# Letters & Opinion

# Heartfelt Thanks to Volunteers at **Our Elections This Year**

To the editor:

As we start a new year, we look back to the exemplary examples of small town democracy in action we saw in Amherst in 2012. Every 4 years we have a flood of elections: the Presidential Primary, March Town Election, September State Primary, and November Presidential. We take over the gym and parking lots at Souhegan, and through pure volunteer power provide our fellow citizens with a clean, fair, efficient, and peaceful voting pro-

Any election requires scores of volunteers to make it happen – having four in a single year, two with huge turnouts, brings out the best in our volunteer culture. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the citizens who have volunteered at our elections this year, and we wish you the peace and rest that the single-election year of 2013 brings us. As a Ballot Clerk, Deputy Supervisor of the Checklist, or Deputy Moderator, you showed that Amherst is a great place to live, and great place to vote, in 2012. We look forward to seeing you helping again in March at the Town Election.

> With Thanks, Nancy Demers, Amherst Town Clerk Lavern Fucci, Amherst Deputy Town Clerk Steve Coughlan, Amherst Town Moderator

#### **State Senate Update**

# **Organization Day**

Organization Day for the New Hampshire legislature is the first Wednesday in December on even-numbered years; it is the day when all state representatives and senators are sworn in and start their duties. The first order of business on Organization Day, after senators have been sworn in, is for them to choose a president to lead the state Senate for the next two years. I was honored to be chosen once again by my fellow senators to be Senate president.

The selection process itself was overseen by another state senator with local connections, as Sen. Bob Odell of Lempster was our temporary presiding officer until a president was chosen. Sen. Odell grew up in Milford and is a 1961 graduate of Milford High School, which I believe was the last class to use the old high school building on Elm Street. In fact, Sen. Odell told me they actually held their graduation ceremony at the "new" high school on West Street, even though they had never had any classes there.

Being Senate president gives me many additional responsibilities. An important early task for the president is to determine which senators are on which policy committees. There are eleven policy committees in the Senate and each committee has a major area of focus such as commerce or transportation or finance. Decisions on committee assignments are important because every bill that goes through the Senate has to go to a policy committee for a public hearing and subsequent deliberation. The committee then must make a formal recommendation on the bill to the full Senate. It is important, then, to have people familiar with the committee's focus area and/or those who have an interest in that area serving on the committee.

The extra responsibilities of being Senate president do come with a pay increase some may consider significant, twenty five dollars. The Senate president and House speaker each receive \$125 per year, while other senators and representatives receive \$100 per year. This rate of pay has been enshrined in the New Hampshire ( 1890. Prior to 1890, legislators were paid \$5 per day while the legislature was "in session," even on days when there were no meetings. There were no controls on how long the legislative session year lasted and, in the years following the Civil War, the session year grew longer and longer until the legislators were makingalmost three times the average per capita income of New Hampshire residents. The people of New Hampshire did not like that arrangement so the 1890 amendment to the constitution was passed, setting legislators' salaries at \$100 per year.

When the \$100 annual salary was established in 1890 it represented about 25% of the average per-capita income. An equivalent percentage today would yield about \$11,500, but the \$100 figure itself was used in the Constitution and has remained unchanged. It is certainly interesting to know the history behind some of the inner workings of the

If you have any questions or concerns about state government or legislation, please feel free to contact me. My office number is 603-271-8472 and my email address is Peter.Bragdon@leg.state.nh.us. Please be sure to include your mailing address in any messages, as messages from residents of district 11 towns (Amherst, Merrimack, Milford and Wilton) receive the highest priority.

> Peter Bragdon NH State Senator, District 11 Amherst, Merrimack, Milford and Wilton

# Letters To the editor:

Published 22 times a year on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday of each Month,

Phone: 672-9444 Fax: 672-8153 e-Mail: news@amherstcitizen.com

on the last Tuesday July and August, and the 1st and 3rd Tuesday

in December. (Dates may vary near Holidays or elections.)

*The Amherst Citizen* is eager to Please direct your letters, views 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.

**Cliff Ann Wales** 

Publisher & Editor

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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.

Jim Wales

Advertising & Production

# Parking Ban – In Effect from November 1 to April 1

#### **REVISED ORDINANCE**

Pursuant to the provisions of RSA Chapter 41, Section 11 and RSA Chapter 47, Section 17, the following regulation is hereby established for the Town of Amherst.

From November 1st to April 1st of each year, no person shall park any motor vehicle on any public highway at any time in such a manner as to impede snow plowing, snow removal or road surface treat-

Information regarding vehicles found impeding winter operations by the Town of Amherst Department of Public Works or independent contractors engaged by the Director of Public Works will be turned over to the Amherst Police Department for disposition.

