

# IDEAS/EDUCATION

THE KEENE SENTINEL SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2009 Page D-1

## Health plan gets praise for Janeway

**T**his could be huge. The New Hampshire Commission to Propose a Retiree Health Care Benefits Funding Model — that's a mouthful — took a big leap toward finding a viable way to help public retirees get health care from somewhere other than Medicare.

It's no longer an academic debate. Thanks to the plummeting assets of the New Hampshire Retirement System, the days of a medical subsidy helping to pay some of the coverage costs for retirees is fast disappearing.

By one insider's estimate, the subsidy no longer applies to as

many as half of the existing, 52,000 public employ-

ees who will one day need health coverage after they've ceased working.

Every local police officer and firefighter hired after 2000 gets no subsidy.

So this commission has spent more than a year and come up with an instrument, the Retirees Medical Trust that financial experts say can help sustain coverage for retirees in as few as five years.

The commission unanimously endorsed the plan earlier this week and is asking the Legislature to approve legislation that endorses it along with providing up to \$100,000 in start-up dollars.

Technically, legislation is not needed to legally set up this trust but Commissioner John Reegan, a Deerfield Republican state legislator, said it would really assist in marketing the plan to cities and towns.

Webster Democratic State Sen. Harold Janeway, a skilled investment manager by profession, gets the lion's share of the credit for brokering this deal among the varied interests of labor, management, industry and government that for years fought about this dilemma.

"You had a varied group of individuals with a lot of reasons not to trust one another," said David Lang, president of the Professional Firefighters of New Hampshire.

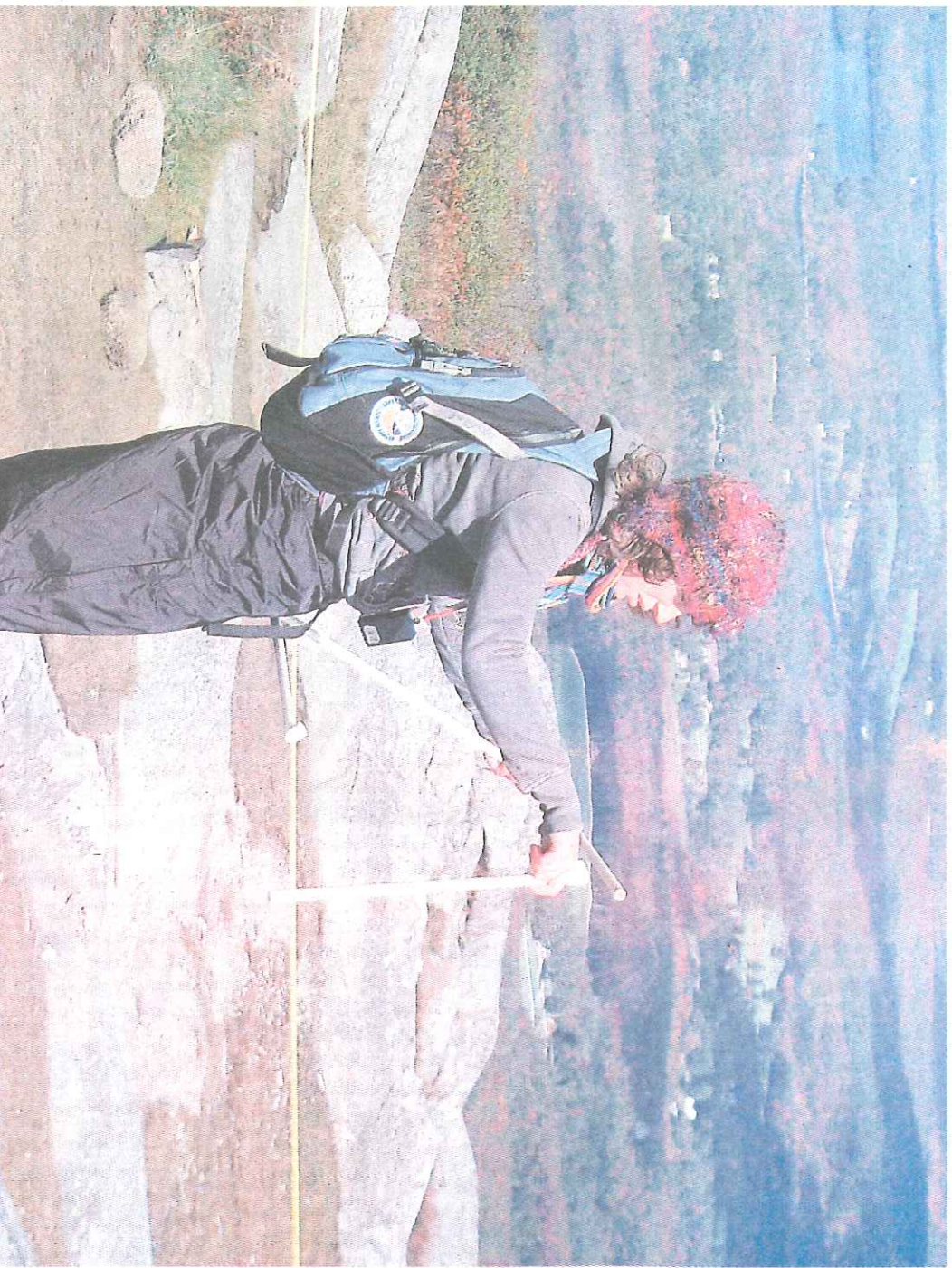
"Senator Janeway brought us together."

