

Letters & Opinion

Serving the Town of Amherst – The ACA Way

To the editor:

Thank you Jeanne Ludt for opening the curtain on the Amherst Citizens Association (ACA).

In 2007, John Behn, Rick Crocker, Neal Foley, Tedd Landon and Shelley Stama of the Ways & Means (W&M) committee resigned. Subsequently the Amherst Citizen Association was formed, which, according to their website is a “Loosely organized group of Amherst residents that are interested in understanding the responsibilities, limits, operational processes, etc of Town government.”

Lofty goals – but hard to see how that can be done without attending the selectmen’s meetings. They rarely attend. Viewing the meetings at home on cable doesn’t allow any interaction with the selectmen or with W&M.

But that does not stop them from publishing their voter guide! That’s the brightly colored single sheet insert that comes to your house in the Amherst Citizen (the paper) with no time left before election to correct or comment in print on it’s content. I know election time has past, but now is a good a time as any to address the destructive nature of their 2012 guide.

- Operating Budget. The guide states that the ACA opposes the budget – “We do not believe the Board has adequately explored opportunities to reduce costs for Town operations by increasing efficiency and potentially outsourcing some services.” Suggestions on how to accomplish these ideas would have been constructive and might even have initiated some good discussion at a selectmen’s meetings during budget season. But that didn’t happen.

The guide snidely continues - “Instead, they are adding two new employees, but only for half of FY13. We assume these new employees will be kept on permanentlyat a much higher cost to the taxpayer.” The board chose to hire the two new employees in January thus halving the increase to the FY13 budget. There was no doubt that the intention of the board was to keep both hires. The ACA knew this and yet their slanted words made it sound like the selectmen were trying to fool the voters. And more – “Management by crisis is not an efficient management style and not one that lends itself to long term stability.” What is the crisis? Where is the instability? The comment simply doesn’t apply.

- Computer Systems and Communication Center Capital Reserves Funds. The ACA supports these warrants “...but questions why the amount has tripled from last year.” Why didn’t someone come to a budget meeting and ask?

- Lease/Purchase of Rescue/Pumper for Fire Dept. The ACA continues to oppose the fire department’s request to replace the 1987 pumper. Is this a vendetta of some sort?

- Road Maintenance. The comments on why they oppose the \$200,000 road maintenance article defy comprehension. The voters passed the \$15 million dollar bond because they saw the need. The money needed for the bridge repairs is a necessity. So the “Where does it end?” comment supports my contention that this is just an angry little group purposely causing controversy. Their motive?

And their best comment of all? “This appears to be another example of crisis management which is anything but efficient.” There is no reacting to a crisis. The need to add money to the road maintenance budget was recommended by the Road Funding Analysis Committee in 2009 and was well publicized.

I have attended about 90% of the selectmen’s meetings over the past 12 years. The selectmen always carefully consider each budget – recognizing the importance and responsibility to balancing spending/need/economy. They should be applauded, not mocked. Disagreeing with the board’s decisions is one thing. Disseminating skewed, partial, misleading, slanted, doubt-casting information full of innuendo to support their opinions is another. Again, what is the motive?

Just how big is this group? At the February 29th selectmen candidate’s forum sponsored by the ACA, of the few in attendance perhaps four could be identified as part of the ACA - Maryelizabeth and Rick Crocker, Tedd Landon and Mark Vincent.

If that colored paper appears at your house in 2013, please also read the voter guide published by the selectmen and if there are questions on differing opinions - call a selectman, the town administrator or a ways and means member.

Liz Overholt
Amherst

Closed for Vacation

The offices of *The Amherst Citizen* will be closed from Wednesday, June 27 through Sunday July 22. Visit us online: www.amherstcitizen.com to view the current or archived issues, or for other information.

Have a Happy 4th!

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.

To Preserve, Protect And Defend

To the editor:

Too often I have heard parts of the Presidents oath of office misstated using words such as “support, protect and defend the Constitution” or just simply “protect and defend” in describing the sacred responsibilities of the highest office in the country. The actual oath is “I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. These three words are the central theme of the Presidents responsibilities while in office. They cover all aspects of the job including the boundaries or limits as described in the Constitution itself. So in executing the duties of this office, these three verbs are fundamental in determining a course of action. It does not hint of only enforcing those things you or your political affiliates believe is right or “fair”, only that you will preserve them all to the best of your abilities. Such an oath of office is given to all members of the government as well and should be part of any analysis.

