



Don Holden, in his CERT gear, accepted the award for 2026 Amherst Citizen of the Year on July 4, with his wife, Susan, by his side. Susan nominated him in secret and organized roughly a dozen supporters to submit letters of recommendation. (Photo: Shirley Flowers.)

Don Holden named 2026 Citizen of the Year

Celebrating a legacy of service and community involvement

BY STACEY MORISON

When Don Holden arrived at Amherst's Fourth of July celebration to help with crowd control and parking, he had no idea he was about to be recognized for decades of service to the community.

Holden was named Amherst's 2026 Citizen of the Year during the annual celebration, a surprise made even sweeter because the nomination had been submitted in secret by his wife, Susan. "He works at least 40 hours a week, helping other people," said Susan. "He's exceptionally caring for others and concerned about the community and its citizens. And I'm lucky to call him my husband!" Linda Ribolini, president of the Amherst Lions Club, presented Holden with

the award. "Lion Don works on most of our activities and projects, always smiling and quietly giving sound advice," said Ribolini. "I was honored to present one of our own to be Citizen of the Year." Holden described being "surprised and grateful" to receive the award. "It is truly an honor to be singled out this year because Amherst has so many dedicated people supporting the community," he said.

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E-bike, e-scooter safety concerns prompt reminders from Amherst police

What riders, parents and drivers should know

BY KRYSTAL MARTINEZ

The growing popularity of e-bikes and e-scooters has sparked conversations throughout Amherst this summer, particularly in and around the Village. In discussions on social media, residents have expressed a range of opinions about rider responsibility and behavior, driver awareness, and how best to keep everyone safe while sharing Amherst's roads and sidewalks. The Amherst Police Department has seen an increase in complaints and safety concerns as electric vehicles be-

come more widely used, particularly among younger riders, and is encouraging everyone to understand New Hampshire's laws and practice safe habits while sharing the road. "As e-bikes have become more prevalent in our community, we've seen an increase in safety concerns and incidents involving unsafe operation," said Sgt. Justin Gerome of the Amherst Police Department. Under New Hampshire law, e-bikes are classified into three categories. Class 1 e-bikes provide pedal assistance up to 20 mph and operate only while the rider is pedaling. Class 2 e-bikes use a throttle and can provide pedal assistance up to 20 mph. Class 3 e-bikes provide pedal assistance up to 28 mph and must in-

clude a factory-installed speedometer. Riders must be at least 16 years old to operate a Class 3 e-bike. Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes may be ridden on bike paths and multiuse trails where bicycles are allowed. Class 3 e-bikes are generally restricted to roadways. E-bikes are not required to be registered, insured or titled, and do not require a driver's license. Electric scooters are classified under New Hampshire law as motorized scooters and are permitted on public roads but not on sidewalks in most areas. They are typically not registered in the same way as cars or motorcycles, but riders must follow applicable traffic

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Souhegan High School celebrated commencement for the Class of 2026. More senior photos, pp. 6-7. (Photo: M. Warren.)



Sports
Look familiar? A soccer ball etched into stone has become a familiar landmark for local players and spectators. More sports news, pp. 8-9. (Photo: S. Morison.)



The Trail Ahead
A blue heron watched the Larsons as they kayaked along the Contoocook River. Read about their Father's Day outing, p. 13. (Photo: M. Larson.)



The Amherst Makerspace
Dottie Chabot watched as Clint Weistakes worked on the cooling pump to his PC using tools provided at the Amherst Makerspace. Read about this versatile community resource, p. 16. (Photo: M. Warren.)

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The Amherst Bear welcomes calendar listing requests, story ideas, and other submissions. We do not print letters to the editor at this time.

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E-bike, e-scooter safety, continued from page 1

laws. Scooters must not exceed 20 mph on public roadways and must follow all traffic laws that apply to bicycles.

New Hampshire law requires anyone younger than 16 to wear a bicycle helmet when operating or riding as a passenger on any bicycle, including e-bikes. Helmets are also required for operators and passengers under 18 on Class 3 e-bikes.

Because electric scooters are a relatively new mode of transportation, New Hampshire law does not currently include a specific statewide helmet requirement for riders. However, safety experts and scooter manufacturers strongly recommend wearing a helmet regardless of age.

Both bicyclists and e-bike riders have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers of motor vehicles. Riders must obey traffic signals and signs, including stopping at stop signs and red lights, yielding to pedestrians, and traveling in the same direction as traffic. Riding against traffic is illegal.

Drivers also play an important role in bicycle and e-bike safety. Under New Hampshire law, motorists are required to yield to bicyclists when turning and to leave a safe distance of at least 3 feet when passing a bicycle at 30 mph (with an additional foot required for every 10 mph over that speed).

Police emphasize that safe operation also includes awareness, visibility, and respect for others using the road.

“Our officers are focused on education, enforcement as appropriate, and addressing unsafe riding behaviors to reduce the risk of injury and promote safety on our roadways,” Gerome said.

The Amherst Police Department encourages parents to understand the distinctive classes and specifications of e-bikes and scooters before purchasing them for children and to ensure riders know both the rules of the road and basic safety expectations.



Two middle school students wore helmets while riding e-scooters down Carriage Road on June 25. As e-bikes and e-scooters become more common, local officials encourage riders and drivers to prioritize safety. (Photo: M. Warren.)

The Honeypot Report

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Don Holden, continued from page 1

Although Holden's volunteer work spans many organizations, those who nominated him described a common thread: a lifelong commitment to helping others without seeking recognition.

"His leadership is not driven by recognition or reward, but by a genuine love for the community and a deep-rooted commitment to service," Amherst Police Chief Anthony Ciampoli wrote in his letter of recommendation.

Holden has lived in Amherst since 1978 and has dedicated countless hours to public safety, emergency preparedness, community organizations, and local non-profits. A retired U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel, he has continued his career of service long after leaving the military, most notably as director of the four-town Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), which serves Amherst, Milford, Mont Vernon, and Lyndeborough.

Since helping establish the program in 2009, Holden has coordinated volunteers who assist at community events,

train residents in emergency preparedness, and support local first responders when needed. He also leads monthly CERT meetings, works closely with police and fire officials, and has helped teach first aid, emergency response, and generator safety classes to area residents.

Beyond CERT, Holden has volunteered extensively with the Congregational Church of Amherst, where he has served as a trustee, helped improve emergency planning, and regularly participates in the Home Starter ministry, delivering furniture and household goods to families moving into permanent housing.

He also served for more than two decades as chair of the Amherst Town Library Trustees and is an active member of the Amherst Lions Club, volunteering at numerous community events throughout the year.

"[Holden's] contributions may often occur behind the scenes, but their

impact is felt across the community," noted Ciampoli.

In her nomination letter, Susan described her husband as someone who never hesitates to lend a hand. "He never says 'no' to anyone who asks," she wrote.

She concluded by writing that her husband "represents the best of us: loyal, dependable, caring, and concerned for everyone's safety and happiness."

For Holden, the unexpected recognition served as a reminder that years of quiet service often leave the greatest impression on the community they help strengthen.

"This award reflects on the organizations I am part of," said Holden, who specifically recognized CERT and the Lions Club for their contributions to the community. "I encourage anyone looking to serve the Amherst community to consider getting involved with these organizations that do so much for the community."



Holden relaxed at home with his new hardware. He is the 51st recipient of the Amherst Citizen of the Year award. (Photo: S. Morison.)

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the U.S. Fire Administration, nearly 83% of New Hampshire fire departments are staffed entirely or mostly by volunteer firefighters.

