

# Letters & Opinion

## Thank You to the Amherst Middle School and Our Wonderful Neighbors

### To the editor:

Our son, Captain Wade Sarraf is currently serving with the Big Red One's HHC Dagger Brigade in Baghdad Iraq at Fort Striker. Wade, his brigade and our family would like to thank the Amherst Middle School and our neighbors for the support and generosity they have given Wade and his team over the last year.

During the Christmas Season, several staff members made donations and collected gifts to send over Wade and his team. Our neighbors got together and sent a Christmas package full of gifts and Christmas treats. Words cannot express the joy and warmth these packages brought to many young soldiers spending their first Christmas far away from home. We appreciate your thoughtfulness and kind deeds as do Wade and his soldiers.

Mrs. Grey's Life Skills Class made cards full of genuine and heart felt of well wishes. These students really got into the moment, their creativity and thoughtfulness made a real impression on the entire AMS Staff. The parents of these students should be proud of their outstanding patriotism.

The Farrington, Bowman, McCormick and Cranney 7th grade team also had their students to create cards for Wade and the troops with whom he serves. Wade gave cards to soldiers who did not receive any packages. Our student's efforts so moved the soldiers they decided to share them with everyone by displaying them all in the mess hall for all to see.

The AMS faculty coordinated donations of snacks and treats to send the troops; the response was so great that we are still able to send a package a week. Students involved in the AMS Canteen donated money from their profits to pay the postage to send the packages to Iraq.

Throughout the school year, Susan [Sarraf] has received words of encouragement and support from the AMS students, faculty and administration. Thank you all so much for your kind deeds, she is honored to be part of the Amherst Middle School and our entire family feels privileged to live in a community that so ardently supports its native sons and daughters.

Finally, we will close with the soldier's request to pass along "props" and a big HOOAH to the AMS students, our neighbors and the AMS staff - that's Army speak for "Roger," "good," "great," "message received," "understood," "acknowledged" "Thank You!"

*The Sarraf Family  
Amherst*

## State Government Continues To Spend

### To the editor:

Every family in New Hampshire is feeling the financial squeeze and all are making spending adjustments. Some citizens are worse off: losing homes and jobs. In addition businesses, charities, towns and cities are also feeling the financial crunch. These are difficult times and it will take years to recover, but we will.

But even in this serious recession, our state government has ignored the fiscal crisis and continued to spend. The 2010 -2011 New Hampshire budget (House Bill #1) increased spending by 7 1/2%. Rather than drastically cutting state costs, here's how Concord solved the problem:

First, the state eliminated revenue sharing with municipalities. Money the state normally shares with municipalities were eliminated; even worse, the funds were cut after the tax payers passed the towns' budget. Now towns must make after-the-fact cuts as a result of expected state funds that will not be coming.

Second, 38 new and increased taxes and fees were passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. No, I am not kidding, 38 new and increased taxes and fees. Tobacco taxes, car registration fees, court fee, rooms and meals tax, gambling winnings tax, campsite tax, vanity plate fee are among the tax and fee increases.

Third, the state will use one-time money to balance this budget. As such, Concord has created a massive hole in the next budget to be passed in July 2011. About \$600 million of one-time money has been used to balance this budget; money that will not be available for the next budget. \$600 million may be a drop in the bucket to California but it is great portion of our state budget.

At a time when citizens are drastically reducing their expenditures, state government spends more, borrows more, and defers more. Don't you wish you could manage your family finances this way? Who voted for the budget? You can look on the NH House web site for the names of all representatives who voted for House Bill #1, the budget.

*Representative Robert Rowe  
Amherst and Milford*

## Letters to The Editor:

*The Amherst Citizen* is eager to serve as a community forum. We welcome your letters, opinions, and commentaries and make every effort to run them in their entirety. We do reserve the right to edit. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the position of the staff of *The Amherst Citizen*.

Please direct your letters, views and commentary to the Editor, *The Amherst Citizen*, P.O. Box 291, Amherst, NH 03031-0291, or e-mail your submission to: news@amherstcitizen.com. We will attempt to run your letter as submitted (space permitting) providing it is signed and phone number is included.

## Trudos Named Amherst Citizens of the Year for 2009

### To the editor:

We are honored to be Amherst Citizens of the Year for 2009 and thank you for this recognition. We are happy to have been able to contribute in some small way to the life of this wonderful town and will try to live up to the meaning of the award in the years to come.

