the city acquired the first floor of the Saco Island Terrace portion of a former mill building on Saco Island, known as

See Unit 91
PAGE A2

TA Action Team earns reward for hard work

By LINDSEY HALL
Staff Writer

SACO — The Thornton Academy Action Team took a well-deserved trip to a Boston Red Sox game as a reward for their hard work and volunteer efforts throughout the school year.

Action Team, an affiliate of the Major League Baseball Players Trust and Volunteers of America, was created in 2003 to inspire high school students to volunteer within their communities. There are more than 100 high schools in 35 states who work hard volunteering at various events.

At Thornton Academy, the Action Team has a dedicated membership. This year, there are about 30 students involved. The team participates in events within the community and the school.

Mary Ann Martin, Action Team leader, says the TA team has a great impact in the school and



LINDSEY HALL/Journal Tribune

Action Team Members Annie Karim and Elizabeth Roy cheer on the Red Sox.

the community. "The TA Action Team is a group that helps other people in need and is making a difference in another person's life," Martin said. "They are caring, loving and have a lot of heart. I'm hoping that when the students leave they will continue to volunteer and make the world a

better place for all." MLB Players Trust and V.O.A. provide members with rewarding experiences and opportunities. Team members participate in monthly conference calls with MLB players, receive tickets to an

See Action Team
PAGE A6

INDEX: 12 PAGES

Obituaries A2
Local/Region A3,6
Community A4
Opinion A5
Sports B1-2
Religion B3
Comics B4
Television B5
Classifieds B6

DEATHS, A2

• Dwight Bonang, Kissimee, Fla.
• Robert Dufort, Wells
• Ruth Grondin, Biddeford



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ALAN BENNETT/Journal Tribune

Mary Hollandbeck and Kyle Brennan excavate a plot of land as part of their archaeological field methods course at the University of New England on Thursday.

UNE Dig
FROM PAGE A1

a marine archeologist ... it's (about) going through and seeing how (ancient peoples) interacted with the ocean and how they were able to survive back then."

Senior Mary Hollandbeck, who opted to sign up for the archeological dig as an elective, said the "sunburns and mosquito bites have really been worth it."

"Archeology has a way of putting you in the past; you see what it was like. The different artifacts show you how they hunted, how they made containers, how they ate, so it's just really interesting to see what everyday people went through," she said.

That, Anderson said, is his mission: to inspire students to take a hands-on approach with their learning, and have some fun, too.

"It's a lot of fun for me to introduce young people to archeology. I think it's exciting to open students' eyes to a new, slightly different way of looking at the world," he said.

"Even for students that aren't going to go to grad school and become archeologists, it's (about) creative critical thinking," he added. "It's being out in the field as a team and solving the problems that come up when they come up. It's really valuable experience in that sense."

Kyle Brennan, a rising sophomore at UNE, said he's not sure what he wants to do with his studies in marine biology, but is grateful for the field experience at such a young age stage in his college career.

"I feel like still being a freshman going into my sophomore year, one of the main things we're all eager to do is go into the field and discover what

we truly want," Brennan said, shoveling layers of dirt into buckets to be screened for artifacts. "I don't know for certain what I want to do so this is one of those things that, being out in the field, being hands-on, this is going to better-build my persona."

And, yes, he said the sporadic weather has been worth it — in fact, it's been welcome.

"Sometimes the worst days have produced the best finds," he said. "(This is) something not everybody gets to do. Even despite the very humid conditions we've had the past two days, and all the sweat and exhaustion, it was worth it just to pull up the smallest fragment of history because it's a once in a lifetime opportunity and I wouldn't miss it for anything."

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Educator Retires
FROM PAGE A1

a strong commitment to instructional practices and teachers, not just programs.

Teachers fully participate in studying collaborating, piloting and making informed decisions about practices in the classroom.

The needs of students today are so varied, and it's critically important for teachers to address the individual needs of different learners, said Melanson.

Over the years, she said, teaching reading has shifted from a standardized approach to a workshop approach that focuses more on small groups and individuals. Schools have been able to grow classroom libraries, allowing students to make

independent reading choices and giving teachers insight on what they need next to become stronger readers.

Terrilyn Lebel, literary specialist at Young School in Saco said Melanson is the embodiment of a lifelong learner who was always eager to discuss how to move teaching and literacy forward, and even in her last weeks in the position was sending out articles for others to read.

"Cathy is as much a cheerleader for students and staff as she is an expert on literacy," said Lebel. "Cathy is a dedicated professional whose retirement is a true loss to the district."

Jessica Cook, an instructional literacy coach at Fairfield School in Saco said Melanson's expertise has

been invaluable and she has been a leader in development and implementation of the district's practices in literacy.

"Cathy is a person who lifts those around her higher," said Cook. "Professionally and personally, what she brings to the conversation enriches the thinking and experiences of both students and adults, and her passion for learning is nothing short of inspiring."

Melanson has no plans set in stone for her retirement, but hopes to continue to do the things she enjoys, including spending time with family, reading, hiking, camping, gardening, sewing and maybe taking some classes.

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Sanford Budget
FROM PAGE A1

a compromise, recalled Charter Commission member Maura Herlihy.

As the charter was being written, its crafters were about to put to the voters a change from the representative town meeting form of government in place for many years to the city manager/city council form of governance. The prior system saw low voter turnout as well, so much so that the charter was changed over the years to reflect fewer representative town meeting members required for a quorum, recalled Herlihy.

"The municipal validation vote was essentially a compromise between those who believed in the checks and balances provided by the representative town meeting and those who believed it was time for a true city manager/city council form of government," Herlihy said. "It was a nice compromise to meet the concerns of people giving up representative town meeting."

The charter goes on to say that if the municipal budget validation referendum process is repealed, it may only be reinstated through the voter-initiated ordinance process and any vote to reinstate the budget validation referendum process must

be held during the regularly scheduled November general election.

The school budget validation vote is required by state not municipal law and will continue. In the case of the school validation, voters are asked every three years if they wish to continue the validation process and so far, they have, Cote said. The question of whether to continue the school budget validation vote most recently appeared on the 2016 ballot.

— Senior Staff Writer Tammy Wells can be contacted at 324-4444 (local call in Sanford) or 282-1535, ext. 327 or twells@journaltribune.com.

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