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# CONCORD MONITOR

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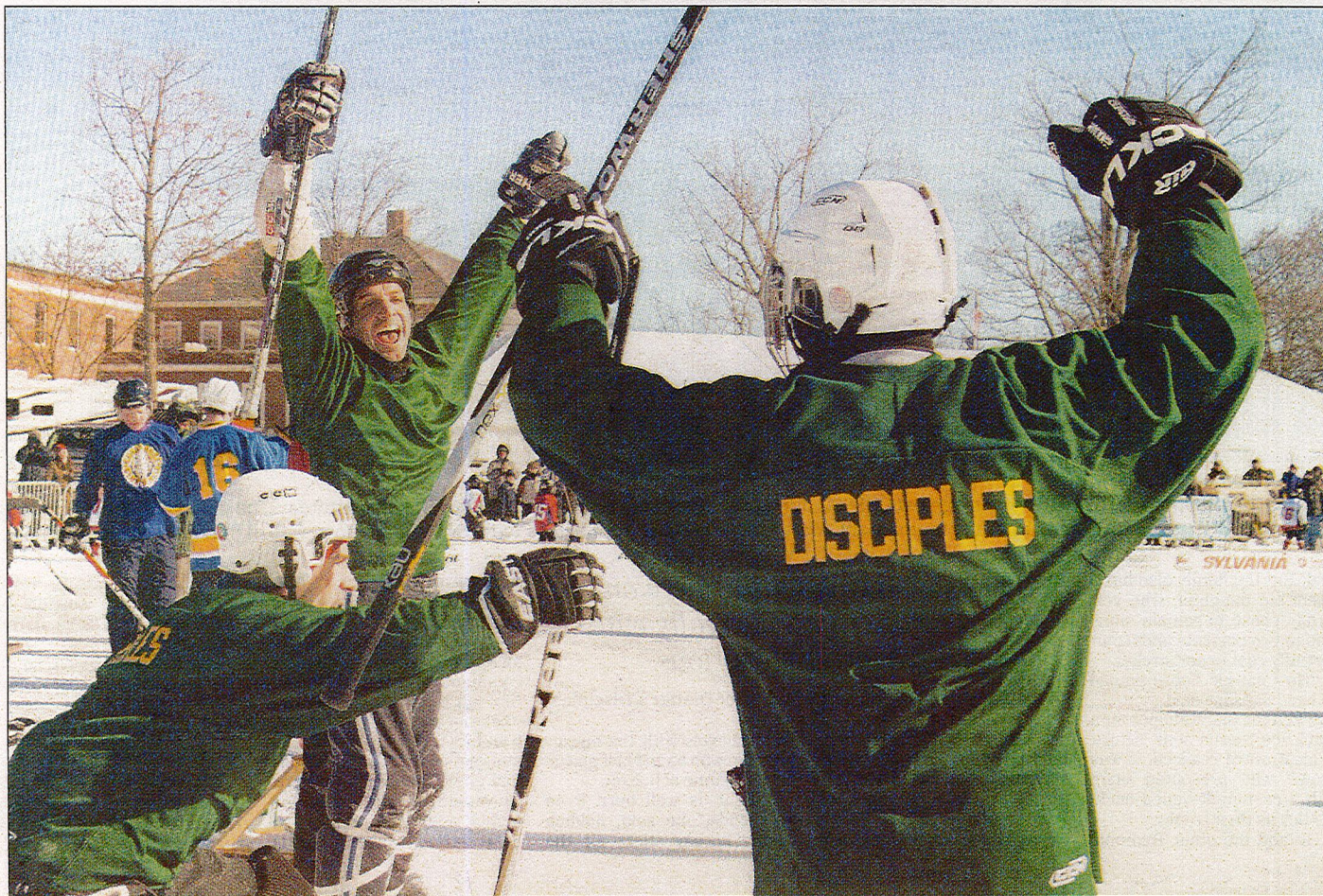
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## Finishing strong at Black Ice



ARIANA van den AKKER / Monitor staff

From left: Dan Deane, Ken Sansone and Tom Fallon celebrate as time expires and their team, Dieter's Disciples, wins the 18+ recreational division final against Kearsarge Krew in overtime at the Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship at White Park in Concord yesterday.

