

Security at Souhegan High School

To the editor:

In the series of recent events, I would like to address the lack of security cameras at Souhegan High School. A few of us attended the Souhegan School Board meeting, Monday, November 17th. While we realize that time is valuable and there are a lot of issues to be covered, being allotted only 3 minutes to discuss a child safety issue seemed insufficient in my opinion. A petition was presented with many signatures which suggests this issue should demand more attention.

Let me first say that blame is not being placed, however we simply would like to review the existing security system which should include the installation of security cameras. Security cameras in the common areas of the school, as well as the parking lots, all "high risk areas" and in the nearby SHS athletic fields. A camera system would assist the school officials in catching the perpetrators of bullying, theft, illegal drug exchange, vandalism and theft in the parking lot, people entering without checking in, and theft within the building, i.e. band equipment, iPods, teachers' purses, wallets, etc. Thousands of dollars in theft occurs at the high school every year. Invariably, the replacement of these stolen items, i.e. iPods, cash, projectors, computers, band equipment, cell phones falls onto the taxpayer and the individual families. Due to the teenage "code of silence", identifying the responsible parties is rarely successful. Step back into those teenage years and reflect on the "negative fallout" a child may be subjected to if they stepped up and identified the responsible party. It is unfair and unrealistic to expect our children to rat on another child.

As in most high schools, an alarming drug culture is able to operate inside the walls of our high school. While this is not unique to any school, it is certainly not prevented by our high school. Requests for drugs are made by one group of children and supplied by another group of children. Because of the unlikelihood of being identified, these activities continue. Both of these groups fail to recognize the school rules and lack sufficient motivation to refrain from having the transactions at the school due to the unlikelihood of ever being identified.

This theme extends into other areas which include vandalism, damage to fields, exterior walls, interior walls, structures and fixtures which cost this community money each time they are damaged. Our community is again asked to foot the bill because a child or a few children, were unable to refrain from breaking school rules.

These events of fighting, bullying, harassment, and domestic problems between partners, while unfortunately typical in our society today, are also present at our high school. These instances spill into the hallways especially when raw teenage emotions take over. Many of these occurrences happen between children who refuse to recognize and respect authority, the school's rules and principles. With cameras in place at the high school, these students could be identified, reprimanded and hopefully given the emotional assistance they need for handling these stressful situation in a positive manner.

False bomb threats and false fire alarms, especially when the New Hampshire Supreme Court is present, pulled by still more members of the SHS

Amherst Veterans Wreath Project

To the editor:

Thank you to the volunteers that helped with the wreath project on Thanksgiving weekend. My family, neighbors, friends and strangers including several veterans assisted in this endeavor. A wreath wht a red velvet bow was placed on each of the graves of veterans in each of the six Amherst cemeteries.

Each year the graves at Arlington National Cemetery are adorned with a wreath and I set a goal to honor Amherst's veterans in a similar way. Amherst Wal-Mart donated the wreaths, Grenon Trading Company of Bedford donated the ribbon, and I made the bows. Wreaths were placed on the graves of over 400 veterans. It is a beautiful and fitting tribute.

In this season of giving and remembrance, my thoughts were to honor our local heroes in their final resting place. It is my hope and intention to make this an annual event.

With thanks to everyone that helped.

Marie Grella
Amherst

community in the past, further demonstrates the lack of respect for SHS social norms held by some members of the SHS community.

The principles of the Souhegan High School are different from most high schools not only in New Hampshire but around the country, however, the problems are not unique. The difference is that other communities help address these very serious problems with cameras and security. Security cameras should be installed at the high school. While it has been the hope over the past years that the members on Community Council would make this request on their own, it is unlikely a child would be able to publically support this measure. Their peers would scrutinize their recommendations especially those peers who engage in the bad behaviors.

While the decision to support cameras and security is unpopular, it will be a "courageous stand", which will eventually be identified as a positive move for generations to come to protect our children, educators, community and property. It would renew "that" respect seems to have gone by the wayside.

