



CLOSE-UP

EDUCATION

N.H. Community Colleges Change Names to Reflect New Priorities

By KRISTEN FOUNTAIN
 Valley News Staff Writer

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S two-year community colleges adopted new names last week to reflect their broader missions and new administrative independence from the state's university system.

New Hampshire Community Technical College in Claremont is now named River Valley Community College. Community technical colleges in Berlin and Laconia will go by White Mountains Community College and Lakes Region Community College respectively, among other name changes.

Six months ago, the governor and legislature approved a law that gave the state's seven community colleges the ability to organize themselves as a system with a separate governing board from the four-year universities.

"This change does not alter our offering the quality career and technical programs that have served this region well," said River Valley Community College President Steven Budd in a news release. "Rather, we also want students to consider our community college a place to start their education and pursue the first two years of a bachelor's degree."

SHARON STUDENTS TO DISCUSS BUILDING GREEN HOMES

Seniors at The Sharon Academy will be presenting findings from their yearlong investigation into environmentally friendly building techniques at the Montshire Museum Science on Thursday evening.

The students formed five groups, each of which researched best practices, then used them to design a house for sites in Vermont. Models based on the house designs will also be on display. The program will run between 6 and 8 p.m.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The department store chain Kohl's, which operates a store in West Lebanon, is offering \$1,000 and \$5,000 college scholarships to honor youth volunteers between the ages of 6 and 18. To nominate a student for the "Kids Who Care" scholarships, go to www.kohlkidswhocare.com.

New Hampshire residents enrolled in post-secondary education in nursing, medicine or social work are eligible for between \$1,000 and \$5,000 in annual scholarships from the bequest of Samuel and Alice Yarnold of Rollinsford, N.H. Students interested should contact the Alice M. Yarnold and Samuel Yarnold Scholarship Trust, P.O. Box 2303, Dover, N.H., 03821.

FALL 2007 HONORS LISTS

Mary Lyons of Hartland was inducted into Psi Chi, an honor society for psychology students, at Elon University in North Carolina.

Margaret MacLellan Fitchet of Etna, a senior at Dartmouth College, was cited for outstanding academic achievement in a religion class during the fall semester. Benjamin Gainer Jastrzembski of Hanover, also a senior at Dartmouth, was cited for outstanding achievement in Latin American/Caribbean studies.

Jason Rodgers of New London and Matthew Whitehead of Sunapee were named to the president's listing at the New Hampshire Community Technical College (now Lakes Region Community College) at Laconia. Jeffrey Collins of Newport and Daniel Huff of Thetford Center were named to the vice president's listing.

Krystal-Lynn Hazlett of West Topsham, a 2006 graduate of Oxbow High School, and Liana Koziupa of West Fairlee were named to the dean's list at Lyndon State College for the fall semester.

Jacob Torrey of Windsor was named a Presidential Scholar at Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y., an award given to students with a grade point average of 3.8 and higher. William Meglathery of Thetford Center, Joel A. Reeves of Lyme and Spencer R. Tobin of Wilder were named to the dean's list at Clarkson.



Samuel Habib, at age 3, sits in his supportive corner chair and smiles at a classmate at Shaker Road School in Concord. Below left, Isaiah Habib, then 7, comforts his brother, Samuel, then 4, in the intensive care unit of Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon. FROM INCLUDING SAMUEL

'Including Samuel'

Concord Filmmaker Shows How Classrooms Can Be for All Students — Disabilities or Not

By KRISTEN FOUNTAIN
 Valley News Staff Writer



FOR CONCORD PHOTOJOURNALIST Dan Habib, the journey that resulted in *Including Samuel*, a documentary about making room for people with disabilities in schools, began almost four years ago in the Intensive Care Unit at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon.

Habib's younger son, Samuel, then 4, who has cerebral palsy, had been put into a coma to help him recover from pneumonia he contracted after getting his tonsils removed. As Habib sat with his wife, Betsy McNamara, and their

older son, Isaiah, at Samuel's bedside, neurologist James Filiano told him, "You should document this."