Any vehicle parked in violation may be authorized to be towed by the Chief of Police or his designee. Any vehicles towed shall be stored and released to the owner only upon payment of the cost of towing (as established by the towing firm).

Any person violating the parking ban shall be subject to a penalty not to exceed \$50.00 for each offence in addition to any other costs associated with the removal of the vehicle.

#### Placing snow upon certain roads and streets Obstructions and Encroachments

Any person who shall put or place or cause to be put or placed any snow or ice upon the surface of the traveled portion of any Class V or Class IV highway or town-maintained portion of a Class II highway for any purpose, shall be guilty of a violation if a natural person, or guilty of a misdemeanor of any other person except with written Town approval by the Director of Public Works or his designated

Any person violating these by-laws shall be subject to a penalty not exceeding the following: (1) First Offense – Written warning (2) Second Offense - \$50.00 penalty (3) Third Offense - \$100 penalty.

This ordinance shall be effective December 9, 2002

# Join The Discussion, Understand The Decisions and Consequences, and Vote

To the editor:

School Boards and Selectmen are moving to finalize the budgets we will present to the voters in January and February, in preparation for voting on the budgets on March 12th. The Souhegan school district budget has been discussed and refined at all board meetings since October, with active participation from the Advisory Finance Committee, as well as comments and suggestions from individual citizens. The process will continue up to Wednesday, January 9th, when the board will present its first formal proposal to the public at a Public Hearing at Souhegan High School. (For the convenience of voters who will attend, the Amherst School District and Souhegan Cooperative School District Public Hearings are held back-toback on the same night in the high school auditorium.)

After hearing public input on the proposed budget, the board may make modifications to the budget. It is then presented to the voters at the Deliberative Session, on Saturday morning, February 2nd. A gain, for the convenience of voters the Souhegan and Amherst School Deliberatives will be held back-to-back in the auditorium. Only the attendees at the Deliberative Session can amend the budget once it is presented by the board prior

After the Deliberative Session, the budget that the session attendees approved is voted on at Election Day, Tuesday March 12th (polls are open in Amherst 6AM-8PM at Souhegan High School; in Mont Vernon 7AM-7PM at the Village School).

The budget being prepared has two major cost increases, and a significant revenue decrease, that must be accommodated by adjustments to other areas. Once again, the NH State Retirement system, which is the primary retirement program for Souhegan staff, has shifted costs that were previously paid by the state to local districts. Rates for non-professional staff have not changed, but rates for professional staff have again risen, over and above the large amount we were required to absorb in the last budget. At the same time, our healthcare insurance provider has also advised us that costs will increase in the next year by a significant amount. In both cases, costs increases are shared between employees and the district, so the full increase does not fall on the taxpayers, but our share is still a large amount. In total, just those two costs will be increasing by \$404,000, even as we decrease the number of employees we are responsible for covering. In addition, state aid will also decrease next year, by \$74,000 for Amherst and \$161,000 for Mont Vernon.

In summary, the board and administration are almost finished preparing a budget to propose and discuss with the voters of Mont Vernon and Amherst. Externally imposed costs have risen dramatically, and state financial support has decreased. The primary cost control opportunity for the board to use in response is staffing levels, and those are being scrutinized closely. The discussion begins in January, and ends in March with the voters having the final say in the voting booth. Please join the discussion, understand the decisions and consequences, and vote.

> Souhegan Cooperative School Board Howard Brown Steve Coughlan Pim Grondstra Fran Harrow Chris Janson, Chair Peter Maresco Mary Lou Mullens

> > **NEXT ISSUE:**

**Tues., January 22, 2013** 

Deadline: 5 p.m.

Wednesday, January 16

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# Tree Lighting Thank You

To the editor:

Thanks to The Amherst Citizen for your consistent coverage, publishing every Tree Lighting photo and article we sent in to you...AND giving us

your front page headline and photos! What a thrill!

This year, we continued hosting the Tree Lighting on Friday Evening, despite the rain, MC Peter reported to me that it was still a bigger crowd that any Sunday TL! All gathered for the Tree Lighting Ceremony on the NEW Reviewing Stand with the PA system donated by the Lions, Rotary, Bean Foundation, Quinn and Veillette families in an effort led by Charlie Vars. We are very grateful to use this staging again. Thanks to The Garden Club and AFD for decorating village sites and the Memory Tree.

