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The Amherst Bear

October 2026 | YOUR TOWN, YOUR STORIES, YOUR PAPER | amherstbear.org



A little flower made her way to Amherst Village during a past Halloween celebration, one of the town's most anticipated annual traditions. Each year, families and trick-or-treaters gather in the Village to celebrate, visit decorated homes, collect candy, and enjoy the festive atmosphere that has made Halloween in Amherst a tradition for generations. (Photo: M. Warren.)

The magic of Halloween in Amherst

Traditions that bring the community together

BY HILLARIE MCCLURE

When Halloween arrives in the Village, the familiar streets take on a different character. Historic homes glow against the darkness of an October evening, and front porches become elaborate stages. For one night, the Village feels like a story unfolding around every corner — one that has been growing with each Halloween for generations.

While the sights and traditions may change from year to year, the magic of Halloween in Amherst is nothing new. For generations, residents have gathered, dressed up, decorated their homes, and opened their doors to the community.

Halloween celebrations in Amherst have a long history. In 1973, the Lions Club began sponsoring a party for children under 12 at Wilkins School. The party included a costume contest, with the inaugural categories including most original, funniest, scariest, and the "farthest out."

The Burns family, who previously lived in the Hillsborough Bank Building at the corner of School Street and Boston Post Road, used to host an elaborate haunted house that was reportedly so frightening, it was considered a rite of passage for the older kids of Amherst.

Resident Marti Warren reflected on Halloweens past, recalling her first in Amherst in 1984, when she was told that she would need at least 500 pieces of candy for trick-or-treaters in the Village. More than four decades later, Warren is planning for at least 1,500 kids — a testament to just how much Amherst's Halloween tradition has grown.

"My kids are all married and live in New England, but they come back for Halloween every year with our 13 grandchildren," said Warren. "It's their favorite holiday. We carve 25 pumpkins for the event!"

Halloween in the Village wasn't always the concentrated effort that it is today. This year marks the 10th anniversary of Doors on the Green, an annual event where residents and businesses set up decorated doors on the Village Green and hand out candy. The event is geared toward younger children, who can trick-or-treat earlier in the evening in a calmer atmosphere.

The idea for Doors on the Green came from resident Marcel Chabot, who

Continued on page 3

Amherst celebrates its four-legged friends

Two beloved events return this October

BY DIANE TROVATO

For many people, pets are more than companions. They are family, sharing everyday routines, important milestones and some of life's most meaningful chapters. This October, Amherst residents will have two opportunities to celebrate that special bond: the Blessing of the Animals at the Congregational Church on Sunday, Oct. 4, and the eighth annual Goldens on the Green on Sunday, Oct. 25.

A blessing for all creatures

Pastor Charlotte Bell brought back the Blessing of the Animals last October after a long hiatus. Five people attended the brief service in the church's Memorial Garden, bringing dogs on leashes, cats in carriers, and other animals, including stuffed animals. Chairs were spaced apart for animals with different dispositions, while water and dog waste bags were provided.

Bell blessed each animal individually, a moment that proved unexpectedly emotional last year.

"A few of the people were so moved, they shed tears. It moved me," Bell said.

This year's event falls on Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, known as a lover of nature and animals. The tradition of blessing animals is inspired

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A proposed $1.7 million settlement follows litigation over PFAS contamination in private wells near the Amherst Fire Station. More town and state government news, pp. 4-5. (Photo: S. Morison.)



Sports
Mason Carson (No. 27) and the Souhegan boys soccer team took the field at the start of the 2026 season. More fall sports news, pp. 8-9. (Photo: Robert Tyszko.)



Community
Dr. Diane Shieh and her son, Justin, trekked to the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro this summer. More community news, pp. 10-11. (Courtesy photo.)



Kids' Corner
Meet Oreo! Adelyn Bartels introduces her new kitten, plus a Halloween word search to get you in the spooky spirit, p. 13. (Courtesy photo.)

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The Amherst Bear

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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.

The Amherst Bear is a 501(c)3 nonprofit monthly community newspaper that is mailed for free to every Amherst address, sharing reliable local news and practical resources for residents of all ages. We rely on donations and paid advertising to fulfill our mission. Please consider making a contribution to support The Amherst Bear. Visit **www.amherstbear.org** to learn more.

