

## SNAKE: Pembroke third-graders begin project to name Eastern hognose snake the state reptile

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"We're kind of into the wildlife thing," Dixon said. "We looked it up and found out the state of New Hampshire has no official reptile."

It's true. While the Granite State does have an official amphibian – the red-spotted newt – there is no official reptile.

When the news spread through the third-grade classroom of Dixon's son, Jeremy, the students said they wanted to do something to change that.

"It's located here, and what's special about it is we only have a few of them," student Henry Harman, 8, said. "It's not poisonous."

Experts say the eastern hognose snake could bite or jump at humans out of fear, but that its venom is harmless.



Dan O'Brien Photo

**Lily Michaud, 9, Elena Rennie, 8, and Katelyn Levy, 8, draft a letter to legislators on why the Eastern hognose snake should be adopted as New Hampshire's official reptile. They are students at Pembroke's Strong Foundations school.**

"They play dead" when faced with perceived threats by humans, said 8-year-old Taylor Palmer accurately.

State Rep. Phyllis Katsakiores, R-Derry, has agreed to help the students try to get the legislation passed.

The 18 students in Baynes' classroom worked on their campaign full-force

on Friday, Jan. 7, with the kids dividing into groups to undertake different tasks. One group took information from the Internet and wrote letters to lawmakers on why the snake should become the official reptile.

On another side of the classroom, students created campaign posters.

Devin Perry, 8, made sure to draw the snakes' scales in detail.

"I like to draw everything," Perry said. "I like to draw sharks, too."

Another group used playdough to show what a tracking device would look like on the snakes, while a fourth group illustrated the snake's habitat by also using playdough.

"I think it's great when students have an idea and adults help bring it to reality," Principal Beth McClure said. "It teaches important life lessons."

Baynes said if the State House creates a committee to hear the proposed legislation, the kids will be going on a field trip to attend the session.

"Whenever you're interested in something that deeply, you're going to learn more," Baynes said. "It's not in the curriculum to do this, but it's worth it."

## SEWER SHOCK: Allenstown sewer plant expansion will cost \$1.6 million more than expected

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to receive funds.

About \$900,000 of the \$1.26 million cost overrun is being paid for by the vendor of the sewer expansion project, Cambridge Water Technologies, officials said.

Allenstown Budget Committee Chairman Sandra McKenney questioned the legality of the warrant article.

"They're going over their bond from 2009. Is that legal?" she said.

Michael Trainque, vice president of the Manchester engineering firm Hoyle and Tanner Associates Inc., which oversaw the project, said the unplanned cost increase happened because the expansion project was a first of its kind,

using BioMag material that allows more waste to settle without having to build additional aeration tanks.

"From day one, the process handler didn't have a true cost," Trainque said. "This was a huge learning process for them."

Trainque said CWT is picking up the majority of the cost overrun, in part, because the project is the first ever for a municipality in the United States and a successful completion could attract business down the road.

That didn't stop a flurry of criticism from selectmen.

After Sewer Commissioner Jim Rodger told selectmen the commission learned of the cost overrun about six months ago, Selectman Jeff Gryval

said, "We haven't heard about this once."

"This doesn't sit well with me," Selectman Roger LaFleur said. "It took a lot to convince the people of Allenstown and Pembroke to support this. Now we're going back to the well."

LaFleur said there was an alternative project that was also presented to the public.

"That would have given us some (additional wastewater) capacity and stuck within the bounds of our budget," he said.

Rodger said one of the reasons officials wanted the current upgrade is because "it seemed to be less maintenance" and has been used in private industries. The project will be officially completed in

the next week or two.

Sewer officials said if voters do not approve the warrant article, the Sewer Department is responsible for paying for the overrun. Officials said they're not allowed to raise customers' rates to directly pay for that, but conceded that rates could rise as an indirect cost.

Allenstown's rates are already scheduled to increase this year, from \$7.05 to \$7.60 per 1,000 gallons. Pembroke's are increasing from \$5.35 to \$6.05, not including a \$20-per-quarter unit rental fee for residences that Allenstown customers aren't charged.

"A lot of elderly people ... can't afford a 10 percent increase," LaFleur said. "This is it for this project."

