



Skeleton crew

ON FEB. 26 Ferrisburgh Central School fifth- and sixth-graders traveled to Lake Placid to watch the world championship skeleton races. The skeleton is a low, one-person sled on which the rider lays on his or her belly and travels headfirst down the same track used by luge and bobsled racers.

The Ferrisburgh students were thrilled by the action and struck up a friendship during the races with another spectator who happened to be the mother of Kestie Tomlinson, a member of the United States Skeleton Team. The students hoped to meet Tomlinson after the race, but settled for an e-mail address.

Fifth-grader Felicia Armell, lower left, started corresponding with Tomlinson and several other students quickly followed suit. "The e-mails were so great I really wanted to meet these kids," said Tomlinson, who decided to make a surprise visit to Ferrisburgh to see in person her young fans.

The surprise was ruined but not the excitement last Thursday when several students looked out the school windows and saw Tomlinson lifting her sled and spiked shoes, upper left, out of her car. The students peppered Tomlinson with questions and autograph requests and they all had their photograph taken laying on the skeleton sled.

Tomlinson hopes to make the U.S. Olympic team for next year's games in Vancouver.

Photos by Trent Campbell



Bridport to set votes on school bond and budget

By JOHN FLOWERS

BRIDPORT — Bridport school directors will meet on Tuesday, March 24, to set a re-vote date for the failed 2009-2010 Bridport Central budget. Board members also hope to endorse a slimmed-down school repair plan that could be presented to voters on the same date as the budget referendum.

The new budget and bond votes are being planned in the wake of narrow defeats this past Town Meeting Day. The Proposed 2009-2010 Bridport Central School spending plan of \$1,356,398 — representing a 0.17-percent increase — was rejected by a 188-184 tally.

Residents on Town Meeting Day also voted 190-184 against a proposed \$800,000 bond issue to repair Bridport Central. The version voters defeated represented a reduction from the \$1.25 million plan that had previously failed to win final approval from the voters.

School officials have asked the town's building committee to revisit the proposed bond, which would have provided for, among other things, a new roof with added insulation, updates to the school's ventilation and electrical systems, removal of asbestos tiling in the hallway, installation of new drop-ceilings with new lighting, and a simplified entryway project (compared to what had been proposed last year) calling for double doors.

Leonard Barrett, chairman of the town's building committee, has said the town — at minimum — needs to replace the roof, which is leaking. The committee is scheduled to give the school board some recommendations at the March 24 meeting, which will begin at 7 p.m. in the library.

Meanwhile, school directors are expected to bring back to the voters a proposed 2009-2010 elementary school budget that is either the same, or slightly lower, than the one that was narrowly rejected earlier this month.

Bridport School Board Chairwoman Sharon Koller said recent forecasts for next year show the school may see fewer special education tuition/transportation expenses. But she added some of those potential savings could be offset by greater operating and maintenance expenses for the school in wake of the failed repair bond.

Koller said she and her colleagues are also waiting to see whether Bridport Central will benefit from federal stimulus money, a factor that could soften expenses for local taxpayers.

She stressed the board is not discussing the possibility of closing Bridport Central and tuitioning students to another community's school.