Amherst Fire and EMS Dept. calls for volunteers as community need grows

BY MATTHEW EMMONS
Head of Recruiting, Amherst Fire and EMS

In a town built on neighbor-to-neighbor support, Amherst Fire and EMS is putting out a different kind of call: a call for volunteers. With emergency responses now fielding 800 to 1,200 calls per year, the department is seeking residents willing to learn new skills and help protect the community.

For many who serve, volunteer firefighting is about more than answering alarms. It is an opportunity to serve with purpose, build confidence, and become part of a close-knit team.

"People are often surprised by how rewarding this work is," said Jonathan Graham of Amherst Fire and EMS. "You don't need prior experience. You just need the willingness to learn and the desire to help your neighbors. The training, the teamwork, the sense of accomplishment — it changes you."

Amherst Fire and EMS operates with a small number of full-time staff and about 30 volunteers, all of whom hold jobs outside the department. Before COVID-19, the department had roughly 70 volunteers. Like many departments across the state and the country, Amherst has seen volunteer numbers decline even as call volume has increased.

Volunteers respond to fires, medical emergencies, motor vehicle accidents, and severe weather events. The department provides all neces-

sary training, including Firefighter I certification, specialized courses, and hands-on instruction from experienced firefighters and EMTs.

"It's not just about fighting fires," firefighter Tyler Bartels said. "It's about being there for people on their worst day. It's about teamwork, problem-solving, and learning skills you carry for life."

Training nights, held twice a month, are a cornerstone of the volunteer experience. New members are paired with seasoned mentors and receive ongoing instruction in firefighting, rescue, and emergency medical response.

"You're never alone," said longtime volunteer Oliver Frates. "From day one, you're part of the crew. You learn together, you work together, and you support each other."

Volunteers are not expected to respond to every call and can balance service with work and family commitments.

"This is your town," firefighter Steve Elwin said. "Your neighbors, your friends, your schools, your families. When you volunteer, you're helping protect all of it."

Amherst Fire and EMS welcomes adults of all backgrounds. The department provides the training, equipment and support; volunteers provide the commitment and willingness to serve.

Residents interested in learning more can contact Matthew Emmons at memmons@afn.amherstnh.gov.



From left: Firefighter Steve Elwin, Captain Darren Schriever, Lt. Oliver Frates, and Firefighter Matthew Emmons participated in a training burn in Merrimack on April 11. (Photo: Steve Elwin.)



Firefighters responded to a car fire on Spring Road in Amherst on March 11. (Photo: Lt. Ben Vaughn.)



Lt. Oliver Frates participated in a full-day training session at the Nashua Fire Department training grounds this past September. (Courtesy photo.)

TOWN AND STATE GOVERNMENT

New Hampshire lawmakers wrap 2026 session

BY STEPHANIE GRUND
State Representative

The 2026 legislative session in New Hampshire concluded June 4, marking the end of a busy period that saw 1,387 bills filed in the House and Senate. Of those, 1,053 originated in the House and 334 in the Senate.

After public hearings, floor debates and numerous amendments, 395 bills passed both chambers in either their original form or with amendments. Meanwhile, 529 were deemed “inexpedient to legislate,” 215 were sent to interim study, 113 were laid on the table, and 130 fell into miscellaneous and other categories. Five bills were indefinitely postponed.

Once the session adjourned, the legislative process continued. Bills that

passed both chambers were sent to the committee on enrolled bills for final review. The committee checks for clerical errors or formal issues before bills are signed by the Senate president and the House speaker. The bills are then forwarded to the secretary of state, who delivers them to the governor’s desk.

Under New Hampshire law, the governor has five business days, excluding Sundays and holidays, to act on each bill. She may sign it, veto it, or take no action. Because the legislature adjourned June 4, any bill not signed by the governor is subject to a “pocket veto” and does not become law.

As of July 3, 198 bills had been signed into law, 15 had been vetoed by the governor, and six became law with-



From left, Amherst’s representatives Stephanie Grund, Daniel LeClerc, Daniel Veilleux, and Megan Murray marched in the parade on July 4. (Courtesy photo.)

out the governor’s signature because they were delivered while the legislature was still in session. Residents can track bill status using the bill tracker on the General Court of New Hampshire website at gc.nh.gov/.

As your Amherst representatives, we want to extend our gratitude to constituents who called, wrote or emailed with questions and concerns throughout the session. We value constituent input throughout the democratic process.

Take steps to protect our waterways

BY CRAIG DURRETT
Amherst Department of Public Works

Have you ever watched water run down a gutter or pool along the side of the road during a storm? Most stormwater — rain and snowmelt — runs off land and into storm drains. From there, it often flows through underground pipes and open channels that can lead directly to streams, rivers, and lakes. Keeping stormwater clean is vital to the health of local waterways, the community, and the local economy.

As water flows across lawns, roads, rooftops and parking lots, it picks up oil, litter, fertilizer, and other pollutants that eventually make their way into local waterways. While the sources of pollution may not always be visible, the impact can be felt throughout the watershed and the community downstream.

Residents can take several simple steps at home to help reduce stormwater pollution. In yards and gardens, fertilizers and pesticides should be applied carefully, never on pavement, and avoided altogether if rain is in the forecast. Rain gardens — shallow, planted depressions designed to collect stormwater — can also help absorb runoff before it reaches storm drains.

In driveways and on sidewalks, homeowners are encouraged to wash vehicles with biodegradable soap and direct wash water onto grassy areas so it can soak into the ground. Hosing debris or dirt into the street should be avoided. It’s also important to address vehicle leaks promptly to prevent oil or fluids from entering stormwater systems.

Other steps include using permeable pavers where possible, keeping leaves and yard waste out of storm drains, installing rain barrels to collect runoff for later use, picking up pet waste, and using deicer sparingly during winter weather.

Community stormwater projects also improve water quality. Rain gardens, bioretention areas, and green roofs help absorb rainfall before it reaches storm drains, while permeable pavement allows water to filter into the ground rather than run off into streets and waterways.

While enjoying local parks and waterways, residents are reminded to do their part: avoid dumping liquids into storm drains, pick up after pets, and be mindful of what flows off their property when it rains. Small actions at home can help keep local water clean, healthy, and safe.



This image provided by the United States Environmental Protection Agency reminds residents to be stormwater smart.

After 25 years in Amherst, Capt. Chad Blake retires

BY MATT LARSON

After 25 years of service to this town, Capt. Chad Blake retired from the Amherst Police Department on June 26 — but he’s not ready to stop working yet. Three days after his last shift, Blake started a new position as a paralegal specialist with the U.S. Attorney’s Office in Concord.

“I’m going right back to work,” he said with a laugh.

Blake’s career in public service began long before Amherst. A military police officer in the Air Force from 1992 to 1996, he was deployed to Saudi Arabia as part of Operation Southern Watch following the end of Desert Storm. After leaving the military, Blake earned an associate degree in criminal justice and a bachelor’s degree in occupational health and safety. Following two years with the Waterville Valley Police Department, he joined the Amherst Police Department in 2001, working his way up from patrol officer to sergeant, then lieutenant, before becoming operations captain in 2018.



(Courtesy photo.)

About two and a half years ago, Blake became the department’s support captain, overseeing detectives, school resource officers, and prosecutions. To prepare for that role, Blake returned to school to earn a paralegal certificate, a credential that helped pave the way to his new federal position.

In his 25 years in Amherst, Blake experienced the full range of police work: fatal crashes on Route 101, violent crimes, and suspects resisting arrest. Still, he maintains

that, overall, “We’ve got a nice little town here.”

