Letters & Opinion

Infanti Seeks Reelection

To the editor:

My name is George Infanti and I am seeking reelection to the Amherst Board of Selectmen. I have been a member of the Board for the last six years and feel honored to have served my fellow citizens and made a positive difference in the governance of our Town. Your Board has undertaken a number of important projects recently and I wish to help guide them to fruition. Our recreation programs have grown greatly in the last few years and a master plan is being formulated to guide them in the future. The outcome of this will help us plan for the next ten years. Our roads are in dire straights and need to be upgraded and repaired. This project had begun and hopefully with the voters support will continue. Peabody Mill Environmental Center has grown and become an excellent resource for our town and I wish to continue to see it improve. Our highway department has outgrown its facility and a study group has been formed to chart a course for the future. These are but a few of the projects I wish to continue to work on as your Selectman.

I have committed over 30 years to community service within this area as well as building a reputation as a successful small business owner. I have always been readily available to the citizens, and take great pride in the fact that I carefully listen to all points of view before making a decision that I feel is best for the town. I wish to continue using these skills to keep Amherst a special place to live and raise a family. I would ask for your support in my bid for reelection on March 9. I am listed last on the ballot and am first for Amherst. Thank you in advance and I look forward to seeing you on March 9, election day.

Sincerely, George D. Infanti Amherst

Thank You For Caring And Also For Sharing

To the editor:

Once again the people of our community showed their concern for their neighbors in need. During the recent holiday season, Milford Stop & Shop offered a Food for Friends program. Shoppers were invited to donate to a local charity as they checked out their purchases. Many of you participated in this program and because of your generosity, Mike Peters, from Stop & Shop, was able to present a check for nearly \$2000 to the SHARE Food Pantry. Thank you to Stop & Shop for its continuous support of the SHARE Food Pantry. Thank you to everyone who participated in this program. Requests for food assistance continue to be on the rise, so your donations to the pantry are truly appreciated. Thank you for caring and sharing.

Gratefully, Carolyn Momenee & Kathi Beane SHARE Food Pantry co-directors

Our Cost Per Student Is Extremely High By National Standards

To the editor:

Elections are approaching for both school budgets and school board. Are you aware we currently pay \$5,000 - \$10,000 more per student than our state or national average? We should ask what we get for the additional \$5,000 - \$10,000 we pay per student.

The school budgets were featured in a recent Amherst Citizen and once

again I was struck by the enormous per pupil expenditures we are looking at for Amherst schools. While I fully appreciate the outstanding job our teachers do with our children, I can't help but wonder if we could maintain our high level of education with not quite such an enormous per pupil cost. Despite losing 15% of our student population, our budgets continue to rise significantly.

Proposed Budget from Amherst School Board: \$15,581 per pupil. Proposed Budget from Souhegan Coop School Board: \$20,440 per pu-

pil.

Our cost per student is extremely high by national standards. The US

Our cost per student is extremely high by national standards. The US Census Bureau released "Per Pupil Spending Amounts by State" in July of 2009. Here are the most current figures:

- Average spent by public schools in the US: \$9,611 per pupil.
 The lowest per pupil expenditure is \$5,683 in Utah.
- The lowest per pupil expenditure is \$5,000 in Otan.
 The highest per pupil expenditure is \$15,981 in New York.
- New Hampshire rates 15th with an average of \$10, 723 per pupil.

At \$15,581 and \$20,440 per student, we have one of the most expensive school systems in America.

Kevin Nunley Amherst

Yet More Recreation Fields?

To the editor:

Time for Taxpayers to Take a Stand! In this time of recession, record unemployment and home foreclosures, how can our town fathers possibly ask the taxpayers of Amherst to spend precious resources on yet more recreational fields? This town needs to act responsibly toward its citizens and find ways to reduce taxes not increase them! The facts must be considered when asking residents to again fund a tax increase to purchase and maintain yet more recreational fields.

Another "Land Grab"! The Bean grant has generously added replacement fields abutting Souhegan High School with the replacement of the cemetery fields in mind. The Brewster Fields are partially under water during the spring when they are needed most . The land is designated as "wetlands/floodplain". The Brewster fields are also located in the center of a high traffic residential area. The planning board has voted to restrict the usage of these fields for all of the reasons previously stated. Will the town choose not to abide by its own Planning Board recommendations?