And so he did, with a video camera and the help of local film professionals and the University of New Hampshire's Institute on Disability in Durham. The hour-long documentary premiered in November, and screenings are scheduled next Tuesday evening at 7 p.m. at Colby-Sawyer College in New London. Admission is free and Habib will answer questions following the show. (For more information and details on other screenings, visit the Web site includingisrael.com.)

"I think both of us feel that this is a story that a lot of families could have told," said Habib, speaking for himself and McNamara. As a 20-year veteran of the *Concord Monitor*, "I happened to have this background that helped me tell this story," he said.

There are unique fears, heartaches and joys in raising a child with a severe disability, which Habib and his wife share through interviews and a montage of older home videos and photographs along with recent footage. Samuel, now 8, has large, bright eyes and an infectious laugh. He loves roughhousing with his brother and is adept at operating the wheelchair, scooter, walker and bicycles he uses to move around.

We see the inside of Samuel's second-grade classroom at Beaver Meadow School in Concord where he spends the entire day with other students his age and his teacher Barbara O'Brien, a practice that the education profession calls "inclusion." Through creativity and effort on the part of O'Brien, his parents and his aide, and through computer-aided voice technology, Samuel is able to participate in everything the others do from finger-painting to reading.

But Habib did not stop there. "Is inclusion (in the classroom) easier for younger kids?" he asks in a voiceover, and follows Pembroke Academy high school student Alana Malfy to find out. Malfy has a genetic developmental disorder. Walking the hallways with her aide, she looks younger than the other students and acts younger, too, screaming in class or when someone else is on a computer she wants to use.

"I did not have any formal or informal training to have these students in my class," said one of Alana's teachers, Carol Ward. "How am I going to reach the valedictorian and reach Alana at the same time? I don't know how to do that." He talked to experts on including people with disabili-



Dan Habib supports his son Samuel during a T-ball game in Concord on May 27, 2006.

CONCORD MONITOR PHOTOGRAPH — LORI DUFF

See 'INCLUDING SAMUEL' — C2

Poetry From Students

THE YOUNG WRITERS PROJECT features more of the best general writing by students throughout the state. Each week, the YWP, an independent nonprofit organization, reads and selects work submitted by students in over 200 schools in New Hampshire and Vermont. Student judges do the preliminary selection work.

More than 5,300 submissions have been sent into the YWP since it became an independent nonprofit in the fall of 2006. Its Web site, youngwritersproject.org, features additional writing by some 2,100 registered student users. Top students from St. Michael's, Middlebury and Castleton State colleges and the University of Vermont provide students with feedback on most of the submissions to the Newspaper Series, which is published



See STUDENTS — C2

No, Focusing on Academic Skills Isn't a Problem

POOR ELIJAH'S ALMANACK

By PETER BERGER
 For the Valley News

KEEPING TRACK of education reform is like watering a lawn. Just set your head on oscillate and cycle back and forth between the ideological extremes. After decades of student-centered, feel-good, content-light, guaranteed success that utterly failed, schools began veering back toward a reasonable middle ground where academic knowledge wasn't disparaged as mere facts and classroom discipline wasn't equat-

ed with fascism. Unfortunately, public education never lingers in the commonsense middle. No Child Left Behind soon had schools careening past reasonable into a realm where obsessively testing kids left significantly less time to teach them anything. In addition to consuming precious classroom hours, resources and money, these purloined weeks of federally mandated assessment produced heaps of unreliable data that at best told us little we didn't already know, and often many things that later proved to be false.

If you've heard reports that schools have lately grown too focused on testing, those reports are

true. There's a difference, though, between being too focused on tests and being too focused on the academic skills and knowledge they attempt to measure. That's a distinction partisans on both sides often don't grasp.

One middle-school teacher recently voiced his lament in *Education Week*. Citing the prevalence of words like "core content," "grades," "standards" and "rigor" in discussions of public education, he complains that schools' current discourse is, regrettably, dominated by language relating to academic achievement, which is a lot like a doctor complaining that his colleagues are too

See PROBLEM — C2