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Guest Guessers: Waterford Students Taking Part In Ice Out Contest

Parent Gives 200 Joe’s Pond Ice Out Tickets To School For Fun And Possible Fundraiser

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Mar 28, 2023

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Joe's Pond, thinly covered by ice, is shown on Jan. 5, 2023. (Photo by Dana Gray)

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JOE'S POND — From lessons to (they hope) luck, Waterford School students are taking part in this year's Ice Out contest.

The school was given 200 tickets by Bill Dimick, a member of the Joe's Pond Association and parent of a Waterford sixth grader. That's enough tickets for every student and staff member at the school.

The annual Joe's Pond Ice Out is a fundraiser that benefits the Joe's Pond Association. It's a 50-50 split in money distribution of the dollar-per-ticket sales for people to guess when the ice will go out. The Association uses its share for a summertime fireworks display and to support efforts to maintain the water quality of the lake.

It's a popular contest that began in 1988. Each year, thousands of guesses are made by people near and far. It's expected that there could be 13,000 entries this year.

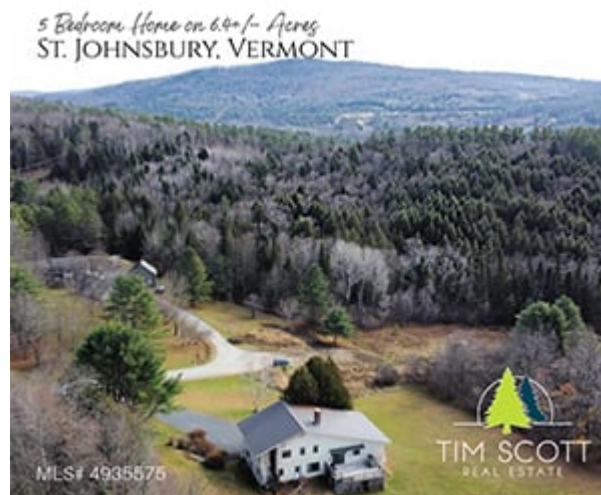
Dimick said he's always looking to encourage ticket sales, and this year he thought he'd take on the expense of the tickets and donate them to his daughter's school for something fun that could become a fundraiser.

"I figured I'd jump in and do my part," he said.

He reached out to Waterford School Principal Christopher Miller, who was all for the idea.

"We're lucky to have such a supportive community here with people who are able to think outside the box with some new idea for a fundraiser," said Miller.

Students and staff are enjoying the guessing game, and teachers are finding the contest makes for some teachable moments.



“Our middle schoolers are looking at the data, digging into some of the statistics of when the ice has gone out over time,” the principal said. The Association has every ice out date and time from the contest’s 34-year history.

Miller said the middle school interventionist, Matt Snodgrass, is a statistician, and he’s worked with students on the concept of probability in the contest.

Other ice-out-related education has incorporated science, writing and geography.

Students are filling out the tickets in their classes. Miller said there won’t be any student or staff names on the tickets. The tickets will note “8th-grade class” and so on through the grades at the pre-K to 8th-grade school. Miller said his ticket will note “Main Office”; he would not divulge his guessed date and time.

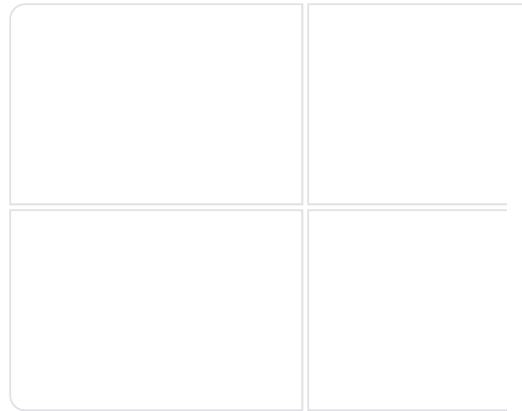
He said a school victory in the contest would be nice, and it would likely be a group decision on how to spend the winnings in the event the ice-out block drops to stop the clock on one of the school’s guesses.

The school will be handing over their filled-in tickets to Dimick today, as Saturday is the deadline for submissions.

Midnight Saturday marks the end of the guessing. Tickets can be purchased online at joespondvermont.com. All mailed guesses must have a postmark not later than April 1. They can be purchased locally at Hastings Store, Larrabee’s Building Supply (West Danville), Azalea Sun,

Bentley's Bakery, Marty's 1st Stop (Danville), Aubuchon Hardware, Natural Provisions, Elks Club (St. Johnsbury), Center Tower Service Station, Dimick Auto Sales (St. Johnsbury Center), Cabot Village Store, Corner Stop-Inn Shop in Walden.

In the contest's history, the earliest date that the ice has gone out is April 5. The latest is May 6. Last year, Laurie Austin, of St. Albans, John Reed, of St. Johnsbury, and Timothy Colgrove, of St. Johnsbury, all won with guesses of April 19 at 4:51 a.m.



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