*Sincerely,  
Vern and Chris Trudo  
Amherst*

## SHARE Food Pantry Needs Help

### To the editor:

The SHARE Food Pantry has been a busy place. With the state of our economy, it is no surprise that requests for help with food have greatly increased. From January through June in 2008, there were 466 food pantry appointments. This year, from January through June, there have been 675 appointments. The Pantry is giving out a lot of food and items of necessity.

Thankfully, our community, Amherst, Brookline, Milford and Mont Vernon, is a very caring and generous one. On May 9th, many people donated to the Mail Carriers' Drive enabling the shelves to be well stocked for awhile. Now, with children home from school and the increase of requests for food, the shelves are quickly emptying.

Once again, SHARE is turning to the community for help. Your donations are needed. Items that are hard to keep in stock are: canned fruit, jellies, canned meats, cereal, juices and condiments. Every month SHARE purchases oil, salt, pancake mix and syrup, coffee, catsup, mustard, mayonnaise, flour, sugar and juice. Every week, SHARE purchases milk, eggs, cheese and margarine. Meats are bought on a regular basis also.

SHARE is low on items that cannot be purchased with food stamps, such as: paper towels, large size baby diapers, deodorant, shampoo and conditioner, feminine hygiene products, toothpaste and toothbrushes, razors and items you would find in a medicine cabinet. Every week, SHARE buys laundry detergent and dish soap detergents.

The SHARE Food Pantry does receive government food from USDA but it is sporadic throughout the year and it does not last very long. SHARE also shops at the New Hampshire Food Bank regularly, but at times they are very low on food to offer.

SHARE is asking for your support to help keep the Pantry shelves stocked. Donations can be dropped off at SHARE (1 Columbus Ave) or placed in the SHARE barrels located at Stop & Shop, Shaw's and Market Basket. Gift cards to the local stores are also very helpful.

Thank you for your generosity in the past and for your continued support of the SHARE Food Pantry. You do make a difference in people's lives.

*Gratefully,  
Kathi Beane & Carolyn Momenec  
SHARE Food Pantry Directors*

## "I shudder to think about what might happen next if things don't change."

### To the editor:

It's bad enough that when I walk my little dogs up Mack Hill most people driving by don't slow down or even move over a little bit when passing us. Some of you do have the courtesy to give us, or my son and his friends biking in the area or the women who walk their babies in carriages or my daughter and other runners who go by or the girls riding horses up the street, the right of way and pass cautiously. Thank you! But many, many of you do not. It doesn't seem to matter if the driver is a woman on her cell phone driving her SUV or a teenager or a delivery person with landscape materials or pizza to deliver, everyone seems to be in such a hurry to get up or down the street. Something must be so important that the safety of others just isn't even a concern

Last night was the final straw for me and I pray not a prelude of a more serious situation occurring on Mack Hill. On my way home from work, I passed what initially looked like a bag or something on the road. As I passed, I saw that it was my neighbor's little dog lying in the street. Assuming she was dead, I backed up to go into the neighbor's driveway to inform them. I heard a car passing by and looked in my rearview mirror thinking "please don't hit her again". As the car drove by quickly, and the wind was blowing her fur she put her head up to look around. Horrified, I ran into the street to see if I could help her and yelled for a couple of cars to stop. The little dog, most likely stunned initially when hit and with a very injured leg, tried to scramble up frightened by me trying to help her. She tumbled and tried to run, dragging her leg and somehow managed to run up her driveway to the safety of her home. What is so, so sad to me is not only did someone hit this little dog but also chose to keep going without any attempt to help her or to notify her owners. Also, individuals continued to just drive by her as she lay injured in the street. I know some of you will say that she just shouldn't have been in the street in the first place, and yes, you are very much right about that. However, regardless of why she was in the street, the fact that the person who hit her didn't have the decency to stop nor did those who continued to pass the injured dog is incredible to me. As an animal lover and a very concerned citizen and parent I am so saddened by this whole chain of events. What is it going to take for people to realize what is really important and slow down and show some courtesy to each other? I shudder to think about what might happen next if things don't change.

*D. Clarke  
Amherst*

## Is This The First Step Toward A Budget Increase?

### To the editor:

At a special town meeting (7/14/09) Amherst voters approved hiring a full time police officer under a federal Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) Hiring Recovery grant. What went unnoticed is the overall plan is to hire two officers. The other officer to be hired is to fill a vacancy in the existing police roster.