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Correction: In the September issue, a photo caption incorrectly identified yoga studio space as The Attentive Practice. The studio is actually shared by Simple Soul Yoga, Peaceful Journeys, and The Attentive Practice. We apologize for the error.

Join the 500 Supporters Campaign

Become a Sustaining Supporter starting at **$10 per month** to help support our local nonprofit newspaper. **Scan the QR code** or visit **www.AmherstBear.org/Support-Our-Cause**.

Donation checks can be mailed to The Amherst Bear, PO Box 104, Amherst, NH 03031.





Four-legged friends, *continued from page 1*

by St. Francis, who was known for praying in the mountains surrounded by wildlife.

For Bell, the service recognizes the important role animals play in their families.

"They are such a part of their human family," Bell said, noting that pets share chapters of their owners' lives and are present for significant moments.

She hopes the service offers people "a moment of joy and pride in caring for their pet" and a sense of healing for those who have lost a beloved animal.

There is no charge to attend. The service will be held in the Congregational Church's Memorial Garden. For more information, visit **ccamherst.org** or **facebook.com/ccamherst**.



Liz MacMillan and her dog, Henri, attended last year's Blessing of the Animals. At left, Pastor Charlotte Bell greeted Henri. (Courtesy photo.)

Goldens take over the Green

Three weeks later, on Oct. 25, Amherst's historic Village Green will once again be filled with golden retrievers and the people who love them.

Amherst resident Bill Swift started Goldens on the Green eight years ago after getting a golden retriever in retirement and wanting to meet more people who shared his love of the breed. The first gathering attracted about 20 goldens. Over the next five years, the event roughly doubled in size each year, and last year's gathering drew 240 dogs and more than 400 people.

The event has become a community effort, with Operation Delta Dog providing tents, tables, equipment and volunteers. The organization provides service dogs to veterans, and all donations from Goldens on the Green go to Operation Delta Dog. Last year, participants raised $3,000 for the organization in just two hours.

This year's event will again feature a Pup Cup truck, kissing booth, fashion show, pool diving and an agility course. While goldens are the stars, other breeds are welcome, too, with a designated "protest area" for visitors and their dogs.

Swift expects the event to draw people from well beyond Amherst. Last year, attendees traveled from as far away as New Jersey and Long Island.

Last year's event benefited from perfect weather and a picture-perfect day on the Village Green. But for Swift, the most important part of Goldens on the Green isn't the activities or even the number of dogs.

"I hope they take away smiles and joy," he said.

He recalled meeting a woman from Cape Cod who had undergone brain surgery just four weeks earlier but was determined to attend. She told him, "Bill, this is like being in heaven."

For more information, visit **facebook.com/goldensonthegreen**.



The beautiful weather drew over 400 people and 240 dogs to last year's Goldens on the Green event. (Courtesy photo.)

Volunteers needed

Volunteers are needed to help refurbish and reset veterans' flat stones at Meadowview Cemetery (located on Foundry Street near the Village) ahead of Veterans Day (Nov. 11). Volunteers can help on their own schedules; assignments will be provided by Marie Grella.

Those interested in helping honor our local veterans are encouraged to volunteer. For more information or to sign up, contact Marie Grella at **marietgrella@gmail.com**.



Overgrowth can take a toll on cemetery markers, making regular care essential to preserving these lasting tributes. (Courtesy photo.)

Halloween, *continued from page 1*

noticed that the Village had naturally become a destination for trick-or-treating because of the concentration of homes there. He saw an opportunity to create a more organized event.

"I took a door to the center of town and onto the Green and started handing out candy," said Chabot.

The idea was well-received, so Chabot approached the town about turning it into a fundraiser. Today, participants purchase lots along the paved path on the Green, with proceeds supporting the Amherst Makerspace.

Residents and businesses can register for a door through the Amherst Recreation Department. Participants can either bring their own door or receive one from event organizers. Early in the event's history, Chabot had a friend who was replacing the doors on a house and happened to have about 25 old doors sitting in a barn. It was a serendipitous find that helped give Doors on the Green its name and, quite literally, gave the event its doors.

