



New Hampshire Homeschooling Coalition News

Volume XX, Number VI

July/August 2009

Coordinator's Report

The NHHC Board met on Saturday, June 27, 2009, from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the Elkins Public Library, 9 Center Road, Canterbury, New Hampshire.

In June, the Coalition sent an email message to remind our members of changes to New Hampshire homeschooler reporting requirements resulting from Senate Bill 18. Chris Hamilton and Stefanie Marsh compiled and posted a table at our website to summarize the new requirements (<http://nhhomeschooling.org/table-ages-16-18>).

We mailed 685 ballots to members for the 2009 annual elections. I'm pleased to report that we had candidates for each of the twelve NHHC districts and almost every officer position. We tallied ballots and elected officers at our June 27 quarterly board meeting. Please join me in welcoming our returning and new district representatives: Kate Wiggin, Barbara Paquin, Amy Gall, Kristen Lotz, Jenny Courser, Kim Burke, Wendy Bisbee, Stefanie Marsh, Kemlo Aki, Stacey Desrosiers, Jenness Nordstrom, and Sheri Walker. An updated list of Coalition district representatives and officers is included in this issue of the newsletter. The board nominated Chris Hamilton for another term on HEAC. Thank you to all of these exceptional and willing volunteers.

Thanks to the hard work of our webmaster, Stefanie Marsh, the Coalition website has a new look. Some links have changed. I hope you'll visit <http://www.nhhomeschooling.org> to see pictures of New Hampshire homeschoolers and read up on homeschooling information, tips, and resources.

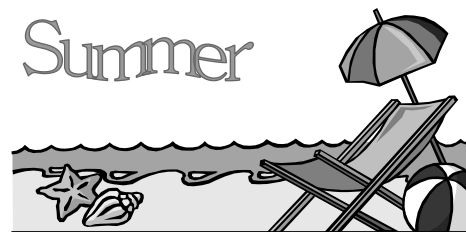
We're looking for a volunteer to serve as the Coalition Secretary. If you would like to learn more about this position, please let me know. We also

need someone to help with our newsletter layout. The Coalition Board enjoys working together to provide you with reliable homeschooling support and information, and we're always eager to welcome new volunteers. If you'd like to assist as the Coalition Secretary or work on our newsletter layout to help and encourage your fellow homeschoolers, please let me know.

The Coalition Board will hold its next regularly scheduled meeting on Saturday, September 12, 2009 from 9:00 a.m. until noon at the Elkins Public Library in Canterbury, New Hampshire. All Coalition meetings are open to the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Grady



Meeting Notices

Saturday, Sept 12 : NHHC Board Meeting, Elkins Public Library, 9 Center Road, Canterbury New Hampshire, from 9 A.M. until 12 Noon.

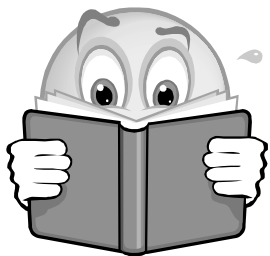
Tuesday, Sept 8: Home Education Advisory Council meets September through June. HEAC meetings are usually the second Tuesday of the month at the New Hampshire Department of Education, 101 Pleasant Street, in Concord, from 3:30 until 5.

All are Welcome

A Book Review

Milton Gaither is a 30-something professor of education at Messiah College (PA) and the father of four, whose children are in a variety of learning situations, including homeschooling. He is also the author of *Homeschool: An American History* published in 2008 by Palgrave MacMillan.

A first glimpse of the chapter titles made it clear that for me that this was a must read: "The Family State, 1600-1776," "The Family Nation, 1776-1860," "The Eclipse of the Fireside, 1865-1930," "Why Homeschooling Happened, 1945-1990," "Three Homeschooling Pioneers," "The Changing of the Guard, 1983-1998," "Making it Legal," and "Homeschooling and the Return of Domestic Education, 1998-2008."