“I swear, half our problem is Walmart,” he joked. “Everything seems to start at Walmart. There’s just so many people coming and going.”

While difficult days came with the job, Blake said he has many great memories from his time with the department. He credits the camaraderie among the staff, adding, “We feel like we’ve created a culture where everyone feels respected.”

His favorite part of the job, however, was helping people through difficult situations, even when they were the ones who committed the offense.

“You realize most people, you know, you’re meeting them on the worst day of their lives, and they’re just good people that had a bad day,” Blake said.

“When you can help someone through that,” he added, “that’s the rewarding part.”

TOWN AND STATE GOVERNMENT

Town seeks volunteers for boards and commissions

BY LINCOLN DALEY
Amherst Town Administrator

One of the things that has always made Amherst special is the willingness of residents to get involved. Many of the decisions that help shape our community are made not by paid staff, but by neighbors who volunteer their time to serve on the town's boards, commissions and committees.

Right now, the town has several volunteer openings, including positions on the **Zoning Board of Adjustment** (ZBA). The two regular member positions have been filled recently, but the town continues to seek two alternate members for the board.

The ZBA hears requests from property owners seeking relief from certain zoning requirements due to unique circumstances affecting their property. The board also hears appeals of decisions made by zoning officials and considers requests for special exceptions. A special exception is a use already allowed under the zoning ordinance, provided certain conditions are met. The board's role is to

determine whether those conditions have been satisfied.

In many ways, the ZBA serves as a safety valve within the zoning process. Members listen to applicants, neighbors, and staff, review the facts, and make decisions that balance the rights of property owners with the intent of Amherst's zoning regulations.

When people hear "Zoning Board of Adjustment," they often assume a background in law, engineering, surveying, or construction is necessary. While experience in one of those fields can certainly be helpful, it is by no means required. What the board really needs are residents who are willing to listen, ask questions, keep an open mind, and make thoughtful decisions. Most members start with little or no experience and learn as they go. Training is available, town staff provide support, and experienced board members are always willing to help newcomers get up to speed.

The **Heritage Commission** is also seeking an alternate member.

Established in 2002 by Will Ludt, the commission works to identify, preserve and promote Amherst's historical resources. Members are looking for someone with an interest in researching historical records and documents, a willingness to contribute to ongoing projects, and a desire to be an active member of the commission. Those interested can learn more about the commission's work and volunteer opportunities by visiting the Heritage Commission website at amherstheritage.com/.

The following boards and committees are also seeking new members:

- **Historic District Commission** – Two alternate members
- **Planning Board** – Two alternate members
- **Recreation Commission** – Two alternate members
- **Trustees of the Trust Fund** – Two alternate members

Serving on a town board or commission is also a great way to learn more about how Amherst works,



meet people from different parts of the community, and play a direct role in decisions that affect the town's future. If you have ever considered becoming involved in local government, now is a great time. Amherst has a long tradition of citizen participation, and we encourage residents to consider serving.

For more information or to submit a volunteer application, please contact me at ldaley@amherstnh.gov or visit amherstnh.gov.

How residents can help first responders

BY SGT. JUSTIN GEROME
Amherst Police Department

Most interactions between residents and first responders occur during emergencies or other stressful situations. While police officers, firefighters and emergency medical personnel train extensively to respond to a wide variety of incidents, there are several things residents can do to help them respond as quickly and safely as possible.

One of the most important — and often overlooked — is ensuring house numbers are clearly visible from the road. In a community like Amherst, where homes may be set back from the roadway and address numbers can vary significantly between properties, clearly marked addresses are critical. Seconds matter during a medical emergency, fire or other critical incident, and delays caused by difficult-to-find addresses can affect response times. Residents should ensure house numbers are clearly displayed, unobstructed by vegetation, and visible both during the day and at night.

Residents are also encouraged to keep emergency contact information readily available and ensure family members know important details such as their home address, phone numbers, and any relevant medical conditions.

When calling 911, remain calm and provide as much information as possible. Dispatchers are trained to ask questions that help determine the nature of the emergency and send the appropriate resources. Staying on the line and to



A clearly marked mailbox helps first responders quickly locate a home in an emergency. (Image courtesy of APD.)

answer those questions helps responders arrive prepared.

Motorists also play an important role in public safety by moving over and slowing down when approaching emergency vehicles stopped along the roadside. This simple action helps protect emergency personnel, tow truck operators, and others working in dangerous conditions.

Finally, first responders want residents to know they are part of the community they serve. Whether responding to an emergency, assisting at a community event or simply answering questions, they are committed to helping keep Amherst a safe and welcoming place to live.

By taking a few simple precautions and staying informed, residents can help first responders do their jobs more effectively while contributing to the safety and well-being of the entire community.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Most New Hampshire towns rely on volunteer boards and commissions to help guide local government, from conservation to planning to recreation.

SCHOOL NEWS

Preparing for kindergarten

BY JANINE METRO
Assistant Principal, Clark School

While starting kindergarten is an exciting milestone for children and families, it can also bring a mix of emotions. Every child develops at their own pace, and there is no one-size-fits-all guide for being “ready” for school.

In just one short month, Clark School teachers and staff will be ready to greet incoming kindergartners and support them as they learn new routines, make new friends, and discover the joys of learning.

If you are wondering how you can help prepare your child for kindergarten, here are some helpful tips:

- Encourage independence with everyday tasks such as dressing, using the bathroom, hand-washing, and cleaning up.
- Have your child practice carrying and managing a backpack.
- Help your child learn how to open lunch containers, snack packages, and water bottles on their own.
- Establish consistent routines, including bedtime and morning routines.
- Visit the Clark playground.
- Read together daily.

- Play games that involve taking turns, sharing, and problem-solving.
- Read books about kindergarten, such as “The Night Before Kindergarten” by Natasha Wing, “The King of Kindergarten” by Derrick Barnes, “The Kissing Hand” by Audrey Penn, and “Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten” by Joseph Slate.

We hope incoming kindergartners and their families will join us for a summer read-aloud with school librarian Susanna Hargreaves in the Clark outdoor classroom on Aug. 6 at 1 p.m. We look forward to welcoming the Class of 2039!



Visit the library and check out the selection of back-to-school books for incoming kindergartners. (Photo: S. Morison.)

What is Community Council?

SUBMITTED BY MAYA GASCOYNE
on behalf of the Communications Committee

Community Council is Souhegan High School’s primary governing body, established at the school’s founding in 1992. Composed of students, staff, administrators and community members, the Council collaborates to align school policies and procedures with the goals of Souhegan High School and its communities. Much of this work involves reviewing student-developed legislative proposals. Past examples include the introduction of a weighted GPA system and allowing excused absences for student mental health days.

To better represent and connect with stakeholders, the Council also aims to keep the Amherst and Mont Vernon communities informed about its purpose and ongoing work.

This past year, the Council’s Constitution Review Task Group (CRTG) worked on revising Souhegan High

School’s Constitution, a document last updated in 1999. The CRTG was led by Project Managers Nicholas Drinkwater, a Souhegan social studies teacher, and Owen Pisinski, a 2026 graduate. Pisinski said the goal of the project was “to better align Souhegan’s founding documentation with the school’s current practices.” The group will continue working with other Souhegan committees during the coming school year to complete the revised constitution.

Interested in getting involved? Community Council consists of 30 student representatives from grades 9–12, 10 faculty members, the dean of students, a member of the Souhegan Cooperative School Board, and five members of the Amherst and Mont Vernon communities. Two of those community seats are currently open. Residents interested in serving or learning more can contact Council co-adviser Anthony Doucet at adoucet@sau39.org.