**'It just hums, the whole thing'**  
Tournament a boon for local businesses



MEGAN DOYLE  
DOWNTOWN

**B**lack Ice Ale was on tap in downtown bars. Local hotels offered a special deal for tournament participants, and shuttles ran between White Park and Main Street.

The Barley House ran a special burger: coleslaw and hot cajun mayo on a blackened beef patty.

It was unmistakably Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship weekend in Concord, as players and spectators stepped – or skated – away from the ice at White Park and into downtown businesses.

"It just hums, the whole thing," said Liza Poinier, operations manager of Intown Concord. "It's a scene."

More than 600 players, some local and some from as far away as Florida, participate in the tournament. But they don't just come for the ice, said Chris Brown, one of the tournament's founders.

"They enjoy Concord as well," Brown said. "There's a lot of teams that come from out of the city. ... So they definitely enjoy the restaurants and stay in the hotels and spend some money in Concord. It's not a bad excuse to get people out."

And even in the cold this weekend, the three-day tournament brought people out in "droves."

See **DOWNTOWN - A2**

## Founders skate in fourth annual competition

By MEGAN DOYLE  
Monitor staff

**T**he rest of the Concord Budmen had skated off to the players' tent to change, but Chris Brown was still on the ice.

He wasn't playing anymore – his team had just lost in a semifinal game. But as he skated across the eight rinks on the White Park pond, he stopped to say hello to one skater and help another clear the ice for the next game.

And as the remaining teams prepared for their championship matches, the announcer noticed Brown in his light-blue jersey, both a player and the orchestrator behind the Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship, exhausted from his game but still ready to help before unlacing his skates.

"Put your sticks on the ice for

him," the announcer shouted into his microphone. "This would not happen without Chris Brown."

The sticks clattered across the ice, a hockey player's standing ovation.

Brown, the president of New Hampshire Distributors, learned to skate on the pond at White Park when he was a kid. Yesterday, he and more than 600 others skated on that same pond during the fourth year of the annual pond hockey tournament.

Brown skates with the Concord Budmen, the host team made up of many of the tournament's founders. Many of them grew up as "park rats" who learned to skate on the White Park pond; now, they're co-workers at New Hampshire Distributors and Thursday night hockey buddies, player Tom Philbrick said.

See **BLACK ICE - A2**

### AND THE WINNERS ARE ...

**18+ OPEN DIVISION:** Jack Edwards Teeth by Cheer of Concord

**18+ RECREATIONAL DIVISION:** Dieter's Disciples of Bedford

**18+ WOMEN'S DIVISION:** The Iceholes of Medford, Mass.

**35+ MEN'S DIVISION A:** CHS '92 of Concord

**35+ MEN'S DIVISION B:** So Sick Swamp Rats of Sturbridge, Mass.

**50+ MEN'S DIVISION:** The White Park Hockey Club of Concord



ARIANA van den AKKER / Monitor staff

The Iceholes, (from left) Jen Glynn, Taryn Lapierre, Jolene Rambone, Jamie Mey and Jacki Lapointe rest during halftime of the 18+ women's division final against the Barley House No Stars yesterday. The Iceholes came away as champions after beating the Barley House in overtime.

## Medicaid kids lack coverage

Health law creates problems for parents

By HOLLY RAMER  
Associated Press

Families shopping for health insurance through the new federal marketplace are running into trouble getting everyone covered when children are eligible for Medicaid but their parents are not.

Children who qualify for Medicaid, the safety-net program for the poor and disabled, can't be included on subsidized family plans purchased through the federal marketplace, a fact that is taking many parents by surprise and leaving some kids stuck without coverage.

A California man said he was given false assurances that his children could be covered by the same plan he picked for his wife and himself, and a Florida father said his daughter is going without coverage while he waits for answers.

And in New Hampshire, some parents who have enrolled in private plans for themselves alone are finding out later that their children aren't eligible for

See **HEALTH - A10**

## MERRIMACK VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Kindergarten, contracts on the to-do list

Voters to get peek at warrant articles

By SARAH PALERMO  
Monitor staff

Voters in the Merrimack Valley School District will get their first look tomorrow night at several big-ticket items that could be on the warrant at this year's district meeting.