The problems mentioned above have been reviewed by several smart community council members. The Souhegan School Board has been apprised of the problem(s) over the years. These problems have been reviewed by several intelligent school administrators and staff as well. Recommendations have been implemented, changes attempted and strategies exhausted. However, the reality is that the problem continues to exist.

Teenage students attending the Souhegan High School who were considering some of the behaviors will likely refrain from such behaviors listed above because of the likelihood of being "caught". As a result of the deterrent factor offered by the presence of a camera, there will be significant reduction in the "dangerous behavior" in those areas "covered" by the view of a camera. This will result in a measurably safer building and will help to identify the minority of children who need correction prior to entering adulthood and prior to making a mistake from which they cannot recover.

The Souhegan High School in Amherst should be a safe place where our children can learn and explore ideas of who, what and where they want to be when they become young adults. It is our responsibility to review and recognize the undeniable truth that cameras are needed at Souhegan. The time is now.

Respectfully,
Karen Tuthill
Amherst

Citizen Feed Back is Important

To the editor:

As we have listened to our Board of Selectmen meetings these last few weeks one thing seems to stand out. In the beginning our Board gave voice to containing spending and keeping taxes low. Department Heads followed these directions and should be applauded for the efforts they have made in constraining increases.

Now some members of our Board are saying things like, "the voters simply need to understand....", "these are needs that just can't wait." to justify increases that were not even requested by the Department Heads.

We, in the Amherst Citizens' Association, thought it would be good to get some feedback before the budget process was too far along. We ask that you please complete this poll and return it as soon as possible so we can inform our Board of Selectmen of the voters' preferences before another budget is defeated. You can find this poll on our website at www.amherstcitizensassociation.org or return the poll to us at: ACA, 7 Sprague Rd., Amherst, NH 03031

The poll includes questions on: Would you like to see your tax bill increase or decrease, what departments would you reduce, what additional services do you think the town should provide, should Amherst adopt a spending cap and should there be an elected Budget committee.

All identifying marks will be stripped from the returns before the polls are tabulated and the results shared with our Board of Selectmen.

Tedd Landon
Amherst Citizens' Association

Thanks to All for Making 2009 Tree Lighting Festival a Success

To the editor,

Thanks to all for making the Amherst Tree Lighting Festival so wonderful: AFD Chief Rick Todd, Matt Conley, Bob Petrella, Mark LaFlamme, Chief Peter Lyon, and all the APD, Mike's Auto, Allison Lockitt and the MOMS Club, Rolf Biggers, Reed Panasiti, Sara Phelps; Kim Whitehead and Congregational Church Choirs, Pat McMullen, and the Amherst Town Band and SHS Acappella Singers, Rich Hart, Sandy Lafleur, Jackie Marshall, Gretchen Pyles, and Library Friends, Girl Scout Elves, Dave Tobin, Tom Grella, and Knights of Columbus, Nancy Head and the Amherst School Board, Roy DeGrandpre and Boy Scout Troop 22, Lloyd Curtis, The Victorian Carolers, and the First Baptist Church, Sue Alger, Marti Warren and Garden Club, Ted Kennedy and Souhegan Congregational Church, Diane Schaumann and Souhegan Valley Chorus, MC Peter Bergin, Marilyn Pelterman, Irene Raissis-Alton, Peggy Silva, and Girl Scouts, Cub Scout pack # 613, and Team Earley, who came together to give us this wonderful Tree Lighting Festival...and to the Citizen for such great coverage!

In 2010, Amherst will have a year-long celebration for its 250th birthday, so next year's Tree Lighting Festival will be extra exciting. If you live in Amherst and you sing a song that you love, for a holiday that you celebrate at this time of year, such as Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, The Solstice, Las Posadas, etc, please contact me to be a part of next year's festival and ceremony!