Members of the 2025-2026 Community Council. (Courtesy photo.)

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Amherst Residents
Joe Kenny (top) and
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SCHOOL NEWS

Souhegan High School Class of 2026

ALL PHOTOS BY M. WARREN.



Members of the senior class visited Clark School, Wilkins School, and Amherst Middle School for the annual Senior Walk.



A sea of decorated graduation caps reflected the personalities, accomplishments, and future plans of the graduating class.



Samantha Thellan received enthusiastic high fives from the line of students at AMS.



Jack Kaler took in the full house inside the Souhegan High School gymnasium for commencement. The ceremony was moved indoors because of inclement weather.



Matthew Nowark embraced his former kindergarten teacher, Amanda Benson. Nowark was a member of Benson's first kindergarten class at Clark School.



Happy seniors headed into Wilkins School to cheers from students and former teachers. From left are Callie Perrin, Eva Stiles, Marley Bacon, and Mackenzie Hollander.

Class of 2026 prepares for the next chapter

Graduation may mark the end of high school, but for the Class of 2026, it also marks the beginning of new journeys as students head to colleges and universities this fall.

Valedictorian Carl Berlack will attend Dartmouth College, and Salutatorian Juliana Koch will attend Boston College.

Congratulations to all of the graduates, and best of luck!

- Souhegan High School Class of 2026 students have enrolled in the following schools:**
- American University

Arizona State University

Bentley University

Berklee College of Music

Boston College

Boston University

- Bryant University

Bryn Mawr College

Butler University

Clark University

Clarkson University

Clemson University

Coastal Carolina University

Colby College

Curry College

Dartmouth College

Dean College

Duquesne University

Eastern Connecticut State University

Elon University

Emmanuel College

Endicott College

Fairfield University

Houston City College

Ithaca College

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Lakes Region Community College

Liberty University

Manchester Community College

- McGill University

Mercyhurst University

Merrimack College

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Montana State University

Mount Saint Mary College

Nashua Community College

New England College

NHTI - Concord's Community College

Northeastern University

Penn State University Park

Plymouth State University

Quinnipiac University

Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Rhode Island College

Rivier University

Roger Williams University

Sacred Heart University

Salem State University

Savannah College of Art and Design

Southern New Hampshire University

St. Lawrence University

Temple University

Texas State University

- The Landing School

The Ohio State University at Columbus

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University of Rhode Island

University of Southern Maine

University of Vermont

University of Winchester

Utah State University

Worcester Polytechnic Institute
- List provided by the registrar at Souhegan High School.

SPORTS

Junior Sabers continue tradition of youth football

BY HEATHER SWEENEY
President, Amherst Junior Sabers
Youth Football Program

The Amherst Junior Sabers Youth Football Program is preparing for the 2026 season as it continues to serve youth athletes in Amherst and surrounding communities.

Originally founded in 1974, the program has operated under several names over the years, including Amherst Football Patriots & Cheer, before rebranding as the Amherst Junior Sabers Youth Football Program in 2025. The new name reflects the organization's partnership with Souhegan High School, where many participants move on to play for the school team.

The Junior Sabers is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that promotes athletics, sportsmanship, teamwork and character development. Its tackle football program is open to boys and girls entering grades 3-8.

The organization currently fields three teams: a Youth team for grades 3-4 and a Junior team for grades 5-6, both of which compete in the Twin State Snowbelt Football League, and a Senior team for grades 7-8 that competes in the Granite State Football League. Parti-

pation has varied over the years, but the program has historically averaged about 75 to 80 athletes annually and is seeing increased interest heading into the 2026 season.

The program currently has 16 volunteer coaches, with additional volunteers typically joining before the season begins. Athlete development and safety remain the program's top priorities.

Junior team head coach Sean Yamamoto said football provides valuable lessons that extend beyond the field.

"For me, football is the ultimate team sport and a powerful vehicle for learning how to collaborate effectively. It teaches players how to follow directions and execute their specific '1/11th' of a plan to ensure the team's collective success. In both sports and life, things will not always go your way. How you react to those setbacks is more important than the moments themselves. Our priority is developing leaders and character first; while winning is important, it is the final item on our list of goals."

Parents have also praised the sense of community surrounding the program.

"I really felt like this was a wonderful and supportive community," parent Jessica Rankins said.



Players on the Youth team lined up for the 2025 season. (Courtesy photo.)

Parent Chris Thellen said one of the highlights of the season was "seeing the kids compete week to week and watching team relationships grow."

Preseason practices begin Aug. 17 and will be held Monday through Thursday before transitioning to in-season practices two to three days per week beginning Sept. 8, depending on the team.

Registration for the 2026 season is open. Families are encouraged to register early so the program can plan equipment needs, coaching resources and team rosters before preseason practices begin.

More information and registration details can be found at amherstjrsabers.sportngin.com.



Junior team head coach Sean Yamamoto stood with, from left, Dorian Lennon and Dominic Beck during the 2025 season. (Courtesy photo.)

Local programs help kick-start a love of soccer

BY AMHERST BEAR STAFF

As the excitement of this summer's World Cup winds down, local programs are gearing up for another season of developing the next generation of players. Amherst Soccer Club and Hampshire United offer opportunities for children of all ages to learn the game, build skills, and compete close to home.

Amherst Soccer Club and Hampshire United operate under the same leadership as a unified youth soccer organization. Amherst Soccer Club offers developmental programs for younger players, while Hampshire United provides competitive travel soccer for older athletes.

Molly Dix, who serves as co-president of Amherst Soccer Club and Hampshire United, said soccer has long been part of Amherst's identity.

"Soccer is a longstanding tradition in Amherst, as illustrated by the soccer ball engraved in the stone wall that welcomes visitors to Souhegan High School," Dix said.

The Amherst Soccer Club introduces players ages U3-U10 to soccer fundamentals in a fun, supportive environment that fosters skill development and a love of the game. Programs are led by licensed coaches and feature age-appropriate training and instruction.

The club hosts family pickup soccer games on Wednesday evenings through Aug. 8 at Upper Wilkins Field on Jones Road. Players of all ages, along with their parents, are invited to participate.

The club also offers a summer camp Aug. 3-7 at the Bean Fields at Souhegan High School. Open to players born before July 31, 2021, the camp runs from 9 a.m. to noon each day. More camp details can be found at amherstsoccerclub.com/camps-and-clinics.

Players looking for a more competitive experience can continue their development with Hampshire United, the travel program affiliated with Amherst

Soccer Club. Founded in 1982 by longtime Amherst resident Dean Jackson, Hampshire United is a nonprofit travel soccer program that emphasizes player development while fostering a lifelong appreciation of the game. Coaching is provided by local university coaches and former Hampshire United players.

Beyond its competitive teams, Hampshire United offers seasonal programs, tournaments, and other activities focused on player development, community building, and keeping travel soccer accessible for families. Its annual Memorial Day tournament, held primarily at Souhegan High School, serves as the club's primary fundraiser and helps provide scholarships for players.

Dix encourages families interested in recreational or travel soccer to learn more about Amherst Soccer Club and Hampshire United.

"This is a community that focuses on developing complete players and building a love of the game," she said.

Fall registration is open for both the Tots (U3-U5) and Early Development (U6-U10) non-travel programs. Visit amherstsoccerclub.com for details.

A few travel team spots remain open this fall. Visit hampshireunitedsc.com for details or contact hampshireunitedsc@gmail.com with questions.