District officials are recommending a move to full-day kindergarten, a contract recently signed with district teachers and a budget for the 2014-15 school year that includes an increase due to pressure from rising insurance costs.

The proposed 2014-15 budget – slightly more than \$37 million – is 2 percent higher than the current budget, said

See **MV - A10**



**FLURRIES** and clouds. High 32, low 2. Greta Norton, 9, of Concord draws the day. **A10**

Business	A3
Comics	B9
Crosswords	B7, B9
Editorial	A8
Hometown	A5
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## BLACK ICE Continued from A1

So of course the pond hockey tournament took shape at the pond where many of the Budmen learned to love the game, Philbrick said. Of course they established the tournament as a nonprofit that has donated thousands of dollars to the park where they still skate and to youth hockey programs across the city.

"It was a natural spot for a tournament," Philbrick said.

The rules remain the same as when those park rats played pond hockey as kids, before they could qualify for the 35-and-over division. Few formal rules, no referees.

"We basically work it out ourselves, that goes back to the roots of our childhood. . . . You settled your differences and moved on," Brown said.

When the team fell to CHS '92 yesterday, Philbrick's wife, Aileen, stepped out on the ice to snap their picture anyway.

They may be co-workers, Aileen Philbrick said of the Budmen, but they treat the team and the tournament like "a family thing."

"I guess I never pictured it to be this big," she said, looking around at the eight rinks and the hundreds of people.

Now, the tournament attracts players from all over to this small city park. Alice Sansone, 39, cheered for her husband, Ken, as he competed with Dietter's Disciples, the eventual winner of the 18-and-over recreational division. Her husband's team is a group of his brothers and their friends, all longtime hockey players. The Sansone family came into Concord from nearby Bedford, but other players on their team came from New York and stayed at their house.

The weekend is their reunion, she said over pulled pork sandwiches and hockey.

"It's really a family affair," Sansone said.

The team lost in the semifinals last year, Sansone said, interrupting her thought to cheer when the team scored a goal. But this year, they've been practicing. This year, they came to win.

"My husband was skating here on the pond before work. It's really cute," she said, laughing. "I mean, it's very serious."

The couple's two sons haven't taken to hockey, she



JIM COLE / AP

The Concord Budmen (left) try to defend against CHS '92 during the Black Ice Pond Hockey Championship yesterday. The defending champion Budmen lost to CHS '92 on the final day of the tournament. More than 80 teams from across the U.S. and Canada played in the three-day tournament.

said. But the family also has a 4-year-old daughter, who yesterday chose to remain snuggled in two blankets and a purple puffy coat in her stroller.

"He's got his hopes pinned on her," Sansone said.

When the team's hopes for a Black Ice tournament victory, at least, were realized, it was Brown who presented them with a custom-designed hockey stick as their trophy.

He and the other Budmen,

*"My husband was skating here on the pond before work. It's really cute. I mean, it's very serious."*

Alice Sansone, wife of Ken Sansone of Dietter's Disciples

as well as volunteers from their company and other sponsors, broke down the rinks yesterday. Now in a teal Black Ice Pond Hockey jacket, Brown ran between supply trucks and

snow shovels with the energy of a man who hadn't just played his own game of hockey.

"Might as well burn it on both ends," he said, holding trophy hockey sticks for the

next award ceremony. "I honestly couldn't do this without all the volunteers."

One of those volunteers, Brian Smith, ran the clock and the commentary as the announcer through the weekend. He also works for New Hampshire Distributors and said he immediately got on board with the idea that grew from his co-workers' conversation over "a few Bud Lights" a few years ago.

"It started to take on a life of

its own, with (Chris Brown's) support and the support of New Hampshire Distributors," Smith said.

That life would go on, Smith assured the dispersing crowd before he turned off his microphone.

"See ya next year," he said.

(Megan Doyle can be reached at 369-3321 or mdoyle@cmonitor.com or on Twitter @megan\_e\_doyle.)