The proposed purchase price of these fields is nearly three times the current owner's purchase price. How can this be? How can one non-resident's investment appreciate while taxpayers are experiencing rapid property devaluation? Who is negotiating this outrageous purchase price of \$625,000? This property has also been on the brink of receivership by lenders throughout the past year. How can we invest in more recreational fields and ignore the safety of our students? There are still no sidewalks in front of Souhegan High School and our Middle School to protect our students in this high traffic area. Will a tragedy have to occur before we act responsibly to protect our children's safety? How can the planning board or any other group honestly say that additional recreation fields are a priority given the facts. Taxpayers must unite and insist that our "Town Fathers" act responsibly by voting against the purchase of additional recreational fields.

Mike and Sally Fairweather Amherst

Vote For a Fresh Perspective: Caroline DeVore for Selectman

To the editor:

Tuesday, March 9th is election day — an opportunity for the Citizens of Amherst to fill two open Selectman seats for the next 3 years. I am eager to join this Board to lend new perspectives and experiences. I also believe I can make a difference by adding my experience to the Board's and by helping this team set a new standard for collaboration and community communication

Amherst has been my family's home for 20 years. My husband Erich and I have three daughters; Julia, a Junior at SHS, Hannah, a 7th grader at AMS (and avid member of the Lady Eagles basketball team), and 6 month old Helena. While our careers originally brought us to NH, Amherst has truly become our family's Hometown. For 25 years my career has been focused in the technology industry where I have held senior executive roles in engineering, marketing and operations. I have had the privilege to serve on executive boards for Compaq, IBM and i2 Technologies and I have successfully planned and managed budgets that exceed the size of our Town's budget. I am also a small business owner and understand the challenges that this economy places on owner-operated businesses as well as on each of our household budgets.

Like you, Erich and I are concerned about the disparity we see between our tax bill and our home's diminished value; even modest increases in Town spending require explanation and deeper understanding these days. I am concerned about the Selectmen's inability to explain and rally support from the Town for their new budget, and I am concerned that the 2010 proposals seem to vary only slightly from the 2009 and 2008 proposals that voters did not support.

I want to be your Selectman because I believe I can make a difference as a member of this Board.

I have a Fresh Perspective on the core issues and challenges our Town is facing. For members who have been in office for 3, 4 or even 5 terms, I applaud your dedication and service to the Town. I also believe in the benefits that new perspectives bring to any governing office. Just as new technology drives innovation, I think that combining new ideas with existing Board know-how will drive innovation locally.

I have the Leadership Skills and experience to work collaboratively, seeking all points of view to insure that I make the most informed decisions possible. I am experienced at building consensus and believe that collaboration among our Town's committees and with other Town and State Boards is a key to our success.

I am a Communicator and have a professional background in marketing and communications. The Selectmen should be the Chief Communication Officers of our Town delivering more than a "yes/no" vote-count on key issues

My goals as Selectman are to:

- Increase communication and collaboration among our Town boards, committees and the community. The Select Board should take the lead in moving beyond low-attendance deliberative sessions and set the bar for communication with the community that is positively unparalleled.
- Review both the open space land purchasing program and the recreational land management program to better align these two efforts with our current economic and Town development realities.
- 3) Put Renewable Energy on the table as a viable path to cost saving. We should put a focus on an "Amherst Recycles" program and evaluate programs to reduce our Citizen's fuel and energy expenses.
- 4) Comprehensively review the road construction and maintenance programs (and bonds) that have eluded voter support for two years. Let's review this \$15M / 4-year commitment, help the voters understand the program and build confidence that this spending is fiscally responsible.

In this contested election, I need your help to make a difference. You can reach me with any questions or comments via email: carolinedevore@ymail.com or post a question to my Facebook Page: http://bit.ly/devoreselectman. I ask for your vote for Selectman on Tuesday, March 9th.

Respectfully Caroline DeVore Grohse-Holz Amherst

Marilyn Peterman for Selectman: She Has The Courage for Dynamic Leadership

To the editor:

We live in challenging and difficult times, and we need a Selectman with experience, imagination, energy, and the courage to make the right decisions that will steer our town and its citizens safely through the difficult economic problems we face today.

Marilyn moved to Amherst 33 years ago, just about the time I did. She, just as I, found that Amherst was the kind of town we were looking for. We both knew very soon that the New England spirit of volunteerism was a way of life in our new town. She jumped right in, volunteering, working, embracing public service in so many ways, and became a leader during the years of Amherst's most rapid growth as a community that attracted people by its quality of life.

Board of Selectmen Proposals (1) Evaluate adequacy, efficiency, and cost effectiveness of Dept of Public Works
(2) Study Pay-as-You Throw Trash System to increase recycling, and re-

duce trash hauling costs;

(3) Board of Selectmen must promote clean energy, create more energy efficiency, and thus reduce costs.