Homeschool: An American History is an ambitious undertaking. In under 300 pages, it addresses not only the history of homeschooling, but also the history of the interrelationships between families and the larger society and the State. Professor Gaither presents this enormous subject in an engaging overview sprinkled with riveting details, and he does a remarkable job of maintaining a dispassionate, reportorial approach to hundreds of years' worth of various strongly held beliefs.

The story opens with the Pilgrims and the idea that, in the colonial period, fledgling governments *required* parents to educate their children at home, because children had to be able to read the Bible as a steppingstone to eternal salvation – predating, obviously, any idea of separation of church and state. As the colonies became a nation, and educators in every setting had the “goal of forging a common American identity,” early Americans found themselves “attempting harmonizations of Protestant Christianity and more modern, ‘liberal’ sentiments of Locke or Rousseau concerning the nature of children.” In the years leading up to the Civil War, massive immigration, the stirrings of industrialization, and the divisions between North

and South strained the fabric of this “American synthesis.” We get insights at every turn into the social, philosophical, political, and economic factors that led to compulsory school attendance. When governments began to nudge their way toward compulsory school attendance for virtually all children after the Civil War, it was, again, to insure that the children were properly indoctrinated – and, while some continued to see schooling as conducive to a lively faith, another aspect of its importance was the hope of producing reliable citizenship in a more secular sense. Those crowding into the teeming cities of the turn of the century, leaving behind the family farmsteads of the Mid-West and Massachusetts, of Italy and Ireland, saw “free” public education as a way up for their children. Most did not have to be coerced to accept it, though they would have been, and were, if they objected.

Well more than half of Milton Gaither’s study deals with the revival of home education that began to take shape in the post-World War II years, as an American counter-culture took root. While some worked to reform schools to make them more “child-centered,” others began to drop out of society and school, forming communes and taking other approaches to raising children. Paradoxically in the meantime, some of the school reforms instituted during these times caused conservative parents also to remove their children from school. The process started slowly, by the late 1970’s, a full fledged movement was under-

NHHC Newsletter Staff
Abbey Lawrence, Editor
PO Box 97
Center Tuftonboro, NH 03816
539-7233 abbey@worldpath.net

Contributors : Jenny Courser, Mary Faiella, Joan Hodges, Mileva Loo, Stef Marsh

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way, complete with appearances on the Phil Donahue Show.

Professor Gaither describes the struggles in the 1970's and 1980's to get courts to confirm homeschoolers' claim of a constitutional right to home educate, as state authorities mobilized to contain or quash the homeschooling movement. He catalogs the ups and downs of what he calls the "constitutional battle" and discusses the decision made by homeschoolers in many states to engage in a "statutory battle" instead, with Fundamentalists and hippie homeschoolers (and others) poring over compulsory attendance laws from sea to shining sea, and "in nearly every case the end result was a more explicit law that gave homeschoolers legal status but also regulated them to a greater or lesser degree..." depending, in part, on the statutory starting point in the various states. "By 1989 most states had come to terms with homeschooling in one way or another and a general peace settled on the land;" but he doesn't stop there. Homeschooling continues to develop and change. Although twenty years may go by in a flash, much has changed between 1989 and 2009, and this part of the story is told as well.

Not unsurprisingly, given the diverse streams of people who converged to form the modern homeschooling movement, there have been divisions among homeschoolers. One of the features of homeschooling politics that Professor Gaither considers is the degree to which both cooperation and hostility among homeschoolers of various persuasions have played a part in the events of the past few decades. One senses that he has sympathies of his own, but even where he might seem disapproving, his evident aim to be fair and his sensitive treatment of the differences in philosophy among homeschoolers is refreshing.

While there is an occasional error, factual (so fact-check if you are relying on data) or technical (enervate means exhaust not energize, and there is a pal in "principal"), where I am familiar with the particulars he offers, Professor Gaither is accurate, and you can see at his website that he is amazingly open to correction and works diligently to get things right. For those of us engaged in "lifelong learning" and interested in the question of how we

got where we are, *Homeschool: An American History* fills in some of the gaps in our knowledge, but, be forewarned, it also leaves this reader wanting to know and understand much more.