## DOWNTOWN Continued from A1

Brown said. He predicted several thousand people would be passing through White Park - and Concord - for the tournament.

"The closeness of the pond and the central (location) of White Park to the city, people are coming out of their houses to come and watch this and take in the atmosphere of the event," Brown said.

The Barley House is one of the local businesses that has sponsored the tournament ever since its first year. The restaurant offers specials throughout the weekend and sponsors two teams - one men's team, one women's team. (The Barley House No Stars competed in the women's final yesterday morning and lost to the Iceholes.)

"I think ultimately it was going to be a really good thing for Concord, and we wanted to be a part of that," Barley House owner Brian Shea said.

And the tournament is a good thing for the Barley House, too.

"There's no question our

*"There's no question our business spikes up. . . . We have a really good business spike in the middle of a traditionally slower time in the calendar."*

Brian Shea, Barley House owner

business spikes up. . . . We have a really good business spike in the middle of a traditionally slower time in the calendar," Shea said.

Local hotels offered blocks of rooms for players, along with their families and friends.

Only a handful of guests at the Comfort Inn this weekend were in town for the tournament, even with the discount-

ed rate, said General Manager Jessie Jenkins. But in the fourth year of this tournament, the turnout has grown from just two or three rooms in the first year.

"We had probably no more than 10 rooms (this year)," she said. "But it is gaining ground each year."

Player Tyler Bickford, 29, returned to his hometown this weekend from Providence, R.I., to play in the tournament with some old hockey buddies. Their reunion means time on the ice together again, but it also means a night out together.

"Saturday night means going downtown," Bickford said.

Like others, Bickford said he wants to play in the tournament again - which means he'll be back on Main Street in Concord as well.

"I'll be back next year," he said.

**Fro-yo business hasn't frozen**

Outside, the temperature on the Main Street sidewalk was 15 degrees.

Inside, a group of teenagers

chatted and scraped Dips frozen yogurt from the bottom of their bowls.

And just blocks away, an employee behind the counter at Orange Leaf wrote fro-yo specials on a chalkboard above the register.

"Winter, colder months are slower than the summer, obviously, but we have a good base of regular customers even while it's cold out," said Orange Leaf owner Kristina Hathaway.

Dips owner Nick Harriman said the summer months helped his store build a base of regulars since opening last year, and some of those customers have continued to brave the elements to get their frozen yogurt fix.

"These cold days had definitely hurt business," Harriman said. "People aren't really walking around downtown."

But it's warm inside, he said.

"It's funny because some people walk in and they're shivering . . . but people really love it," Harriman said.

Hathaway said catering

birthday parties and in-store fundraisers are also a boost to business with below-freezing temperatures outside.

"They're coming in to get out of the cold and also enjoy a treat," Hathaway said. "So even though it is a frozen treat, it's still a treat, and people want to enjoy that year-round."

And maybe this really is the perfect time of year for a to-go cup - it won't melt.

### Loyal to local business

The graves of local veterans will be marked with American flags from a Main Street business this spring.

The Concord Veterans Council has decided to buy 4,320 flags from Flag-Works Over America for the city's 13 cemeteries this year. Patrick Page, the store's owner, said the council awarded the contract to him even though his offer wasn't the lowest bid.

His per-flag price was three cents higher than an out-of-state company, which made a difference of about \$129 on the order total.

But Ned Brooks, secretary of the Veterans Council, chose local.

"It's better for the city to keep it in the city," Brooks said.

Page, who has owned his business since 1996, said he has lost contracts by that slim a margin before.

"When I said, 'You've got the order,' it was like I gave him a Christmas present," Brooks said.

Those flags will be distributed on Memorial Day. A U.S. Navy veteran, Page said he was honored to both earn the contract from the Concord Veterans Council and provide flags for Concord's cemeteries.

"I love going by anywhere and seeing my flags," Page said. "I'm a proud guy. I really believe in America and veterans. . . . I think it's really important to be showing our patriotism to the whole country and to veterans," he said.

(Megan Doyle can be reached at 369-3321 or mdoyle@cmonitor.com or on Twitter @megan\_e\_doyle.)



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