"We like it to be spooky for the little kids, but not scary," said Chabot, who confirmed that there will be a good mix of candy and non-candy treats based on the preferences of parents. "We also make sure that the event is accessible and sensory-friendly," he continued, highlighting the thought that goes into bringing this event to life.



Trick-or-treaters of all ages get into the Halloween spirit. These two chose the Lorax as their costume inspiration. (Photo: M. Warren.)



This decorated door, sponsored by the Amherst Recreation Department, was a stop at last year's Doors on the Green. (Courtesy photo.)

This year, Chabot is anticipating the biggest event yet. With Halloween falling on a Saturday, he is hopeful that the weather will cooperate and 40 lots can be sold. He's anticipating 2,500-2,800 kids. Those numbers seem likely, as historical figures show an average of between 1,800 and 2,500 trick-or-treaters have participated annually.

For those who don't live in the Village but want to contribute to the Halloween tradition, candy donations from the community can help keep Village homes well-stocked. This year, collection boxes organized by Girl Scout Cadette Troop 61210 and Junior Troop 63255 will be available beginning Oct. 1 at Moulton's Market, the Homestead, and the Amherst Library.

For all the numbers, decorations, costumes and candy, perhaps what makes Halloween in Amherst so special is that it is about more than Halloween. It's about neighbors opening their doors, families coming back year after year, and a tradition that continues to bring the community together.

To register for a door, visit **amherstnh.recdesk.com**. To volunteer at Doors on the Green, contact **amherstmakerspace@outlook.com**.

Halloween 2026
Saturday, Oct. 31

Doors on the Green: 5-7 p.m.
Village Trick-or-Treat: 6-8 p.m.

ROAD CLOSURES

Road closures for Halloween typically include most secondary streets in the Village, although closures are subject to change. Expected closures include:

- Foundry Street
- Davis Lane
- Carriage Lane
- Main Street
- Church Street
- School Street
- Part of Middle Street
- Cross Street
- Part of Courthouse Road
- Manchester Road (Main Street to Mack Hill)

Through roads, including Boston Post Road, Mack Hill, Manchester Road (Mack Hill to Limbo Lane/Narragansett Road), Amherst Street, Middle Street south of Amherst Street, and Courthouse Road south of Amherst Street, will remain open to through traffic.

FUN FACT

The first jack-o'-lanterns were carved from turnips, not pumpkins.





Why I support The Bear

BY KIM AHLGREN

I missed the Amherst Citizen when it closed. As the Student Art Show coordinator for the Friends of the Amherst Library, I had relied on the local paper to promote our annual show and share photos from the reception. Social media is useful, but important news can quickly disappear beneath everything else in a feed.

So when The Amherst Bear launched, contributing was a no-brainer. I understood the value of having a local paper — a place where community organizations can share what they're doing and residents can see what's happening around them.

As chair of the Friends of the Amherst Library, I've seen that value firsthand. The Bear has helped us promote our open houses and art receptions, featuring both student and professional artists, through its community calendar. For our nonprofit, having a local newspaper gives us another way to reach the people we serve.

But The Bear has also given me something I didn't expect: a way to keep my son connected to Amherst while he's away at college.

This spring, I read an article about the Souhegan Nordic team, which my son had been part of. I thought about cutting it out and mailing it to him, just as my father used to send me newspaper clippings when I was in college in the '80s. Then I noticed a photo of the winter track team, which included several of his friends. There was also an article about an Earth Day event at our neighbor's Christmas tree farm, where my son had worked.



Kim Ahlgren and her husband, Kyle Fox, with their son, Kasen Fox, at his high school graduation in June 2025. Ahlgren says The Amherst Bear helps keep her son connected to the community he grew up in. (Courtesy photo.)

So I mailed him the entire April issue, wrapped around some cookies.

"Nice!" was his reply.

If you have teenagers, you know that's a win.

The Bear is helping my son stay connected to his hometown while he's away — an unexpected reminder of just how much a local newspaper can mean.

BECOME A SUPPORTER TODAY! Your support makes it possible for The Bear to continue telling the stories that keep our community connected.

To donate online, visit **AmherstBear.org/Support-Our-Cause**. Donation checks can be mailed to The Amherst Bear, PO Box 104, Amherst, NH 03031.