Members of the U12 girls team exchanged high fives during a match this spring. (Photo: Betsey Hansen.)

SPORTS

Girls on the Run: Not just another running program

BY LINDSEY BRISTOL
GOTR Coach

If you’ve heard of Girls on the Run but don’t know much about it, you might assume the program focuses primarily on running. In reality, the nonprofit organization is about much more than training for a race. Girls on the Run, or GOTR as participants and coaches call it, is an eight- to 10-week program for girls in grades 3-5 that combines preparation for a noncompetitive 5K with evidence-based lessons designed to build confidence and essential life skills.

Founded 30 years ago, GOTR has grown from just 13 participants to more than 2.7 million girls served. The organization now has chapters in all 50 states, multiple councils within each state, and several international locations.

In Amherst, GOTR offers both spring and fall seasons. Throughout the program, participants explore topics such as empathy, friendship, resilience, confidence, and community involvement. Each practice includes a discussion-based lesson, a movement activity that reinforces the day’s topic, a warm-up, and a running activity that allows the girls to put the lesson into practice.



Coach Lindsey Bristol and GOTR participant Elliot Leknes got glittered and bedazzled before the rainy 5K celebration on May 30. (Courtesy photo.)

Sessions conclude with a review of the lesson and the presentation of “Energy Awards” to participants who demonstrate positive attitudes and strong teamwork.

Community service is a key component of the program. Each season, girls learn about the importance of giving back and work together to plan a Community Impact Project. Designed to be completed during a single practice



Participants and coaches celebrated the end of the season in 2025. The local GOTR chapter meets two afternoons a week at Wilkins School in both the fall and the spring. (Courtesy photo.)

with minimal resources, past projects have included creating thank-you cards for first responders, making toys for shelter animals, and painting kindness rocks and toad houses.

The season concludes with a celebratory 5K event that brings together Girls on the Run participants from across the state. Filled with music, cheering, face paint, tutus, glitter, and plenty of fun, the event celebrates both

the girls’ accomplishments and the lessons they have learned along the way.

For families looking to help their daughters build confidence, develop strong friendships, and find their voice, Girls on the Run offers an experience that extends far beyond the finish line. For more information on the upcoming fall season, visit girlsontherunnh.org/ or contact Coach Lindsey at madsmom30@gmail.com.

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DID YOU KNOW?

A regulation soccer ball has 32 panels in its traditional design—20 white hexagons and 12 black pentagons.

COMMUNITY

Amherst family celebrates special 100th birthday

BY DIANE TROVATO

When Alma Watson celebrated her 100th birthday on June 23, her family wasn't just celebrating a milestone. They were also celebrating the care and support that has helped her remain safely at home.

Watson lives with her daughter and son-in-law, Linda and Bruce Ribolini, longtime Amherst residents.

Born in Montclair, New Jersey, and raised in nearby Verona, Watson spent much of her youth helping with her family's ice and coal business, driving delivery trucks throughout the area. She fondly recalls delivering ice to local venues where she had the opportunity to meet famous big band leaders Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey.

Watson married her husband, Charlie, in 1949 after the two met by chance in a local park when he stopped to ask her for the time. After spending 40 years in Clifton, New Jersey, they retired to Raymond, New Hampshire, to be closer to their children. They shared 66 years of marriage before Charlie's death in 2015. When asked what affected her life the most, Watson replied, "Marrying Charlie."

Last September, Watson moved to Amherst to live with the Ribolinis, marking a new chapter in her life as she celebrated her 100th year surrounded by family. Linda and Bruce, both active members of the Amherst Lions Club, have embraced the role of caregivers.

To help support Watson's care at home, the family recently turned to Home Health & Hospice Care (HHHC) of Merrimack. A home health aide visits several times each week to assist with personal care, while a nurse monitors her health and a volunteer visits regularly to provide companionship and document her life stories.

"When you are with your loved one every day, there are changes you may not notice," noted Linda. "Having a nurse visit each week gives me an extra pair of eyes to catch anything I might have missed."

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The Ribolini family was already familiar with HHHC. Charlie Watson



Watson on her wedding day in 1949. (Courtesy photo.)



Alma Watson celebrated her 100th birthday in Amherst this June. (Courtesy photo.)

spent his final days at the Merrimack Community Hospice House, giving the family firsthand experience with the organization's resources and care.

Because Watson has always loved animals, the family is also working with the hospice team to arrange therapeutic visits from a companion dog and miniature horses.

Looking back on a century of life and change, Watson credits her perspective with helping her through life's challenges.

"I never really looked at them as hard times," she said. "I just looked at them as getting through life."

For more information about Home Health & Hospice Care, call 603-882-2941 or visit hhhc.org.

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COMMUNITY

Married pastors embark on concurrent sabbaticals

BY CHRISTINE SHELDON

The Rev. Karl Hester is taking some time away from the pulpit — and he’s doing it with a purpose. Hester, the pastor of Messiah Lutheran Church in Amherst, has received a grant through the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program and will be on sabbatical until October.

Hester is one of 233 pastors nationwide selected for the program in 2025. The grants, which provide up to \$60,000 per grantee, provide time and funding for pastors to step away from ministry for rest, reflection, and renewal while supporting their congregations during their absence. More than \$13 million was awarded this year.

Adding to the significance of the award, Hester’s wife, the Rev. Kimberly S.C. Hester, pastor of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Nashua, also received a grant through the same program. The married pastors are taking their sabbaticals concurrently.

Karl Hester has served Messiah Lutheran Church since 2019, leading the Amherst congregation through the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. His sabbatical, which began in July, will focus on the life and writings of C.S. Lewis through travel, study and reflection.



The Rev. Karl Hester and the Rev. Kimberly S.C. Hester were celebrated during a June 27 send-off gathering at Messiah Lutheran Church in Amherst. The married pastors are both on sabbatical through the Lilly Endowment National Clergy Renewal Program. (Courtesy photo.)

His plans include visits to Ireland, the United Kingdom, and Wheaton College in Illinois, home to one of the world’s largest collections of C.S. Lewis materials. Messiah Lutheran Church will also offer C.S. Lewis-themed programming during his absence, with some events open to the community.

Kimberly Hester’s sabbatical, titled “Bits and Pieces — An Art-full Renewal,” focuses on artistic exploration, family connection, and spiritual renewal. Although her grant was awarded in 2024, family and medical circumstances delayed the start of her sabbatical, which now coincides with her husband’s.

Rare pre-Civil War flag earns recognition for Amherst

BY LORI MIX

The Captain Josiah Crosby Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) has named the Historical Society of Amherst the winner of its Oldest U.S. Flag Contest, recognizing a rare pre-Civil War flag believed to date from 1850 to 1858.

The 31-star Grand Luminary flag, also known as the Great Star pattern, was identified as the oldest U.S. flag documented among the five towns served by the chapter: Amherst, Lyndeborough, Milford, Mont Vernon, and Wilton.

Although little is known about the flag’s early history, it was donated by a private citizen to the Amherst Library in the 1970s and later transferred to the Historical Society of Amherst. For many years, it remained carefully folded in a glass display case.

The Historical Society now hopes to have the flag professionally conserved and properly displayed so it can be safely viewed by the public. The organization plans to seek grant funding to help offset preservation costs.



From left: Lisa Montesanto and Susan Fischer, members of the Historical Society of Amherst, displayed the 31-star Grand Luminary flag. (Photo: L. Mix.)