He also recognized talent, so when San Diego, Ca., legal expert Sheena Satchek addressed the commission months ago, he moved to hire her as a consultant to the commission.

Satchek played a pivotal role in setting up successful benefit trusts in California, Oregon and Washington for firefighters, teachers and law enforcers.

The State Employees Association stepped up and paid for most of Satchek's consulting fee and that paid dividends in drafting the benefit trust the commission has endorsed.

"This really was a team effort



Photos by VICTORIA HAMMAN

## Study at the summit

### Keene High, Antioch students join forces for long-term project

By SARAH PALERMO  
Sentinel Staff

They're tiny and fragile, yet they live in some of the most exposed and extreme areas of the region.

And they could hold key information about how humans affect the natural world.

Crevice plant communities, small, fragile pockets of vegetation, have adapted to living in an extreme habitat on Mount Monadnock.

Students of the crevice plant communities on the summit.

The high school students learned how to identify the plants they were studying, how to measure and count them and how to gather the data, Davenson said.

"It's quite an amazing study and a great partnership," he said.

The study has exposed his students to people with expertise in environmental work, people who use science as more than a subject in a textbook.

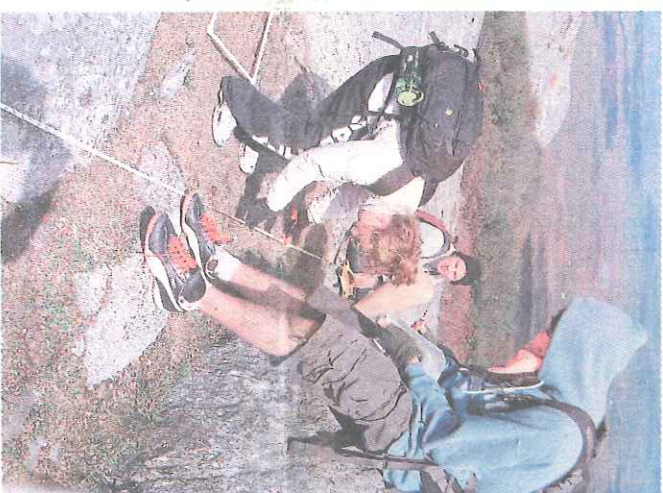
"The master's students have come into classroom, and they went over map skills, research skills and how to properly set up a study. It gives the students a glimpse at the study through other aspects than just going up and counting," Davenson said.

Davenson said he hopes to bring Keene students to the summit twice a year for many years to come.

Palmiotti and Antioch students began the MERE Project in 2007.

From Oct. 18-28, Keene High School's Students at a Free Tibet will be hosting Tibetan artists on a leg of a Tibetan Arts Tour through the United States.

The artists will be visiting classes, selling Tibetan goods after school, making a sand mandala in the north lobby and performing a



cultural pageant.

The tour is sponsored by Drepung Gomang Institute, a non-profit organization located in Louisville, Ky., committed to preserving the Tibetan culture and traditions. Events on the tour help the exiled Tibetan community raise funds to educate, feed, house and care for almost 2,000 exiled Tibetan monks and the Tibetan refugees living in southern India.

The artists will be creating a sand mandala in the school's north lobby, Thursday, Oct. 22, through Monday, Oct. 26.

On Thursday morning at 8 a.m., they will hold opening ceremonies, and be available to talk to students and the public. Closing ceremonies

will be held on Monday at 6 p.m., including chanting, a traditional dance, the deconstruction of the mandala and sharing the sand.

The artists will have items for sale at the school during the week, including scarves, T-shirts, wall hangings, jewelry and bags, many made by Tibetans in the refugee settlement in India. All of the proceeds support the refugee community in education, food and medicine.

Students for a Free Tibet raised \$3,000 this year for the refugees, and received a grant for \$1,000 for a total donation of \$4,000. Over the past three years, the group has raised more than \$12,000 for Tibetan causes, according to adviser Jennifer White.

Bellows Falls Union High School is hosting an Internet safety workshop for parents on Oct. 20 at 5:30 p.m. Parents will have an opportunity to learn about setting boundaries on Internet access for children and some dangers associated with Internet use.

The event will be led by Christina Smith, the school's technology integration resource educator, and Officer Eric Johnson of the Brattleboro Police Department. Babysitting services will be available upon request and snacks will be provided. For more information call 802-463-9958.

What's going on in your school?

You can e-mail Sentinel education reporter Sarah Palermo at [spalermo@keenesentinel.com](mailto:spalermo@keenesentinel.com) or call 352-1234, extension 1436.

### Quick STUDIES

Students at Keene High School and Antioch University New England have joined forces for a long-term study of the plants, which reveal information about climate change and human effects upon the mountain.

Students recently noticed, for example, that the foliage of sheep laurel near the summit has been turning brown, which indicates increased stress.

Marshall Davenson teaches Advanced Placement Environmental Science at Keene High. His students have collaborated with Antioch professor Peter Palmiotti and some of his graduate students for the research as part of the long-term Monadnock Ecological Research and Education (MERE) Project.

The group climbed the mountain last month to take baseline mea-