Please join me in voting to elect a Selectmen who will get more done for less, Vote Marilyn Peterman.

Howard Morse Amherst

Peterman Asks for Your Support

To the editor:

After attending the town deliberative session, I believe that Amherst needs a Selectman with experience and can begin the job on day one.

I moved to Amherst a little more than thirty-three years ago. I began my community involvement on the Planning Board. About 30 years ago.

In 1987, I was elected to one of six terms on the BOS. I served with some very intelligent and unselfish people. Our dedication came with no strings, just the need to help and give back to the town we love. I enjoyed and listening to Amherst's citizens at the Post Office, at the "dump" or anywhere else we met.

The dedicated town employees taught me "the ropes". The employees deserve your appreciation. Compared to other towns our size, we have fewer employees than most of them.

I helped formulate budgets that reflected the will of the people in good bad economic times. One year, we met one Sunday, "the Sunday Massacre" to wring out more dollars from each line.

Serving for three years as chair on the Souhegan High School Finance Advisory Committee, I added to my budgeting experience.

I successfully helped negotiate four police contracts.

During my terms, the town purchased the Bragdon Farm, renovated the Town Hall; launched our Communications Center and establish funds for land purchases.

Amherst is not an island unto itself. As a volunteer at NRPC and NHMA Center, I lent Amherst's voice to important decisions. I met leaders from around the state and learned how their towns and cities provided services and dealt with issues.

I actively lobbied for state education money for Amherst. I was asked to serve on Governor Shaheen's Best Schools Council and I chaired the Regional Water District Charter Commission and represent Amherst on Merrimack Valley Regional Water District.

A Selectman can only act as part of a majority. But, it is the responsibility of each member to provide leadership; gather facts, listen to all, ask the right questions and make tough decisions. Selectmen should inspire confidence; Selectmen should also be able to communicate effectively every tool to help citizens understand the issues. Selectmen should be creative and proactive in proposing how to provide the best services while spending tax dollars wisely.

The ability to craft a responsible budget is not unlike pushing a large bolder up hill. It is hard work. I applaud the Selectmen for this year's budget. However, in reading over the Warrant Articles, I wonder if some should be in the budget?

A required revaluation in two years will cost us approximately \$125,000 whether or not there is money set aside. The cost of vehicles for Fire and Emergency Medical services continues to rise at a dizzying pace.

For the first time there is a warrant for Health and Human Services Agencies. These agencies help Amherst residents that cannot help themselves. In the New England tradition of neighbors helping neighbors, it is a small price to pay for those who from time to time are in need. Please vote for Article 40

I am asking for support and vote on March 9th.

Sincerely Marilyn Peterman

Vote "No" on Article 24

To the editor:

We are urging taxpayers to vote "no" on warrant article 24, not because we don't support providing the fields, but rather because this is not a well thought out option.

The 2006 town assessment on this land is \$342,500. How does the seller justify an asking price of \$625,000?

Our concern is that once again voters are being asked to pay for land before the responsible parties have done their homework. I would urge voters to question the viability of the land for recreation purposes. Brewster Fields on Stearns Road is plagued with flooding issues every year.

Vote "No" to keep looking for a better option.

Jim and Jackie Kempf Amherst

No On Article #24

To the editor:

Once again the taxpayers of Amherst are being asked to purchase a piece of property at an inflated price. The warranty article to purchase the property off Stearns road has no merit on three points. One, the petitioners presented no contrete evidence that the purchase is critical in these hard times, just statement and dire threats of cancelled programs. I seldom see the Cemetary fields used except for twice on a Sunday when I watched my niece play soccer. My niece from Nashua, playing with other teams from Nashua, not Amherst. No hard evidence was presented addressing need. Secondly, the petitioners have excecuted a puchase and sales agreement for \$625,000 of taxpayers money for a piece of property assessed at \$300,000 which has been in foreclosure at least twice as reported in several local papers. The means the property could be purchased for less then the assesed value. If you were purchasing a foreclosed property would you hand over twice plus or would you work with the bank? Additionally, just as last year, there is no current appraisal on the property as admitted in the deliberative session. Finally, this piece of property is under 4 plus feet of water every spring. Soccer fields survive this quite nicely, but a baseball field, as yet to be built at an as yet to be determined cost, would be in the middle of Stearns road every spring, along with assorted benches, soccerballs and other floatables. This warrant article is a want, not a need, in these hard economic times and warrants a NO vote. We're being asked to pay more than we should for land we don't need.

Paul Martin Amherst



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