



SERVING THE WESTERN MOUNTAINS OF MAINE WHERE THE KIDS GROW STRAIGHT AND TALL AND THE WOMEN ARE ALL GOOD LOOKING.

Wescott unveils foundation for Gondi's return

By David Hart
Irregular Staff

CARRABASSETT VALLEY – After a couple weeks of lingering rumors surrounding significant mountain enhancements, excitement is now brewing following a selectmen's meeting last Monday.

With an impact similar to that generated when he earned his Olympic Gold medal, Carrabasset Valley resident Seth Wescott delivered an unforgettable speech.

Wescott asked the town to think outside of the box and consider purchasing a top-to-bottom signature gondola lift. A \$10 million signature lift would be a draw for New England skiers and would return Sugarloaf's reputation as a world class resort as it was when the very first gondola was installed in the 1960s, Wescott said.

"I come before you today to propose forming a further partnership between Boyne, Sugarloaf and the Town of Carrabasset Valley," Wescott said.

Sugarloaf, whose assets are owned by CNL

investment group, is operated by parent company Boyne Resorts/USA.

Wescott, having traveled the globe reaching snowy summits in over 500 resorts on five continents, said he's learned that there are many ways to run ski resorts.

After the meeting, he described resorts he's visited in Japan at which eight or 10 lifts might have eight or 10 different owners.

The Town of Carrabasset could be the owners of Sugarloaf's newest base-to-summit signature lift and lease it back to Sugarloaf. It is anticipated that revenue generated would be paid back to the town to offset costs of a municipal bond.

"My model for the proposal which I'm making is not a new one, and one that is practiced throughout the world as well as right here in our own community," Wescott explained.

His proposal is to have the Town of Carrabasset Valley purchase a lift through low interest municipal bonding and form a partner-



Carrabasset Valley resident Seth Wescott asks his town to think outside of the box and become the owners of a very large and significant asset on Sugarloaf Mountain. (David Hart photo)

— Please see **Wescott** on page 17



Kirby and Elaine Holcombe of the Rangeley Region Guides and Sportsmen's Association (left to right), Nancy Perlson, Shelby Rousseau and Bill Pierce of Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust at the Landowners Recognition Awards banquet where RLHT won the Landowner of the Year award. (Contributed photo)

RLHT named Landowner of the Year

AUGUSTA — The Landowners Recognition Awards banquet was held on Tuesday, Oct. 20 at the Augusta Civic Center. The Rangeley Lakes Heritage Trust was honored as 2008 Conservation Landowner of the Year after being nominated for the recognition by the Rangeley Region Guides and Sportsmen's Association.

The honor recognized RLHT for its efforts in providing public access to many of the region's finest natural resources. The nomination also noted RLHT's dedication to improve fish and wildlife habitat, provide and maintain over 35 miles of recreational trails and for its numerous programs designed to protect a variety of resources and educate both young and old about responsible stewardship.

The event was sponsored by the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine Snowmobile As-

sociation.

"RLHT has consistently provided a wide range of programs and investment to conserve the legendary lands and waters of the Rangeley Region. We are proud to have partnered with them in many important efforts. We look forward to a bright future of working alongside this outstanding organization to enhance the recreational experiences in that amazing region for the people of Maine," commented IFW Commissioner Danny Martin.

Some of the lands RLHT has conserved that provide outstanding nature-based recreational opportunities include riparian areas along rivers such as the Kennebago, the Rapid, and Rangeley and streams like South Bog and Bemis. Other notable RLHT conservation efforts include Cascade Stream Gorge, the

— Please see **RLHT** on page 27

Valuation up, revenue down

By David Hart
Irregular Staff

MSAD #58 — Superintendent Quenten Clark checked in last week with some district news.

Adding to district complexities is an upcoming meeting he'll have with other superintendents regarding the first wave of curtailments coming our way this year. The meeting will be facilitated by the Maine Department of Education Commissioner Susan Gendron, he said.

Clark estimated that approximately \$100 to \$200,000 of state subsidy funding will be cut from the district. This is school district revenue that was factored in this year's currently operating budget. Based on revenue shortfalls, Clark expects that additional announcements of further curtailments will also happen near the end of the budget cycle.

The first wave of cuts, Clark said, they think they can endure. Budgeted and scheduled bus purchases can be postponed, he explained. Additional curtailments later this cycle can be very damaging for the district.

With continued state revenue shortfalls and the threat of a penalty imposed on MSAD #58 for not complying with the consolidation law, Clark said that conversations at upcoming board meetings should be very interesting. When the penalty is imposed, MSAD #58 could be looking at an additional loss of \$130,000.

In other news, residents of some district towns might be interested in spikes recently found in state valuations. State valuation plays a role in the state Essential Programs and Services formula for state subsidy and factors in-

— Please see **Valuation** on page 10

Board supports 'Yes' on Question 3

By David Hart
Irregular Staff

SALEM — Members of the MSAD #58 school board voted in favor of supporting Question 3 at their last school board meeting. The referendum question will ask voters to decide if they want to repeal the consolidation law that was passed by lawmakers in 2007.

MSAD #58 Superintendent Quenten Clark says if the question is defeated, his district could be looking at being penalized next year by a loss of \$130,000 in state revenue. And this subsidy loss can occur each and every budget cycle.

Governor John E. Baldacci, who initiated the bill, has been campaigning hard to see the people's referendum defeated.

The campaign to defeat the question is led by Maine State Chamber of Commerce president Dana Connors who has been actively fundraising. As of last Friday the group has

raised \$340,000 to use for lobbying, advertising and other political effort.

Reports suggest that proponents of the question have raised under \$10,000.

The largest contributions, \$25,000 each, are reported on a list generated by the Maine Ethics Commission. The in-state and often out-of-state corporations are saying they'd like to support this effort to defeat the question and/or maintain the law, Clark explained.

Large contributions are reported from LL Bean, TD BankNorth, Unum Group, Maine Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association, U.S. Cellular and Nestlé Waters North America.

"What I would really like to know is what is the interest level for these companies and why would they want to take a position to make sure that the penalty stays intact," Clark asked. "What good can it do for them and

— Please see **Yes on 3** on page 10