TOWN AND STATE GOVERNMENT

Understanding public school funding in New Hampshire

BY MEGAN MURRAY
State Representative
Member of the House Education Policy and Administration Committee

You might be wondering how public schools are funded in New Hampshire. Stay with me – it's complicated!

Generally, 73% of revenue (money into the district) for New Hampshire's public schools comes from local property taxpayers. In terms of special education funding, nearly 85% of associated costs come from local property taxpayers as a result of insufficient financial support from the state and federal levels.

Additionally, state funding has not kept up with inflation. This year, the New England Consumer Price Index has inflation for 2026 sitting at 3.7%. Routine adjustments to state aid sit well below that and have not kept pace with the cost of living or inflation rates.

Currently, the state contributes approximately 10% of New Hampshire's overall special education costs. The federal government contributes about 5%, or approximately $58 million in fiscal year 2026, toward special education reimbursements. The overall yearly cost of special education in New Hampshire is roughly $900 million statewide. Recent court rulings have continued to call for the state to provide a more appropriate level of funding for education and special education.

Local taxpayer funds also cover special education costs associated with students who attend schools outside their resident districts, including charter schools, as required by state law.

Another challenge is the timing of reimbursements. State and federal special education reimbursements for eligible services can take 12 to 18 months to reach school districts. Districts must therefore pay those costs up front and cannot offset them until reimbursement funds arrive.

When developing the following year's budget and determining the amount to request from taxpayers, districts use data and projections based on prior-year needs and costs, as well as enrollment projections, to estimate future expenses.

Other major expenses, including teacher retirement benefits, transportation, and health insurance, have also increasingly fallen to local taxpayers. The state no longer contributes to Group I retirement benefits; at one point, the state covered as much as 35% of those benefits. Health insurance costs have increased significantly for many districts, while transportation remains a substantial portion of school budgets, with fuel and other costs continuing to rise.

State building aid is another challenge. The program is essentially frozen, with much of the available funding going toward debt for public school buildings constructed before 2011. At the state level, fiscal year 2027 set aside $12 million to pay that old state building aid debt, while no additional funding for new projects was included in the budget, except for three projects that the New Hampshire Department of Education determined to be extreme emergencies. Although buildings and projects may technically qualify for aid, funding remains limited.

With limited state building aid available, school districts considering major building projects may need to rely on local funding, including bonds that spread the cost of a project over multiple years.

Until next time, that's your 30,000-foot view of public school funding.

Fire Prevention Month: Know your way out

BY MATTHEW EMMONS
Head of Recruiting, Amherst Fire and EMS

October is Fire Prevention Month, a time when firefighters encourage everyone to take a few minutes to think about something we hope you never have to use: your home fire escape plan.

As firefighters, we see firsthand how quickly a fire can change a situation. A fire that starts as a small problem can produce dangerous smoke and heat within minutes. When an alarm sounds, there may not be much time to think. That is why preparation is so important.

One of the most effective ways to prepare your family is by practicing EDITH — Exit Drills In The Home.

EDITH is simple: Create a fire escape plan, make sure everyone in the home knows two ways out of every bedroom when possible, choose a safe meeting place outside, and practice the plan regularly.

When conducting an EDITH drill, make it as realistic as possible. Start by sounding the smoke alarms and have everyone leave the house using their planned escape routes. Practice staying low if there is smoke, feeling doors before opening them, and remembering, "Get out and stay out." Never go back inside for people, pets, or belongings. Once outside, call 911 from a safe location.

Parents should also make sure children understand that a smoke alarm is an important warning, not something to ignore. Firefighters recommend practicing your escape plan at different times of day so everyone knows what to do, even if they are awakened from a deep sleep.



Firefighter-in-training Finn Baizel, age 5, was the lucky winner of a visit to the Amherst Fire Station as part of the Amherst Library's summer reading program. He learned about fire safety and received a tour of the station. (Courtesy photo.)

October is also a good time to test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, replace batteries when needed, and make sure everyone in your household knows the escape plan.

We hope you never need to use your escape plan. But if that day comes, practicing EDITH could make all the difference.