Mary Faiella

A Short N.H. Retrospective

- **1623** - Dover, the first permanent settlement founded.
- **1680** - N.H. enacts own first school law requiring schools in all towns of fifty households or more.
- **1769** - Founding of Dartmouth College.
- **JULY 18, 1776** - Declaration of Independence is read on the state house's western steps.
- **1778** - First state to hold a constitutional convention.
- **1783** - First state to require that its constitution be referred to the people for approval.
- **1788** - New Hampshire becomes the 9th state; U.S. Constitution is ratified by New Hampshire.
- **1808** - State capital is established in Concord.
- **1853** - Franklin Pierce becomes the 14th U.S. President.
- **1854** - Founding of the NH State Teachers' Association
- **1890** - Two students become the first female students of New Hampshire College (later to become UNH).
- **1923** - UNH established.
- **1963** - Adopted the first legal lottery in the twentieth century United States; the nation's first since 1894.
- **1990** - Homeschool law enacted.

Photography Workshop



The Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications in Manchester offers a one-day photography workshop taught by Geoff Forester on July 10, from 9 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The workshop will cover camera basics, taking good photos, and selecting photos to tell a story. The \$40 registration fee includes lunch. Visit www.loeb.school.org or call 603-627-0005 for more information and registration details.



We Asked Homeschoolers

For those who have sent a homeschooler off to college: In hindsight, what advice do you wish someone had given you in advance?

LOTS!

- First, understand that you are about to become a professional college application coach! Accept it.

Start early talking about — and actually DOING something about — college.

- Junior year is the time to schedule your visits to college campuses, and certainly no later than fall of your child's senior year.
- Although there have been some very few great choices made in terms of which college to attend without ever setting foot on campus, they can be counted on the fingers of one hand. And they've all already been taken.
- Public high school guidance counselors have tons of info about regional colleges and universities.
- Do research before making any travel plans — visit college websites, request promotional DVD's, ask your friends with college-aged kids about schools they visited.
- When you plan your college tours, call ahead, ask if your child can spend the night on campus in a dorm, and book a room for yourself in the cheapest Motel 8 within 20 minutes. Take a good book.
- Think carefully about how long it took you (and how much money transportation cost) to get to this campus you're currently visiting. If it is too far away or costs too much to travel there, you will not be able to drop in to take your child out to lunch, come for a performance of their play or their concert, or cheer them on to victory in a sport. This is important.
- If you are interested in your child's spiritual growth, be sure to seek out the Campus Crusade for Christ, Inter-Varsity chapter or independent student-run Bible study group and take time to talk to the staffer during your campus tour. Find out where most of the kids go to church and if it is off campus — ask how they get there. Schedule your travel plans around a visit to a Sunday service there.
- BE SURE you eat in the campus cafeteria.
- Start early (Jan 1st) on the FAFSA— some schools need this completed before tax-day.
- Although there are some great national scholarships out there (especially if you are part of a minority, or if your child already knows he wants to be a nuclear physicist), your best bet for scholarship help is often local. Your local public high school should have a list of those scholarships which local companies and service/interest organizations offer. Get that list in the fall of your child's senior year, at the latest. There's NO MERCY if a submission deadline is missed.
- Do not assume that your child will understand the urgency of seeking financial aid. SIT ON THEM till they do the necessary work.
- Don't overlook the wisdom of starting off with a less expensive, commuter, community college experience (like NHTI in Concord or Granite State in Conway) at least for the first year.
- Encourage your child to apply to 3 or 4 colleges, not all in the same "tier." In other words, one or more should be in the category of absolute "shoe-in — I KNOW they will accept me."
- In these difficult financial times, some smaller schools are closing and some families are having their children transfer to or apply to less expensive public colleges and universities than they would have considered 5 years ago. Their students are filling seats our kids might have taken

- Don't waste money applying to schools you KNOW will not accept you. Do your research.
- Keep a 3-ring binder of: all scholarships applied for, plus info on every school your child is interested in., copies of mapquest driving directions to be stored, notes about your impressions when you visited with answers to specific questions/issues, copies of your FASA forms and pin number.
- **BE ORGANIZED.**
- Finally — consider that going to college straight after senior year of high school is not always the best choice. Apprenticeships, travel, research intensives, time to earn some \$\$ -- time to visit schools if you didn't fit it in before — all of these are great reasons to delay — especially if your child does not know WHY they are going to college in the first place.