## CRIME: Hooksett police chief blames staff shortages, media coverage on increase in burglaries

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discussion that was had publicly about staffing levels was counterproductive to our ability to police the town," he said.

The majority of the burglaries are occurring in homes during the daytime hours while residents are at work.

The statistical jump occurred during one of the most tumultuous years of Agrafiotis' tenure, capped last fall when 956 residents signed a petition asking that he be placed on leave pending an independent investigation.

The burglary increase also occurred during the time period that the Police Department launched a neighborhood watch program. Despite that, Agrafiotis said the watch groups are a step in the right direction.

"I believe it's positive," he said. "The police can't do everything. We need the eyes and ears of the citizens, and we need them to call."

Agrafiotis said police plan to continue with a watch, run by a former police officer. He confirmed the department is no longer moving forward

### Hooksett crime stats:

<b>Burglaries</b>	<b>Shoplifting incidents</b>
2010: 85	2010: 113
2009: 49	2009: 88
2008: N/A	2008: N/A
2007: 36	2007: 40
2006: 53	2006: 25
2005: 46	2005: 33
<b>Domestic violence incidents</b>	<b>DWI incidents</b>
2010: 123	2010: 37
2009: 84	2009: 34
2008: N/A	2008: N/A
2007: 47	2007: 60
2006: 65	2006: 91
2005: 61	2005: 71

with efforts to join the Manchester Police Department's Crimeline program, despite an attempt beginning in late 2009.

"We decided the neighborhood watch was the way to go for us," he said.

Some weeks were particularly worse than others when it came to break-ins, according to police logs. In the second

week of December, there was one residential burglary each weekday during the daytime, including three on Hackett Hill and one on Whitehall Road.

Those two areas of town have been the hardest hit, Agrafiotis said.

"Right now, it seems to be our rural areas. Our Hackett Hill area and our Route 27 (Whitehall Road) area," he

said. "Houses are spread further apart. It's harder for the neighbors to see something strange and call us."

The chief said Hooksett provides burglars with easy access via interstates 93 and 293.

"It's a target-rich community, a target-rich environment as far as if people want to commit crimes," he said. "We're not the only community that's had burglary spurts and sprees."

Crime statistics also revealed Hooksett experienced a significant increase in domestic violence crimes in 2010 – reaching another decade-high – with 123 incidents, up from 84 in 2009 and 47 in 2007, when the town hit a decade low.

"My unscientific thought is that it has to do with the economy," Agrafiotis said about the domestics. "The economy is very tough on a lot of people, so that causes more tough family situations."

Shoplifting also broke a decade record with 113 cases in 2010, up from 88 in 2009, 40 in 2007, 25 in 2006 and 33 in 2005. The chief credits that to the opening of big-box stores.

## FIRST: This year's robotics competition kicks off with the reveal of "Logomotion," the new game

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Additionally, any piece placed over a yellow ubertube is also worth double.

The best teams are invited to the global competition, being held this year in April in St. Louis. Before they can get there, they must compete in several regional competitions. During March, regional competitions are held in various places all over the nation and the world. Teams are grouped into alliances of three teams

each for gameplay.

Pembroke Academy Team 134 met Sunday, Jan. 9, for brainstorming and deciding a direction for the season, said David Kelley, the team's adviser.

"We thought the end game where the mini robots climb to the top of the pole is going to add much excitement to the game and additional challenges," he said. "In addition, the height of the third level of the 3x3 scoring grids is going to create a high suspense factor

into the game."

Kelly presented this analysis of Logomotion:

"The game is going to present some unique challenges for the drive teams," he said. "For instance, they will need to communicate to the other side of the field with the human players to let them know which of the three game pieces they want entered onto the field.

"Another challenge will be the field of vision from the driver's station, namely

the scoring of the FIRST logo across the three horizontal pins to double your score will be a mirror image from the driver's perspective, and as you are more successful in scoring, you will decrease how much the drivers will be able to see the field – each scoring piece creates another obstruction to your view. This will probably mean the successful team will need to depend on the robot's vision system more this year than in the past years' games."

## Town and School District Meeting Planner

Election Day and voting on warrants is Tuesday, March 8, for most towns. The filing window for most town and school candidates is Jan. 19 to 28. Hooksett town candidates file between March 23 and April 1, with elections on May 10.