Take a few minutes this October: make a plan, practice it, and know your way out. Then stop by the Amherst Fire Station on Saturday, Oct. 3, for our Fire Safety Open House. Tour the station, learn about fire safety, and bring the kids for an obstacle course and touch-a-truck activities.

Keeping our kids safe online

BY CAPT. JUSTIN GEROME
Amherst Police Department

These days, phones, video games and social media are a big part of our kids' lives. They are great ways for kids to have fun and keep in touch with friends and family, but like anything else, there are some things parents should keep an eye on.

At the Amherst Police Department, we encourage parents to talk with their kids about what they are doing online. You don't need to know every new app or understand every social media trend. Sometimes, simply asking your child what they are doing and who they are talking to can make a big difference.

It's important to remind kids that not everyone they meet online is necessarily who they say they are. Talk to them about sharing personal information, their location, passwords, or pictures with people they don't know. It's also worth having a conversation about cyberbullying and what they should do if someone sends them something that makes them uncomfortable.

Most importantly, make sure your kids know they can come to you when something goes wrong. They should never feel like they can't tell a parent or trusted adult because they're worried about getting in trouble.

Parents should also take some time to know what apps their kids are using, check their privacy settings, and have a general idea of what they are doing online. This isn't about spying on your kids. It's about being involved and helping them make good decisions.

The internet and social media aren't going anywhere, so the best thing we can do is stay involved and keep talking with our kids.

From all of us at the Amherst Police Department, stay safe, look out for one another, and remember that staying connected means more than just being online.



For young people today, phones are a common way to communicate, connect, and explore the world. (Photo: S. Morison.)

TOWN AND STATE GOVERNMENT

Board of selectmen approves $1.7 million PFAS settlement

Vote followed dispute over potential liability

BY STACEY MORISON

The Amherst Board of Selectmen voted 3-1 on Aug. 10 to approve a proposed $1.7 million settlement resolving litigation brought by 15 Amherst residents over alleged PFAS contamination of private drinking-water wells. One board member was absent and did not vote.

The settlement, which remains subject to court approval, would resolve claims alleging personal injury and diminished property value related to PFAS contamination associated with the town's historical use of aqueous film-forming foam, or AFFF, at the fire station on Amherst Street.

Under the agreement, Amherst would pay $500,000 within 30 days of court approval, with the remaining $1.2 million due within 30 days following the March 2027 town election. The board of selectmen intends to recommend financing the settlement through a multiyear bond, which Amherst voters are expected to consider in March. If the bond is not approved, the $1.2 million balance would instead be appropriated through the town's budget process, according to Town Administrator Lincoln Daley.

The town denies any wrongdoing, negligence, fault, or liability arising from or related to the alleged use, storage, handling, release, disposal, migration, or presence of PFAS.

According to Daley, the board, in consultation with legal counsel, evaluated the legal risks, anticipated costs of continued litigation, and potential financial exposure associated with the claims. The board determined that the settlement was reasonable after weighing those factors.

"Taking all circumstances into account, this compromise emerged as the most balanced and effective resolution for all sides, bringing a fair close to the matter," Board Chair Danielle Pray said in a statement provided after the meeting.

The town's insurance coverage through Primex does not include spills or environmental contamination among its listed coverages, according to Daley. As a result, the town does not expect its insurance to cover the settlement.

Selectman John D'Angelo was the lone dissenting vote. In a statement before the vote on Aug. 10, he argued that the proposed settlement was unnecessarily high and that the town should take the case to trial.

D'Angelo said the town has legal exposure for damages associated with two documented AFFF training sessions at the fire station between 1988 and 2000. He said state law limits the town's potential liability to $1 million per incident, or $2 million for the two sessions. At $1.7 million, D'Angelo argued, the settlement would require the town to pay 85% of its potential maximum liability without taking the case to trial.

D'Angelo went on to say that the town's fire department had followed recommended practices at the time AFFF was used and questioned why Amherst taxpayers should bear the cost when manufacturers and distributors of PFAS-containing firefighting foam have faced litigation elsewhere.

"I oppose this settlement," D'Angelo said. "In my judgment, we should take this case to trial."

Pray defended the settlement, saying that rejecting it would expose the town to additional legal costs and uncertainty.

The settlement would resolve the claims brought by the 15 plaintiffs named in the lawsuit, according to Daley.