I have no trouble supporting one additional police officer. Two police officers is over the top. I suppose the town can higher as many police officers as it wants providing it does not exceed the default budget. The question is not a legal one, it is a moral one. If the town hires an extra policeman what operating department gets short changed? Probably road maintenance.

This is the first step toward a budget increase. Once hired, it is unlikely that the officers will ever be un-hired. These permanent costs will be described in a budget proposal as "certain adjustments required by previous action by the town".

Although the meeting was very sparsely attended there were some who spoke eloquently against overspending. I don't think the Selectmen heard them.

*Joe Esposito  
Amherst*

## Rep. Belvin: "I voted no."

### To the editor:

Well, your Legislature, of which I am a member, voted in a "Balanced Budget" for NH Wednesday June 24, 2009, and sent it to the Governor, and it will become law for the next two years from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2011. This two year \$11.6 billion dollar in spending budget (House Bill-1 spending, and House Bill-2 revenue) increases expenditures 7.7% over the current budget, during a time of sharply falling state revenue, which will likely be 10% lower than in 2008. I voted "no."

Here are a few of the 12 fee and other tax increases voted in by the majority party with virtually no Republicans voting in favor: 12.5% increase in rooms and meals, and adding Campgrounds to this tax, \$30 increase, almost doubling, your annual state auto registration fee which can grow to \$75 depending on vehicle weight, application of the Interest and Dividend tax to small business LLC companies in addition to their already 8.5% Business profits Tax and .75% payroll tax. One wonders, without employers, how do you get employees?

The budget gets balanced by over \$500 million of one time money, such as Washington based "stimulus" for Education, and Health and Human Services, and the \$110 million raid on the on the Doctor's Medical Liability Fund. Come 2011 these funds will all be gone, leaving a half billion dollar hole as the starting point for the next budget.

Finally there is the "cost downshift" from the State to the Cities and Towns. \$50 million of revenue sharing has been dropped, the State contribution to the Public Employees Retire Fund drops to 30% from 35% for each employee, leaving the Town and School property tax to make up the difference. Milford and Amherst Selectmen have their work cut out for them. Oh yes, Catastrophic aid for Special Education is under funded as well.

The House Republicans offered \$181.9 million of suggested spending reductions. None were adopted by the majority party. Please remember this budget when November, 2010 rolls around.

*Respectfully,  
Bill Belvin  
State Representative  
Hillsborough 6, Amherst/Milford*

## Flagrant Littering in Our Town

### To the editor:

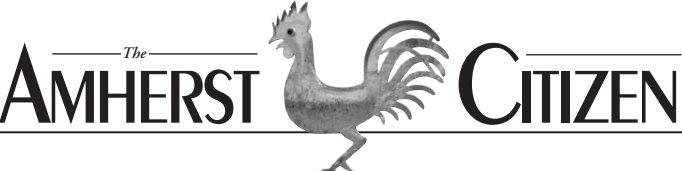
Thank you to Connor P. Sullivan for your letter to the editor "The Truth About Bottled Water" and the waste and litter caused by this unnecessary commodity. I also want to express my thoughts about the flagrant littering in our area and our town. Anyone walking through our many neighborhoods or driving down our roads cannot help to see bottles, cans, food containers and bags of garbage which have been deposited by uncaring people. In that same vein, utility poles are littered with notices of yard sales, moving sales, services offered, lost pets, birthday wishes and the like. This is unsightly makes it our town and area a less desirable place to live.

There are people who walk in their communities and regularly pick up trash. These people are to be commended. Can more be done? Firstly I suggest that social attitudes have to change about the acceptability of littering. I see many people walking their dogs where I live. Some walk in groups with friends. Many carry "doggie bags" to pick up after the pets. They too are to be commended. It is no longer socially acceptable to allow your dog to soil someone's property and that social change has made things better for all of us. But it seems acceptable, by some at least, to litter and by others to see litter on our streets and accept it as the way things are. These attitudes must also change. What better way to teach youngsters that littering is unacceptable than to show them, by example, that we care enough to pick up trash and do not approve of littering.

Secondly, posting notices on utility poles should not be allowed. Why aren't postings considered litter? More times than not signs are left posted until beaten by the weather they fall to the ground.

Finally, education on the unacceptability of recklessly discarding trash should be emphasized by parents, teachers and community leaders, perhaps state wide, perhaps nationally.

*Sincerely,  
Al Trasatti  
Amherst*




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