




GIFT CARDS
BUY \$100, GET \$25!
BUY \$50, GET \$10!



The Laconia Daily Sun

THURSDAY

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2025

VOL. 26 NO. 129

LACONIA, N.H.

603-527-9299

FREE

Gilford students form nonprofit to support mental health of kids in hospitals

DECA Club's Operation Smile gets boost from school, community

By GABRIEL PERRY
THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

GILFORD — Students at Gilford High School are turning a school project into a nonprofit organization, seeking to support the mental health of children who are hospitalized.

Operation Smile was born through students engaged with the GHS DECA program, which, as part of a broader movement, teaches principles of business, finance, hospitality, management and marketing.

But the students in Gilford are taking their education one step further, by creating something tangible



Gilford High School students who formed Operation Smile are, from left, President Amelia Costea, Treasurer Jiya Patel and Vice President Sophia Comeau. (Gabriel Perry/The Laconia Daily Sun photo)

see **OPERATION SMILE** page 12

IRWIN
 PICK UP & DELIVERY SERVICE



NEED SERVICE WORK?
 We'll pick your vehicle up & drop it back off **FREE of charge!**

To make your reservation, contact Madilyn Hughes at madilyn.hughes@irwinzone.com

PICK UP & DELIVERY HOURS:
 Monday - Friday 7:00am - 5:00pm
 Saturday & Sunday Closed

Irwin Automotive Group
 51 & 59 Bisson Ave and
 446 Union Ave Laconia, NH
 603-524-4922 | www.irwinzone.com

**15 mile radius. Available at our 51 & 59 Bisson Ave locations*

Improv troupe brings silly, on-the-fly comedy to Lakes Region

10-member group Circuit Breakers will perform for the first time Dec. 13 at Colonial Theatre

By JANICE BEETLE
 FOR THE LACONIA DAILY SUN

As the husband of Courtney Palmer, the associate producer for Powerhouse Theatre Collaborative, Alex Palmer is often asked to step in when a performer drops out of a show.

During one such last-minute engagement, a few of the actors forgot their lines, and the action onstage stopped abruptly. "That was when I realized that there was a need for improv experience in the local theater community," Palmer said.

He brought the idea to form a troupe to Powerhouse's producers, Bryan and

Johanna Halperin. Almost at the same time, Amanda Wagner approached the Halperins with the same thought. Wagner's motivation was partly her own interest in being part of an improv troupe; she figured she'd need to be part of starting one first.

Since this spring, Palmer and Wagner have been working to build a team of nimble performers. In mid-November, after competitive auditions, they launched Powerhouse's latest offering, the Circuit Breakers improv troupe — 10 area performers who like to think fast and work as a group to make people laugh. Both Palmer and Wagner are members.

And talk about improv. The troupe's first public appearance will come only a month later. They'll riff for 30 minutes on Saturday, Dec. 13, during a 7:30 p.m., 21-plus-themed night that also includes a run of a new parody of "A Christmas Carol," called "Fezziwig's After Dark" at the Colonial Theatre in Laconia.

"It's really fun to have the challenge," Wagner said. "With improv, you don't really prepare anything for a show, but it does take a good amount of rehearsing to get to know each other, and get a sense of how we're going to put on a show for

see **IMPROV** page 18



Preserve Laconia's Legacy
 Support the Belknap Mill today!
www.belknapmill.org

DOJ investigating elder abuse in Belmont assault in October
see page 10

Valovanie named Tilton-Northfield fire chief
see page 11