Friday Kickoff Thanks to the Amherst Fire Dept (AFD) Chief Mark Boynton, his firefighters, and Gate City Tree for decorating the tree! Deep appreciation to our DPW: Bruce Berry, Marge Drobat, and Perry Day and their crews for setting up the Reviewing Stand. Huge thanks to Robert Daniel of Glass and Gear Photographic & Entertainment Equipment Rentals for setting up, running, getting and returning our PA system! He was at the green, in the cold rain for many hours! Many thanks to his wife Dorothea and daughters Alison and Morgan Daniel for learning and memorizing The Amherst is My Home Song, and thanks to Peter Bergin, for serving his 37th year as the Tree Lighting Festival MC. More thanks to Trese Gilligan, Marilyn Peterman, Pat McMullen, the S. H.S. ACapella Choir and Santa, Mary Eileen Indelicato, and Karen Werner. Thanks to new Police Chief Mark Reams of APD and his family Dawn, Jack and Benjamin, and Officer Derek Mahoney. More thanks to Irene Raissis Alton, and her troops, and Paul Levesque his Pack 613 for the girl and cub scout singers.

Still more thanks to Mark LaFlamme, and to our refreshment folks, the Amherst First Baptist Church for popcorn and Roy DeGrandpre and Boy Scout troop 22 for roasted chestnuts....and deep appreciation for Bob Petrella! Thanks to Town Manager Jim O'Mara and Torrey Demanche for assistance. Thanks to all those who provided the Friday Supper: The Amherst Lions Club, and John Swanson who with the Congregational Church's Youth Group led by Rev. Maureeen Frescott hosted a Village Community Supper at the church. They served 200+ people and had a line of happy diners patiently awaiting Bruce Ribolini's home-made sauce! Thanks to Emmy McGuy and her student Arianna Gaudette for entertaining them with live piano music!

Santa Saturday Thanks go to Doffie Farrar, Gail Beers, Jess Steele and the Amherst Newcomers Club, Chief Mark Boynton and The AFD, Bob Petrella, Mary Eileen Indelicato, and GS Troops 22515, 20910, 22667, and 22793 for hosting the GS Craft fair and cookie swap, and Jenn Whitney's elves from TROOP 22977: Ashley Barham, Angelina Boynton, Julia Pinkham, Emma Sette, Jenna Speer, Ryleigh Tobin, Camy Whitney and from Troop 20356, Halley Barham. More thanks to Tracy Veillette and the Amherst Historical Society, to Team Earley for Refreshments, and to Chief Mark Reams and the Amherst Police Dept for their Open House and Kids ID

Pancake and Concerts Sunday Thanks go to the AFD, Patrick Matthews and The Amherst Town Band, and the Souhegan H.S. ACapella Choir, Sara Phelps and the Congregational Church-UCC Choirs, Christy Belvin and lenn Erdody, Director, of Souhegan Valley Chorus for their Sunday evening

All-weekend Long Thanks to Linda Ribolini, of the Lions, for Collecting New and homemade kids' hats, mittens, scarves, socks, coats, snow/ ski pants and blankets for the needy; Bins were placed at the AFD, Cong'l

Daily Thanks to all family members of Amherst residents who serve in harm's way at home and abroad, and cannot be with their families on the holiday that they celebrate. They serve in the Military, in the Foreign Service, and in the Police, Fire and EMS Departments everywhere. Cited this year were Sgt. Francis J. Cuddy III with the US Marine Corps, Michael F. Cuddy who is with the State Dept. and Matthew Crowley, who deployed to Afghanistan this past week.

Peace on Earth to Women and Men of Goodwill! May all have a wonderful season of holidays...in December, there seems to be at least one holiday for anyone who wishes to celebrate a holiday!

Ann C. Bergin ATLF Chair

PS! Always looking ahead! Next year, the Amherst, NH Village Tree Lighting Festival will kick off on the Friday before the Second Sunday of December.....FRIDAY December 6, 2013! (Dec. 8 will be the second Sunday in 2013.) Amherst residents who have a song/poem for a December holiday they celebrate, can talk about possibly performing at the 2013 Tree Lighting Ceremony!

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Department of Public Works

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THE AMHERST CITIZEN **Schedule of Issues** 

**- 2013 -**

January 8 May 14 January 22 May 28 February 12 June 11\* June 25\* February 26 July 30\* March 7\* August 27\* March 26 April 9 September 10

\*Issue dates may be subject to change. Watch future issues for schedule updates

April 23

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September 24

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- ☐ Merrill's Convenience, Milford
- ☐ Shaw's Market, Milford ☐ Stop & Shop, Milford
- ☐ Harvest Market, Hollis
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