The PFAS contamination was identified in private wells in the area surrounding Amherst Street, Cobbler Lane, and Thatcher Drive in 2022. The town responded by providing bottled water to affected households and connecting affected properties to the Pennichuck water system.

Investigations by the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services and the town's environmental consultant identified PFAS contamination in soil at the fire station. The investigations indicated that contamination at the site was likely contributing to PFAS contamination in groundwater and private wells south of the station.

The town has continued investigating and addressing contamination at the fire station and has taken steps to limit further migration of PFAS from the property.

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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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Estate Planning for Newlyweds: Building a Strong Foundation Together

Marriage is an exciting milestone filled with new opportunities, shared goals, and plans for the future. While many newlyweds focus on buying a home, combining finances, or starting a family, estate planning is often overlooked.

A thoughtful estate plan helps ensure your wishes are honored and your loved ones are protected if the unexpected happens. For newly married couples in New Hampshire, key documents may include wills, durable powers of attorney, and advance healthcare directives. It is also important to review beneficiary designations on retirement accounts, life insurance policies, and other assets to confirm they reflect your current intentions.

Planning for your future together starts with a solid foundation, and estate planning is an important part of that process. At Sowerby & Moustakis Law PLLC, we help couples create estate plans tailored to your unique goals and circumstances. Estate planning is not just for those with significant assets. It is for anyone who wants to protect the people they love and make important decisions on their own terms.

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SCHOOL NEWS

Calling all fourth-grade leaders

BY PETER CIPPARONE
Assistant Principal, Clark-Wilkins School

This fall, Wilkins School will once again offer several leadership opportunities for fourth graders. We believe older students can be important teachers and mentors for younger students and are capable of taking on meaningful roles within the school community. Below, some of last year's student leaders share what their leadership group did and what was involved. Fourth graders are encouraged to apply for these exciting opportunities! Be sure to complete the application sheet and return it to your homeroom teacher before the deadline.







Principal's Council

By members of the 2025-2026 Principal's Council

Principal's Council is a group of fourth graders that makes school decisions and talks with the principals about important school issues. Two students from each fourth-grade classroom will be picked to be on Principal's Council. Principal's Council lasts the full school year.

Principal's Council has a lot of responsibilities. The first is we say the Hootie Shoutouts and recite the Pledge of Allegiance over the announcements every morning. Another responsibility is setting up projects for the school, such as the sticky note project last year for Teacher Appreciation Week. Another project we did was keeping track of the Winter Olympics on a bulletin board.

Principal's Council is fun because it helps you gain courage by speaking during announcements, and you get to create fun and important projects that the whole school will see! You should apply because you will help make the school a better place for all!

Recess Rangers

By Isla Coogan, Angelina Diaz Mejia, Aneliese Meyer, and John Ricci

Recess Rangers are students in fourth grade who help first and second graders at recess. Your job is to solve problems at recess and help keep the younger kids safe. Some problems you should expect to help with are arguments, kids shoving each other, kids crying or getting hurt, or kids doing something unsafe. If you see a student doing something dangerous, shut it down. You can also join in some of the games the younger kids are playing, like gaga ball or football.

Recess Rangers have meetings to talk about what is happening at recess. You will have one day a week when you're a Recess Ranger. It's your job to remember what time to go outside, so you need to be responsible.

Being a Recess Ranger can be hard because you have to help lots of kids, but we're still happy that we got to do it.

Joey's Club

By Calla Franklin, Quinn Glenny, and Amelia Graham

Joey's Club is about doing things with Joey, the therapy dog. There are two sessions of Joey's Club, one in the fall/winter and one in the spring. At the end of each session, there is a party for the members of the club.

There are so many fun things you'll get to do in Joey's Club. During the meetings, you get to learn Joey's commands and practice them. Some of his commands are heel, sit, and down. You also learn how to put the gentle leader and the leash on Joey and how to handle him when you walk. Remember, you're in control.

Towards the end of your session, you'll get to visit classrooms and show them some of Joey's commands and even do a special project with him. If it's nice out, sometimes you'll get to go outside with other Joey's Club members to play frisbee with him!