The Grand Luminary, or Great Star, pattern is considered one of the most distinctive designs of early American flags. Rather than displaying the stars in rows, the design arranges them into a single large star surrounding one central star, representing California, which became the nation’s 31st state in 1850 and the newest state in the Union at the time.

Original pre-Civil War American flags are relatively rare. Historians note that widespread personal ownership and display of U.S. flags did not become common until the surge of patriotism during and after the Civil War, making surviving examples from the 1850s especially significant.

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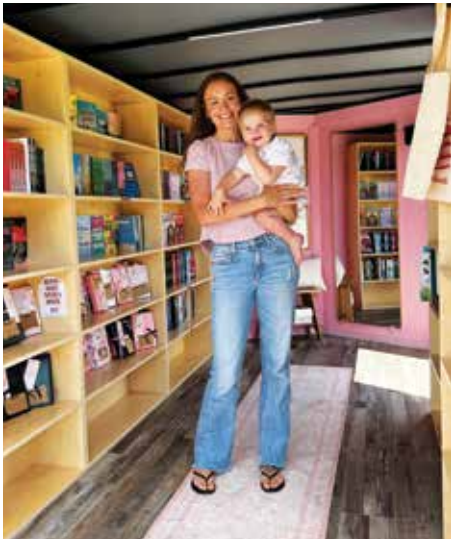
The United States flag has always had 13 stripes since 1818, honoring the original colonies. Only the number of stars changes as new states join the Union.

BOOK NEWS

The Novel Nook hits the road

BY STACEY MORISON

Bre Dupont, who graduated from Souhegan High School in 2020, has launched a new venture. Inspired by her love of reading and the growing popularity of mobile bookstores across the country, Dupont asked her father for help renovating one of his old work trailers to turn her vision into a reality. “I think he thought I was joking when I asked to paint it pink and put books in it,” she said with a laugh. After adding handmade bookshelves, new flooring, and a few pink



Crew helped mom Bre Dupont sell books at her pop-up event at Natura Realms in Amherst on June 20. (Photo: S. Morison.)

walls, Dupont’s mobile bookstore, the Novel Nook, was open for business. Since launching in June, Dupont has hosted several pop-up events around town, including stops in the parking lot of Natura Realms and on Manhattan Drive near Gymnastics Village. She hopes to partner with other local businesses and bring her mobile bookstore to additional locations in the coming months. For now, the Novel Nook carries mostly adult fiction, including thrillers, fantasy, and romance, along with a seasonal section currently featuring beach reads. A local authors section is planned. According to Dupont, one of the shop’s most popular offerings has been its “blind date” books, in which readers select a gift-wrapped title based only on its genre and Goodreads rating. The bookstore also includes a section for younger readers, featuring picture books and board books chosen with help from Dupont’s son, Crew, who is 16 months old.

“I had to include a little spot for the kiddos as well, since I pretty much went through this whole journey with my son by my side,” she said. The Novel Nook’s schedule is updated weekly on Instagram (@thenovelnook3) and Facebook.

Your next favorite read

BY AMY LAPOINTE
Amherst Town Library Director

BIG LITTLE TRUTHS
by Liane Moriarty
Finally, a much-anticipated sequel to “Big Little Lies.” Set 10 years later, Madeline, Celeste, and Jane now have children in high school and are dealing with teenage drama and a mysterious threat.

YOU’LL BE SORRY
by Lisa Gardner
Themes of trust, survival, and buried secrets play out when newlyweds move to a small NH town for a fresh start.

SUNLIGHT FINDS YOU
by Laura Moriarty
Set in 1950s Florida, this historical coming-of-age novel explores themes of love, social class, and resilience when a forbidden teenage romance is upended by betrayal.

KATABASIS
by R.F. Kuang
This dark academia fantasy draws heavily from classical mythology and especially Dante’s Inferno, as two rival grad students descend into hell to rescue their professor’s soul.

THE JACKAL: THE RISE AND FALL OF CARLOS, THE WORLD’S FIRST SUPER-TERRORIST
by Joby Warrick
From the 1970s to the 1990s, Carlos innovated a new kind of terrorism-for-hire, complete with hijackings, hostages, airport bombings, and international assassinations. A rare interview with the mastermind himself, coupled with recently declassified documents, makes this a riveting true-crime read.



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Attorney Peter Moustakis is a longtime Amherst resident, a proud father, and an enthusiastic T-ball coach. Over the years, he has served the Amherst community as Town Moderator, Assistant Town Moderator, and Chair of the Ways and Means Committee.

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The Importance of Putting your Home into a Revocable Trust

A revocable trust, also known as a living trust, offers New Hampshire homeowners a practical way to simplify the transfer of their home and avoid probate. By placing your home into a trust, it can pass directly to beneficiaries upon death, bypassing the delays, costs, and public nature of probate proceedings. This can reduce administrative burdens, including maintaining the property and covering ongoing expenses during probate.

Revocable trusts also provide flexibility during your lifetime, allowing you to modify or revoke the trust while continuing to manage your assets. They also offer a way to balance housing security for a loved one with long-term inheritance planning and allow a designated trustee to step in if you become incapacitated.

While revocable trusts don’t provide creditor or Medicaid protection, they remain a valuable estate planning tool. Because every situation is different, working with a qualified attorney can help determine the right approach, and revisiting your plan over time ensures it continues to meet your needs.

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COMMUNITY

The Trail Ahead

BY MATT LARSON



Not all trails are made of dirt. Some ford their way over rock and soil and can actually carry you if you're willing to take the ride. Such is the case with river kayaking, something I know little about but have decided to get more acquainted with in the years ahead. It's the natural progression of exploration, I suppose: once you've seen enough things on foot, you start to wonder what everything looks like from the water.

The problem with river kayaking, though, is logistics. With hiking, if you get the whim to explore, you can throw your boots in the car and just go when-

ever you want. You don't need to wait for anybody's schedule to align with yours, and you don't have to worry about how you're going to make it back to your car (unless you get lost). But with river kayaking, you really need a friend. That way, you can drive two separate cars to your endpoint, leave one there and head to the launch point. Or if your wingperson doesn't want to paddle, they can at least drop you off and pick you up.

So, for my first exploration of the Contoocook River, I recruited my number one partner in crime. She didn't have a choice. She had asked me what I wanted to do for Father's Day and, much to her surprise, for the first time in 18 years, I had a response. She was trapped. Before she could reconsider, we were off to the Powder Mill Boat



The sun was out on the Contoocook River during a paddle in June. (Photo: M. Larson.)



A large fallen tree forced the author's wife, Liz, to portage her kayak during their adventure. (Photo: M. Larson.)

Ramp in Greenfield. After leaving her car there, we drove my truck to the North Village area in Peterborough, where I found a patch of dirt to park and launch the kayaks.

Over the years, I've kayaked the Souhegan a few times and have always found April and May to be the best times to run it. I've launched near the high school and by Kaley Park in Milford, but whenever I went in late June, I spent most of my time running aground. My hope was that the Contoocook, being deeper and broader, wouldn't pose as much of a problem on June 21, and I was mostly right. We only needed to portage over a few fallen trees near Peterborough. One of them was pretty dang big.

It was a terrific ride. As we flowed north toward Greenfield, things opened up and we took in some beautiful scenery. There was a blue heron and a green one. There were hawks, red-winged blackbirds and an osprey. We even ran into three men fishing in different spots, one of whom was fly-fishing while wading in the river. Seeing him made me feel like I was in a scene from *A River Runs Through It* and nowhere at all close to home.

In three hours, we saw so much, and my conclusion is that I can't wait to do it again. Only next time, now that we're fully into the summer months, I'm going to head north, where the waters run higher. See? I'm learning.