Joan Hodges

Having sent four children to college and having ALL four of them end up doing something with math and having all four of them say I didn't spend enough time on math, here is my wish. I wish I had really focused more on the basic skills of Algebra and Geometry until I knew that they could apply it and manipulate it easily as opposed to just completing the exercises. I guess they just needed more play time with it. I found out after they were all gone that this is a common complaint from homeschooled college kids.

Mileva Loo

Looking back, the one simple thing I wish someone had suggested to me years ago was to look at some college applications very early on, during the middle school years or even earlier. Looking at applications, both from individual institutions as well as the "Common Application," which is an application that many colleges use (www.commonapp.org), can be helpful in answering the question, "What is it exactly colleges are looking for through the application?" In many cases the answer seems to be, "Not much!"

After looking at the Common App., it appears it would be difficult for anyone in college admissions to gain any real insight into an average student other than a list of activities along with the transcript and standardized test scores. We had read, and heard at an admissions workshop, that college employees did not want to be burdened with huge amounts of additional paperwork for which they had not asked, and yet they ask so little on the application that it would seem one might want to prepare ahead of time to be sure criteria is met.

Things we learned after checking out the typical admissions process:

- Colleges are not interested in anything a student did prior to high school (unless perhaps it is a longtime activity that has continued into high school).
- Colleges want to see an investment over a period of time in an activity or community service project. (The student is asked how many hours per week, how many weeks per year, and how many high school years the student was active in any given area. In other words a one-time two hour volunteer task does not appear to be what they are interested in.)

Colleges request a letter of recommendation from a guidance counselor and a teacher of an academic subject.

Through comparing the Common App. with others used by individual colleges it became evident that some ask for more than others, and therefore could highlight my daughter's experiences better and allow her to express herself in a deeper way. Since the application process is the main vehicle to college acceptance, it is important that we give as much time and effort to learning about it as we do to all the academics and activities that lead up to it. So I'll offer the advice I wish had been given to me: start perusing those applications, early on!

Jenny Courser



For Our Next Issue

We Want to Ask Homeschoolers:

What is the most effective [high school level] foreign language instruction you have found? If you used a tutor, how did you find him or her?

How much did you have to spend? Have you found any free resources that were effective for long-term (i.e., 2 yrs+) study?

Send contributions to abbey@worldpath.net.

When submitting a contribution, be sure to include how you would like your name to appear in the newsletter.

Notes From the Editor

Stef Marsh, NHHC webmaster, wrote the following as part of a discussion on our local homeschool list; I thought others might find it interesting.



Even though many of us do not use a "complete curriculum", in that we don't buy the materials for all subjects at one grade level from a particular publisher, most of us do cover all of the subjects most days, using our mix of materials.

That said, I can give you an idea of what has worked for us with children around 12 years of age.

Ideally we start the day with a few chores, get laundry in, etc. Then we start with math or English. I like to get the hard work done when the kids are fresh. For a fifth or sixth grader, math and

English (including any grammar, vocab, or writing) would be done by 10:30 or 11:00. Then we take a break, go outside, and go on to history or science. Science and history often involve piling on the couch and reading aloud and discussing as we read. We jump up to look at maps, or to look up an animal or science question on the computer. I save projects and experiments, like building a traditional Japanese house or looking at things under the microscope, for afternoon. (And really, we often do those things in the evening. During the afternoons, we have group activities and lessons and play with friends.)

When everyone gets bored with this system (after about six weeks), we switch things around for awhile. We might start with doing a project. Then we do the math and English in the late morning. And we allow events like preparing for International Night and rehearsing the Perform It! Shakespeare play to turn our schedule upside down. I find my children learn so much, so fast, from being involved in an exciting event that it's worth all the disruption. Then when life is calm (don't laugh--I can hear you out there!) we get a lot of grammar and math done.