Let’s start with the basic definition of these terms to see what the implications are in terms of our current republic. Let’s start with preserve: 1. To maintain in safety from injury, peril, or harm; 2. To keep in perfect or unaltered condition, seems simple enough. The last two verbs are defined as follows: protect: to shield from infringement or restriction, defend: to maintain or support in the face of argument or hostile criticism. It would seem that the members of our government, regardless of political party, pledge to fully accept all aspects of the Constitution as the law of the land in “unaltered condition”.

Such an oath, in comparison to today’s progressive ideals of moving beyond the Constitution by re interpreting and defining even the basic premise of our rights based on special interests and political correctness, would seem to be incongruous. The change mechanisms of the Constitution requiring debate and approval by the people are obviously not considered suited for the needs of the current political realities. It would seem logical that such people would NOT swear such an oath. If they did, how could they in good conscience preserve, let alone protect and defend, the very guiding document which they admit is “outdated”? As Albert Einstein once said, “Anyone who doesn’t take truth seriously in small matters cannot be trusted in large ones either.” It would be the same as if our government leaders were members of secretive organizations whose doctrines and allegiances were in conflict with our Constitution. Wouldn’t that bring into question the sincerity of their oath or at least the question of which one they really support?? O, wait, they already do that. For the last 70 plus years, our government, from the President on down, has been over populated with card carrying members of the CFR (Council on Foreign Relations), the Trilateral Commission, the Bilderbergers and Skull and Bones. In general these organizations do not agree with our Constitutional republic and would like to remove U.S sovereignty. If you would like more detail, please read “The True Story of the Bilderbergers” by Daniel Estulin, “The Brotherhood of Darkness” by Dr. Montith or “The Creature from Jekyll Island” by G. Edward Griffin. The references in these writings will illustrate my concern for members of our government who belong to such secret groups.

As J.P. Morgan once said, “A man always has two reasons for doing anything: a good reason and the real reason.” What is the real reason for swearing an oath to one document when your allegiance is with another? As that idol of our current political leaders Saul Alinsky has forwarded in his writings, the ends justify the means. In this case the ends are referring to the end of the sovereign Constitutional Republic which has proven to be the brightest hope of free men the world over.

Don Bessler
Amherst

Ms. Ludt’s Book Club Invited “to give it a go”

To the editor:

The Amherst Citizens Association finds it interesting that Jeanne Ludt feels that the “truth” must be revealed about the ACA, as if we have been trying to keep our organization, its history, and its mission a secret. To the contrary, this information is available on our web site www.amherstcitizenassociation.org for all to see. We also meet regularly at Souhegan High School and anyone can attend and add their voice to the discussion. Email us at amherstmatters@gmail.com to be added to our already sizeable list of subscribers. Ms. Ludt has emailed us in the past seeking to know more about the ACA and was cordially invited to join us at our meetings. She has never done so. As for the Selectmen’s meetings, they are televised and available online so an empty meeting room certainly does not mean nobody is watching. ACA members are watching and we contact the Board of Selectmen and the Town Administrator on a regular basis when we have questions or comments. ACA members occasionally appear before the Board to discuss important issues. Most recently we presented ideas for the default budget which we discussed with Board members prior to the public hearing. Our suggestions were presented as just that – suggestions from concerned taxpayers for our elected officials to take into account as they made their decisions. Our authority is our first amendment right to free expression and nothing more. We have never told anyone how to vote. We are providing another point of view to add to the knowledge base of voters when they go to the polls. These voters have noticed that the Board of Selectmen and Ways & Means have been voting in “lockstep” for nearly every spending article that has been proposed. The ACA brought this to light by publishing the total spending increase on the entire warrant. For the last 4 years our voter guide has offered recommendations that voters can choose to follow or not. As it happens, the voters have agreed with ACA an average of 85% of the time, and agreed with our recommendations on the proposed budgets 100% of the time. Neither the Board of Selectmen, nor Ways & Means can claim that sort of success rate. However, if Ms. Ludt’s book club would like to give it a go, they are certainly welcome to publish their own guide and let the voters decide whose opinions they agree with.