KIDS' CORNER

Summer at Baboosic Lake

BY ADDISON ALLAN, age 10

Hi! I'm Addison, and I would like to tell you about Baboosic Lake Town Beach in Amherst!

Baboosic Lake Town Beach is one of the highlights of my summer. It is really fun to play in. My favorite part is the boat rentals because I really like to be on the water! I also like the Rock, lifeguards, Snack Shack and raft!



Addison tried stand-up paddleboarding on Baboosic Lake this summer. (Courtesy photo.)

Baboosic Lake is an amazing place to be, and these are my top reasons for loving it:

1. I'm on their swim team.
2. I go there every day.
3. Even on hot days if you stay in the shade, it is actually cool and relaxing.
4. Baboosic swim lessons are really fun, and if you get to know the lifeguards, then you have gotten to know your instructors.
5. The Baboosic Swim Team is really awesome. Even if you don't win your race, the coaches are not upset at all as long as you tried your best.

One more thing, the best part is actually playing with your friends! Some of the things we love to do are swimming to the Rock, practicing our dives, being on swim team together, chatting, and eating our snacks together. Ice cream days are the best days followed by pizza days! Baboosic Lake is the highlight of my summer and could be yours too!

How to start a lemonade stand

BY HADLEY SBORDONE, age 8

1. Make your lemonade.
2. Get a table and put your lemonade on it.
3. Make a sign so people know you are selling lemonade.
4. Get a basket to put the money in.
5. Smile and say thank you.



Hadley and her friends split the profits and each made \$9 from their lemonade stand. (Courtesy photo.)

Hey kids! Want to see your work in the newspaper?



Send us your poems, recipes, book or movie reviews, pet spotlights, original puzzles, and more! We can't wait to see what you create!

Submit at amherstbear.org/submissions. Be sure to include your name, age, and a photo.

ALL AROUND TOWN

Town Calendar

SAT 8/1 – MON 8/31: United Way Shoe Drive. Donate new or gently used shoes for children or adults, to be distributed directly to those in need. Drop-off locations in Nashua; find list of locations at unitedwaynashua.org/event/shoes/.

SUN 8/2, 8AM: Kids' Try-athlon at Bedford Town Pool and High School. Kids ages 4-14 are invited to swim, bike, and run to benefit Friends of Aine. Find more details and register at friendsofaine.com.

SUN 8/2, 10:30AM: Monadnock Summer Lyceum series (Unitarian Church, 25 Main St., Peterborough). Live music at 10:30am; lecture starts at 11am. Details at monadnocklyceum.org/.

TUES 8/4, 5–8PM: National Night Out hosted by the Amherst Police Department at Souhegan High School. Meet your local first responders (including K-9 Niko), touch-a-truck, and enjoy a family-friendly movie in the SHS theater starting at 5:30. All are welcome.

TUES 8/4, 6:30–8PM: Concerts on the Green Summer Music Series! The Soul-town Band performs. Bring a blanket, a picnic, and enjoy.

THUR 8/6, 8:30AM: 32nd Annual Charity Golf Classic at Amherst Country Club to benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley. Registration deadline is 8/3. For more details, visit svbgc.org.

THUR 8/6, 1PM: Summer Read Aloud for incoming kindergartners at Clark School outdoor classroom. Join Clark librarian Susanna Hargreaves for stories and popsicles.

THUR 8/6, 1–2:30PM: Let's Play Mahjong at the Amherst Library. Drop-in session for players who already know how to play Chinese Mahjong.

FRI 8/7, 2–3PM: Summer Reading Program Finale Ice Cream Social at the Amherst Library. Enjoy a sweet treat as we wrap up the summer reading program. Registration required at amherstlibrary.org.

SAT 8/8, 8AM–NOON: Household Hazardous Waste Collection. 33 Newcomb Parkway, Pelham. For more details, visit nashuarpc.org/hhw/.

SUN 8/9, 10:30AM: Monadnock Summer Lyceum series (Unitarian Church, 25 Main St., Peterborough). Live music at 10:30am; lecture starts at 11am. Details at monadnocklyceum.org/.

SUN 8/9, 2–3:30PM: Amherst Land Trust Guided Walk of Grater Woods. More details at amherstlandtrust.org/events.

WEEK OF 8/10, 9AM–NOON: Summer Camp Fun at Preschool in the Village! Children ages 3-6 are invited to join us. Register at preschoolinthevillage.org/store/summer-camps.

TUES 8/11, 1–2PM: ATL Reads Book Discussion at the Amherst Library. Join us for a discussion about "All Systems Red" by Martha Wells. Registration required at amherstlibrary.org.

TUES 8/11, 6:30–8PM: Concerts on the Green Summer Music Series! Amherst Town Band performs. Bring a blanket, a picnic, and enjoy.

WED 8/12, 10AM–2PM: Sunflower Bloom Festival Trip for older adults (50+) with Amherst Recreation. Bus departs from Buck Meadow and travels to Sunfox 8th Annual Sunflower Festival in Concord, NH. Register at amherstnh.recdesk.com.

WED 8/12, 6–7PM: ATL Reads Book Discussion at the Amherst Library. Join us for a discussion about "All Systems Red" by Martha Wells. Registration required at amherstlibrary.org.

FRI 8/14, 6–8PM: Puzzle Palooza at Milford Town Hall. \$40 per team. For more details, visit milfordrec.com.

SUN 8/16, 10:30AM: Monadnock Summer Lyceum series (Unitarian Church, 25 Main St., Peterborough). Live music at 10:30am; lecture starts at 11am. Details at monadnocklyceum.org/.

MON 8/17 – THUR 8/27, 8AM–2PM: Amherst Police Department Youth Police Academy. A hands-on program designed to give students in grades 7-10 a behind-the-scenes look at law enforcement and public safety. For details, contact kcordero@amherstnh.gov.

TUES 8/18, 6:30–8PM: Concerts on the Green Summer Music Series! Tattoo performs (rescheduled from June 30). Bring a blanket, a picnic, and enjoy.

THUR 8/20, 1–2:30PM: Let's Play Mahjong at the Amherst Library. Drop-in session for players who already know how to play Chinese Mahjong.

SUN 8/23, 10:30AM: Monadnock Summer Lyceum series (Unitarian Church, 25 Main St., Peterborough). Live music at 10:30am; lecture starts at 11am. Details at monadnocklyceum.org/.

WEEK OF 8/24, 9AM–NOON: Summer Camp Fun at Preschool in the Village! Children age 3-6 are invited to join us on the playground for water play, bubbles, games, stories, and creative art projects. Must be potty trained. Register at preschoolinthevillage.org/store/summer-camps.

THUR 8/27, 5:30–6:30PM: Wilkins School Open House for incoming first graders and their families. Meet your child's teacher, see their classroom, and explore the school. Contact kbailey@sau39.org with questions.

THUR 8/27, 7–8PM: An Evening of Poetry at the Amherst Library. Poetry lovers, writers and closet poets are invited to share a poem (original or by a favorite poet). Susanna Hargreaves will guide the evening. Registration required at amherstlibrary.org.

SAT 8/29 AND SUN 8/30, 10AM–4PM: Nashua Area Artists Association annual outdoor Greeley Park Art Show in Nashua. Juried art show with dozens of local artists on display. More details at nashuaarts.org.



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Amherst Town Band celebrates 40 years

BY JOSEPH MCMULLEN
Publicity Manager, Amherst Town Band

For four decades, the Amherst Town Band has been filling parks, parades, and community celebrations with music.