Attention Readers

Contributions to the newsletter are always welcome. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length and appropriateness. Submissions requiring extensive editing may be declined at the Editor's discretion.



Email all submissions to the editor at abbey@worldpath.net

REPORT FROM THE HOME EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL

Abbey Lawrence
PO Box 97
Tuftonboro, NH 03816
abbey@worldpath.net
539-7233

Sarah Browning, head of the Office of Legislation and Hearings, visited the June HEAC meeting to explain the rule-making process. The recommendations for rules changes made by HEAC will be reviewed by JLCAR (Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules) lawyers and any recommended changes will be incorporated into the document by the DOE (Sarah Browning, Mary Mayo, and probably Roberta Tenney will meet). That version will likely be presented to the Board of Education at its August 12 meeting. It's possible that JLCAR or the DOE will recommend changes, and it's also possible that during the rule-making process the BOE will decide to make changes.

The increase in the age of compulsory attendance to 18 as of July 1 of this year has created some confusion about evaluations and notification for homeschoolers. A student who is 16 now need not submit an evaluation for the 2008-2009 school year, but notification letters will be required for the coming 2009-2010 school year for all students younger than 18, and evaluations for the 2009-2010 school year are required for students who have not turned 18.

A summary of the requirements for older teens at each step of the way for the past year and the year ahead is on the Coalition website at www.nhhomeschooling.org/table16to18.htm. No homeschooling notification or evaluation is required for students enrolled full-time in college.

If your student has finished high school but is younger than 18, you may certify high school completion with the New Hampshire Department of Education. The relevant section of the rules which the HEAC recommended is Ed 315.09 Certificate of Completion:

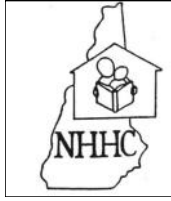
The parent meets the requirements for successful completion of a home school program for a child under 18 years of age when, pursuant to RSA 193:1, I(f)(2), the parent submits a letter to the department of education certifying that the child has completed the home school program at the high school level. Such letter will be deemed a certificate as defined above in Ed 315.02(a). The letter containing the statement above shall also include the following information:

- (a) Name and address of the child;*
- (b) Name and address of the parents;*
- (c) Date of completion of the home school program;*
- (d) A phone number at which the parent may be reached during normal business hours; and*
- (e) Signature of the parent*

Note: There was a mistake in numbering the sections when the Council approved the rules; the section above referred to, RSA 193:1, I(f)(2), was incorrectly labeled I(e)(2). The error has been noted and corrected.

It will be some time before the rules are adopted, but if the Department is willing to post this section as policy, it will prevent some confusion and answer questions from both parents and superintendents.

Council members Chris Hamilton, Mike Comitello, and I met with newly installed Commissioner Virginia Barry on June 26. She seemed well disposed towards parental choices in education. She wanted to know what if anything makes homeschooling in New Hampshire different, and we all thought the reasons for doing it here are much as anywhere, as are percentages of homeschoolers. I told her about the legislation we faced this year, and that the DOE supported bills that the Council never saw until there were hearings scheduled. We agreed on the importance of open communications, and there was some talk about gathering data: how do homeschoolers do on the SAT, or at college? She agreed to come to the September HEAC meeting, and I hope she will have time then to take public input.



New Hampshire
Homeschooling Coalition
PO Box 2224
Concord, NH 03302-2224
www.nhhomeschooling.org

In This Issue: History of Homeschool Book Review, Photography Workshop, New NHHC Reps Contact List and more....

*New Hampshire Homeschooling Coalition
Join Us!*

We're here to serve you! Members receive newsletters, discounts on seminars, legislative updates and information, social activities and support. You can attend NHHC meetings and serve on the board. You have a vote. Help us become the best support group for you and membership is free!

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Confidentiality. You may release my name to: ___the news media ___other homeschoolers

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Contact name and phone _____

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I would like to make a donation to NHHC. \$ _____

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