After Santa Claus lit the Richard Crocker Memorial Tree, we thanked Police, Fire and Rescue personnel who serve, during the holidays and further, those from Amherst who serve in the military and the foreign service, and who cannot celebrate the holidays with their spouses, children, parents; their families, because they are on duty. We saluted:

1. Lt. Christopher Barker, son of Keith and Deborah Barker, serving in Iraq.
2. Warrant Officer 1 Matthew J Crowley, son of Michele and John Crowley, Ft. Rucker, Enterprise, Alabama, attending flight school.
3. Senior Airman Scott Fedas, Jr, son of Scott Fedas and grandson of Jack and Carol Fedas, serving in Afghanistan.
4. USAF Tech Sergeant Amy L. McIntosh, daughter of Jim and Sue McIntosh, serving at Lackland AFB, Texas.
5. USAF Airman First Class David J. McIntosh, son of Jim and Sue McIntosh, deploying to Iraq (today) December 13, 2009.
6. Army Lt. Colonel David Tiedemann, son Of Joanne and Charlie Tiedemann, brother of Scott and Michael, based in Italy with wife Regina, children Owen, Shannon and Emma, serving NATO, but departing the day after Christmas to Afghanistan. His last family holiday at home in NH was in 1999.

We also want to add that we hope those whom we named last year, Ensign Joanna Bridge, Lt. Colonel Kyle B. McCarthy, Commander Doug Belvin, Lance Corporal Dustin C. Jones, Sgt. Ryan Philbrick, 1st LT Michael F. Cuddy, and Green Beret Neal Benson, will be able to be home for their holidays this year.

We also want to note that for the second year in a row, all 390 veterans who are at rest in the six cemeteries of Amherst have graves that are decorated with evergreen wreaths and red bows. Marie Grella organizes the effort. Walmart donates wreaths, Grenon's donates the bows which she makes. She then organizes a team of veterans, townsfolk and asks Maggie Paul at SHS to organize students to lay the wreaths at each grave.

In their honor and with gratitude, the ceremony closed with the singing of God Bless America.

Thanks to all who worked to make this day a success; heartiest thanks to Dr. Mary Jennings our SAU 39 Superintendent who gave us a lovely site to hold our ceremony when we lost our old stage due to wear and age. The Brick School Steps were a wonderful place to celebrate the lighting of the tree!

Ann C. Bergin, Chair

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SAU 39
Amherst, NH

Souhegan High School is a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools and continues to use the Ten Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools as one of our guiding documents to serve the 970 students of Amherst and Mont Vernon, NH. We also are members of the National School Reform Faculty (NSRF) and offer Critical Friends Groups (CFGs) as our primary professional development initiative. Our other guiding documents are the Souhegan Mission Statement, the Souhegan Six, and the Souhegan Learner Expectations.

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PRINCIPAL

SOUHEGAN HIGH SCHOOL

The District seeks a leader with the following:

- Student centered leadership.
- Well grounded in secondary curriculum and staff professional development; an advocate for high quality regular and special education programs; skilled at supervision and evaluation of faculty and staff; well organized and collaborative managerial skills; good working knowledge of budgets, contractual/legal obligations, and technology.
- Excellent communication skill; accessible; well-developed collaborative skills with other educators, students, their families, and the community.

The application deadline is **January 4, 2010.**

DEAN OF FACULTY

SOUHEGAN HIGH SCHOOL

The District seeks an enthusiastic, articulate, creative, student-oriented and caring leader with the following:

- Certification/License and 5 years experience/training in Administration.
- Experience with supervision/evaluation; curriculum coordination; and implementation of school-wide initiatives.
- Excellent communication skills; accessible; well-developed collaborative skills with other educators, students, their families, and the community.

The application deadline is **January 11, 2010.**

For position requirements and information on Souhegan including how to apply for this position, please visit **www.sprise.com** and **www.sprise.com/shs/**

Please forward your information to: **Dr. Mary Athey Jennings, Superintendent, SAU #39, PO Box 849, Amherst, NH 03031**
Email: supt@sprise.com EOE



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