Now, as the volunteer ensemble celebrates its 40th anniversary, it is marking both its rich history and a new chapter.

The band was founded in 1986 by Jean Butler, then a music teacher at Souhegan High School, after musicians who had performed in Amherst PTA productions expressed interest in continuing to play together. Under Butler's leadership, the group grew steadily, attracting musicians from across the region and expanding its performance schedule.

Today, the band includes about 35 volunteer musicians. While some are current or retired music educators, most are amateur musicians who participate simply for the enjoyment of making music and sharing it with the community.

The Amherst Town Band has become a familiar presence at the town's outdoor summer concert series, Fourth of July parade, and December tree-lighting celebration. Over the years, the ensemble has also performed throughout southern New Hampshire, in Massachusetts and Maine, and twice traveled to Milford Haven, Wales, for performances.



In 2004, the Amherst Town Band traveled to Wales and performed under the direction of Patricia McMullen. (Courtesy photo.)

The band is also navigating a leadership transition. After the current music director stepped down, three experienced conductors volunteered to share directing responsibilities while the band's executive board searches for a new music director. Butler, who recently returned to New Hampshire, has joined former music director Patricia McMullen and Gordon Estabrook, conductor of the Temple Town Band, in leading rehearsals and performances. All three also perform as members of the band.

The Amherst Town Band will celebrate its 40th anniversary with a dinner in September, honoring the musicians, directors, and volunteers who have helped sustain the ensemble since its founding. For more information, visit amhersttownband.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

Wales is often called the Land of Song because of its long tradition of community singing, brass bands, and choirs.

June Amherst Home Sales

Town Transaction Report Provided by The Corr Group



Office: 603.213.8257
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Nashua NH 03063

Address	Beds	Baths	Sq Ft	List Price	Sale Price	Sale Date
18 Winterberry Drive	4	3	2,438	\$710,000	\$745,000	6/1/26
7 Corduroy Road	2	2	1,190	\$319,000	\$330,000	6/3/26
30 Founder's Way	4	5	4,711	\$6,363,700	\$6,363,700	6/4/26
11 River Road	4	3	2,136	\$724,900	\$775,000	6/8/26
19 Mulberry Lane	2	2	1,276	\$280,000	\$380,000	6/8/26
12 Candlewood Drive	4	3	3,082	\$875,000	\$900,000	6/11/26
10 Clark Island Road	3	4	2,384	\$1,650,000	\$1,650,000	6/15/26
19 Old Milford Rd	4	4	4,156	\$1,169,900	\$1,200,000	6/15/26
1A Debbie Lane	2	2	1,260	\$535,000	\$535,000	6/15/26
5 N Meadow Road	4	2	2,977	\$775,000	\$800,000	6/15/26
7 Victoria Ridge	4	4	3,300	\$1,225,000	\$1,225,000	6/17/26
4 Schoolhouse Rd	3	2	1,680	\$595,000	\$567,000	6/17/26
8 Veterans Road	2	2	1,396	\$399,000	\$399,000	6/17/26
33 Brook Road	3	3	2,580	\$829,900	\$890,000	6/17/26
9 Tarleton Lane	3	3	2,238	\$749,900	\$775,000	6/18/26
19 Baboosic Lake Road	4	3	3,017	\$695,000	\$720,000	6/18/26
6 Newbury Drive	3	3	1,338	\$575,000	\$625,000	6/18/26
11 Fairway Drive	4	3	2,364	\$699,900	\$705,000	6/18/26
2 Mack Hill Road	3	2	1,416	\$625,000	\$640,000	6/22/26
6 Mulberry Lane	2	2	1,260	\$425,000	\$425,000	6/23/26
105 Chestnut Hill Road	4	4	2,251	\$869,000	\$975,000	6/23/26
6 Appleton Way	2	2	1,793	\$715,000	\$715,000	6/24/26
15 Martingale Road	4	3	3,136	\$799,900	\$815,000	6/24/26
2A Renee Drive	2	2	1,260	\$535,000	\$535,000	6/26/26
16 Storybrook Lane	5	5	4,251	\$1,300,000	\$1,400,000	6/26/26
7 Village Woods Drive	5	5	4,135	\$1,050,000	\$1,025,000	6/30/26
32 Hickory Drive	4	2	1,904	\$679,900	\$600,000	6/30/26
12 Ponemah Hill Road	3	2	1,050	\$599,900	\$537,500	6/30/26

Note: Square footage is above grade.

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Amherst Makerspace: A “win-win” for students and community

BY RACHEL BARKER SWEENEY

Tucked inside Amherst Middle School is a resource many residents may not realize they have access to: a makerspace filled with tools, equipment and opportunities for practical learning, creating and repairing. While students use the space during the school day for STEAM — science, technology, engineering, arts and math — it also serves the community through evening programs and open workshops.

Porter Dodge, former principal of Amherst Middle School, said the woodshop had gone through periods of limited use over the years, despite being filled with equipment and potential. After visiting other makerspaces, Dodge and founding members Brad Freeman, Marcel Chabot, and Steve Opre developed a plan to create a true makerspace in the school’s industrial arts wing. The goal was to expand hands-on learning for students while also putting the space to good use for the community.

A partnership with the town was established, the space was reorganized, and donations came from BAE Systems, the Amherst Junior Women’s Club, and others. Additional equipment was acquired over time, and membership grew to roughly 80 community members before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Today, students and community members have access to a fully equipped woodworking shop, metalworking tools, MIG and gas welding equipment, an electronics workbench,

a 3D fabrication lab, laser etching and cutting tools, large-format 3D printers, and a vinyl cutter. The makerspace also includes art rooms, a pottery wheel and kiln, a sewing room, a culinary arts classroom, computer labs, a video editing station, and large-format color poster printing.

“You want to talk about kids that were excited? We had kids working on electric circuits, CNC machines, and operating all different machinery,” Dodge said. “I was blown away to see the engagement. There were a lot of great things we did at the middle school, and that was an accomplishment I am very proud of.”

While the Amherst Makerspace is a local project, it is part of a larger international movement that encourages hands-on learning, creativity, repair, invention, and shared access to tools.

Marcel Chabot, coordinator of the Amherst Makerspace and a former AMS student, said that for the school, the partnership helps offset the cost of installing, maintaining and supporting specialized equipment while bringing in volunteers with the knowledge to keep it operating safely.

Members use the space to repair items, build projects, and learn from others with a wide range of skills.

Before the pandemic, the makerspace offered classes more regularly. Chabot hopes to expand opportunities for residents to learn woodworking, cooking, metalworking, welding, pottery and other practical skills. The home



Marcel Chabot, coordinator of the Amherst Makerspace, used the CNC machine, a favorite in the shop that uses computer software to accurately engrave materials. (Photo: R. Barker Sweeney.)

economics area, for example, includes several ovens along with counter and table space suitable for everything from preparing for a bake sale to hosting a cooking class. He encourages anyone with a practical skill to share to inquire about teaching a class.

The Amherst Makerspace hosts an open house every Thursday from 6:30 to 8 p.m., giving residents an opportunity to explore the space and try a project.

“This is a unique resource in the town of Amherst, and it is really amazing,” Chabot said. “This program supports both the adults and the kids in a win-win that is hard to find these days.”

For more information, visit amherstmakerspace.com or email admin@amherstmakerspace.com.



Henry Wisneski, a regular at the Amherst Makerspace on Thursday evenings, used leftover scraps of lumber to make a toolbox. (Photo: M. Warren.)

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