

# Barnstead names school officer

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Staff Writer

**BARNSTEAD** — Barnstead Elementary's new School Resource Officer has been chosen.

Sue Roberts, a Gilmanton native and resident, will start the position Monday, Principal Stephen O'Neil announced at Tuesday's School Board meeting.

"She has the lion's share of experience and talent," said O'Neil of why Roberts was chosen for the position.

A School Resource Officer is someone who will be highly visible at the school and involved in school and community activities. Other aspects of the position include educating children and being a person children feel comfortable coming to with problems.

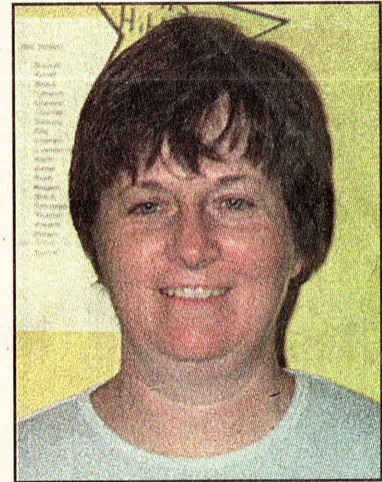
Roberts grew up in Gilmanton and graduated from Belmont High School second in her class. She then went on to attend Colby Sawyer College.

In 1987, Roberts became secretary to the police chief in Gilmanton.

"That was it," she said. That was when she decided to become a police officer, the first female police officer in Gilmanton.

After Gilmanton, Roberts went to Alton, where she's been an officer for the past 9½ years. Roberts has two children (a son age 20, and a daughter age 18) and has been married for 27 years.

Although experienced in all aspects of law enforcement, Roberts said most her of training has focused



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Officer Sue Roberts

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on children, especially in dealing with sexual assault and domestic violence crimes.

"My emphasis has been, over the nine and a half years, in dealing with children in one way or another," Roberts told the board. She added that she has taken about 16 classes as an officer on dealing with children, including a child linguistics class. Roberts said that many of her courses have been in the area of human psychology.

Roberts has been the D.A.R.E. officer in Alton and has acted as sort of an informal resource officer for a number of years, she said.

"This is the sort of thing I've done for a very long time in an informal way," said Roberts of her experience at Alton Central School.

Roberts created and taught a course entitled "You and the Law" for seventh and eighth graders, because she felt that students needed a follow-up to the teachings of D.A.R.E. Roberts also made herself available and known to the students in Alton. She would sit with children at lunch time, attend school events and even participate in events with children. Roberts went rock climbing with kids from the school.

"I'm a little unorthodox," said Roberts of her methods. She added that most officers would not foster such close contact with students.

"They really have to start relating to me," said Roberts, when asked how she felt she could be most effective in the new position.

Roberts said she hopes to reach out to Barnstead Elementary students in the same way she reached out to Alton students.

"It's really interesting to see how they start to trust you," said Roberts. "It comes with interacting with students every day, being a role model."

In response to a question, Roberts said the school would decide whether she would wear her uniform on her new job. Roberts said she wore a uniform when she went to Alton Central, and after a while, students didn't notice the uniform.

Another thing she hopes to accomplish is to reach out to high-school age students who live in Barnstead. After graduating from eighth grade at Barnstead Elementary, students are scattered to several different high schools in several different towns. Roberts told the board she wants to visit these high schools and let former Barnstead Elementary students know that the town still cares about their progress.