Mark Vincent
Amherst Citizens Association

Third Grade History Week Depends on Parent Volunteers

To the editor:

Each spring nearly 140 third-grade Amherst students spend one week learning about Amherst History. This year’s week commenced with unseasonably cold temperatures and buckets of rain. The soggy weather did not deter the eight and nine year olds as they stepped off for a week of fun and lots of learning. The success of our activities were due to the many volunteers who enthusiastically jumped on board to show the children their home, lead them on a museum tour, discuss a town building, make a historical craft, or stand at the Civil War monument to bring an Amherst war veteran alive. It is with sincere thanks that we recognize Jim O’Mara, Bob Schaumann, Carolin Sanchez, Carol Lyons, Anne Krantz, Peter Bergin, Keith Hunt, Will and Jeanne Ludt, Superintendent Peter Warburton, Mike and Mickey Larivee, Sarah Hydorn, Sue Ruggiero, Amy LaPointe, Bob Korkuc, Susan Fischer, Bonnie Knott, Romi Krolsch, Jackie Marshall, Nathalie Marshall, Joe and Wendy Taggart and Robert Allwarden for their involvement during Third Grade History week. Additionally, Shannon Galinson, Tracy Veillette, Helen Rowe and Sue and Dave Clark deserve an immense amount of praise for graciously opening their historic homes for 25-minute interior tours that illustrated a full story of Amherst history to the children. You are too numerous to name individually but as always, large events like this are not possible without parent volunteers. Thank you for taking time away from work and other duties to assist your child’s teacher and the planning committee during the week’s activities. Finally, thank you to the Citizen for the great photos and write-up in the last issue.

Best regards,
Amy Littlefield
Lisa Mazur
Perrin Enriquez
Amherst

My Progressive Values

To the editor:

Being born into a hard working, Italian immigrant family, I count myself among the fortunate. My grandparents immigrated to the US after WWI, seeking a better life for their families. I was raised one of 5 children and learned values like: education, hard work, and helping those less fortunate. These were not unusual values but seemed to represent those of our communities and nation.

Of these values, education was extremely important. Although I saved as much as possible from my odd jobs, the government helped me enormously by providing the GI Bill after the Vietnam war. I, therefore, grew up expecting local, state, and Federal governments to help citizens by crafting legislation through a process involving good will and compromise. Why else would people run for elected office if not to help ordinary folks?

Now as a grandparent, I watch our ultra Conservative NH Legislature, elected in 2010, strike down or reduce nearly every program aimed at helping ordinary people. It gives me cause to stop and reflect upon NH’s political condition. We’ve seen right-wing attacks on: children – who find it easier to buy cigarettes while subsidies for health care have been reduced or eliminated; the poor - face cuts in Medicaid and other indigent care programs while NH Conservatives battle to strike down and weaken the Affordable Care Act (ObamaCares); the under educated - who experience reduced funding for programs from pre-K through higher education; and voters - who will face more barriers to exercise their constitutional voting rights while towns will be burdened with the costs to implement these cumbersome and unnecessary rules

All while the wealthy live unaffected. All in the name of budgetary discipline?

I believe at a minimum State & Federal governments have an obligation to provide affordable access to health care for all residents, safety nets for the poor, adequate 21st century education for our children, and unimpeded access to the polls for all qualified voters. We can see most of these values in the writings and practices of our main stream religions. Why then does “The Right” focus its energy almost solely on cutting taxes for the wealthy?

The argument that reduced taxation leads to job growth is clearly a false rationale given the job growth history of the Clinton (22 million) vs. Bush (2 million) years.

We should all reflect on the type of nation we wish to pass on to our children when making our voting choices.

RJ Iannuzzelli
Amherst

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Swimming Pools

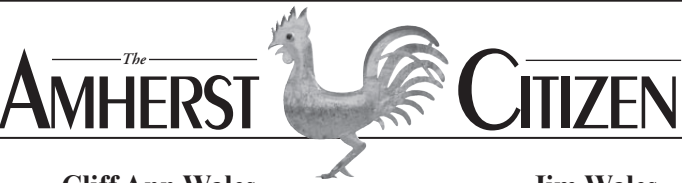
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120 Route 101A
Amherst, NH
(603) 880-8471



Cliff Ann Wales
Publisher & Editor

Jim Wales
Advertising & Production

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e-Mail: news@amherstcitizen.com

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How to contact us:

Phone: 603-672-9444

Fax: 603-672-8153

Mail: PO Box 291
Amherst, NH 03031

eMail:

News: news@amherstcitizen.com

Ads: ads@amherstcitizen.com

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