### Allenstown

*Town Meeting and School District Meeting:* Saturday, Feb. 5, Allenstown Elementary School, 9 a.m.

*Voting:* 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Allenstown Elementary School.

### Auburn

*Town Meeting:* Saturday, Feb. 5, 10 a.m., Auburn Village School.

*School District Meeting:* Monday, Feb. 7, Village School, 7 p.m., Auburn Village School.

*Voting:* 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Auburn Village School.

### Candia

*Town Meeting:* Saturday, Feb. 12, Moore School, 9 a.m.

*School District Meeting:* Saturday, Feb. 5, Moore School, 9 a.m.

*Voting:* 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Moore School.

### Epsom

*Town Meeting:* Saturday, Feb. 12, Epsom Central School, 9 a.m.

*School District Meeting:* Tuesday, Feb. 8, Epsom Central School, 6:30 p.m.

*Voting:* 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Epsom Central School.

### Hooksett

*Town Meeting:* Saturday, April 2, Cawley Middle School, 1 p.m.

*School District Meeting:* Friday, Feb. 11, Cawley Middle School, 7 p.m.

*Voting:* 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., Cawley Middle School.

### Pembroke

*Town Meeting:* Saturday, March 12, Pembroke Academy, 10 a.m.

*School District Meeting:* Saturday, March 5, Pembroke Academy, 10 a.m.

*Voting:* 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., Pembroke Village School.

Please note: Pembroke is the only town on the list with the traditional style of Town Meeting and School District Meeting, where the vote takes place at the meetings. All other towns and school districts listed are under the official ballot law, commonly called SB-2. The meetings are the deliberative sessions, where discussion and changes to warrants takes place, but the voting on all warrants and budgets takes place on election day.

## IN BRIEF

### David Hess named Citizen of Year

HOOKSETT – David W. Hess has been named the 2011 Hooksett Citizen of the year by the Hooksett Lions Club. The 52nd annual Citizen of the Year celebration will be held on Saturday, April 23.

Hess has served the town of Hooksett since the early 1970s and currently is representing the citizens in the New Hampshire House of Representatives, a position he has held for 22 years.

He served as school district moderator for 23 years for the Hooksett School District and is a member of the Conservation Commission and open space committee.

Hess was a member of the 1988 Charter Commission, a member of the Hooksett Budget Committee and served as the town's legal counsel. He is a member of the Hooksett Men's Club and an incorporator of the Robie's Country Store Historic Preservation Corpo-



David Hess

ration, just to name a few of his other contributions.

Most recently his volunteerism on the Conservation Commission has proven instrumental in the conservation of more than 500 acres of the Clay Pond watershed and the imminent protection and acquisition of the historic Pinnacle.

For his service, dedication and commitment in making "Hooksett a better place in which to live" he has been named the Hooksett Citizen of the Year for 2011. The first honoree in 1959 was Fred C. Underhill.

Hess is married to Judith Hess, and they have two children, Scott and Christopher.

For event and ticket information, contact Jim Sullivan at 485-4951.

### Hooksett Subway restaurant robbed

HOOKSETT – An employee of the Subway restaurant at 140 Bicentennial Drive was robbed about 9:45 p.m. Friday, Jan. 7, after a masked man entered the shop through an unlocked back door, police said.

According to a written statement, a man entered through the back door, then demanded money from an employee. He left the area with an amount of cash police would not disclose.

The robber is described as a white male between 5-foot-3 and 5-foot-6.

He wore a mask, gloves and a black hooded sweatshirt with a gold symbol of the roman numeral "XI" on the upper chest.

A police statement on the incident did not mention the robber having a weapon. Anyone with information can call Hooksett police at 624-1560.

– Dan O'Brien

### Free gun safety kits offered by police

CANDIA – The Candia Police Department is offering free gun safety kits from Project ChildSafe. Project ChildSafe is a nationwide program whose purpose is to promote safe firearms handling and storage practices among all

firearms owners through the distribution of key safety education messages and free gun locking devices, or safety kits.

To obtain the kit, contact the Candia police station between 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. at 483-2318.