(*All photos courtesy of Wilkins School.*)



Building schools that will serve the next generation

BY MICHAEL BERRY
Superintendent of Schools SAU 39

As we began this school year, I wrote about the shared purpose that connects our schools and communities. That shared responsibility extends beyond the learning taking place in classrooms today. It also requires us to consider the schools we will leave to the generations that follow.

Responsible stewardship means using taxpayer resources carefully. It also means providing students and employees with safe, effective, and appropriate learning environments. These responsibilities are not in conflict. They must guide our decisions together.

Facilities planning is ultimately educational planning. The condition, design, and capacity of a school directly affect how students learn and how educators serve them. Classrooms must support whole-group instruction, small-group learning, specialized programming, intervention, and collaboration. Schools must also provide appropriate ventilation, accessibility, security, technology, and space for confidential student services.

Across SAU 39, we must continually balance immediate repairs, long-term capital needs, affordability, and the educational experience of our students. This challenge is particularly evident at Wilkins, where much of the infrastructure is aging and the building's configuration no longer fully supports current educational programming. Routine maintenance and targeted repairs have extended the building's useful life, but they cannot indefinitely resolve underlying concerns involving major systems, instructional space, accessibility, safety, and reliance on portable classrooms.

Major public investments require careful analysis, transparency, community participation, and an honest discussion of trade-offs. Community members should understand not only what is being considered, but why it is needed, what alternatives have been evaluated, and what the long-term financial implications may be.

Affordability must remain central to this work. However, delaying necessary improvements also carries consequences. Aging systems become more expensive to maintain, emergency repairs can disrupt learning, and repeated short-term investments may not address the root of the problem. Responsible stewardship is not simply about spending less today. It is about making thoughtful decisions that protect the public's investment and serve students well for decades.

People may disagree about the best path forward. That disagreement is both expected and valuable when it remains grounded in reliable information, respect for one another, and a shared commitment to students.

As we settle into fall, I remain grateful for communities that have consistently invested in public education. Together, we can honor that legacy by responsibly caring for the schools our students need today, while thoughtfully planning for the students who will enter our classrooms tomorrow.

SCHOOL NEWS

Understanding reading screening and instruction

BY DR. KIMBERLY SARFDE

My two youngest children attended Amherst schools, where I saw firsthand the care, dedication, and thoughtfulness teachers and staff bring to literacy instruction. Like many parents, I sometimes wondered whether my children were developing the reading skills they needed. New Hampshire law helps answer that question by setting expectations for instruction and screening.

Beginning July 1, 2027, RSA 189:53 will require districts and chartered public schools that provide elementary education to deliver measurable, evidence-based literacy instruction through fifth grade. The law calls for explicit, systematic instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding and encoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. It also addresses writing, speaking, and listening. These requirements reflect a large body of research showing that children benefit from systematic instruction in the skills needed to recognize words and understand text.

A separate law, RSA 200:59, already requires public and chartered public schools to screen students in kindergarten through third grade for potential indicators of dyslexia and related disorders. The initial screening must occur within 60 school days of a student's entry into public school and be repeated at least once during that school year and at least twice yearly through third grade. Schools must inform parents of the results.

A screening result identifying potential risk factors is not a diagnosis, but it should prompt attention. If a student does not meet grade-level benchmarks in specific foundational skills, the school must conduct a secondary assessment within 30 days to determine whether the student needs modified, differentiated, or supplemental evidence-based reading instruction or a referral for a special education evaluation.

Families do not need specialized training to help at home. Reading aloud together builds language, vocabulary, knowledge, and comprehension. Practicing letter-sound connections and encouraging children to sound out unfamiliar words reinforces phonics instruction. At conferences, ask specific questions: How is my child doing with decoding? Is reading accurate and fluent? What do the screening results show?

If you are concerned, ask what instruction or intervention will be provided, how often it will occur, and how progress will be measured and shared. If difficulties persist or a disability is suspected, parents may request a special education evaluation.

Every child deserves timely support before small difficulties grow. Understanding the law and asking focused questions can help families partner effectively with schools. Remember, your child's teacher wants to work closely with you to help your child become a strong, capable, confident reader.

For more information about how these literacy requirements are addressed in SAU 39 schools, visit the district's curriculum website at **sites.google.com/sau39.org/sau39/curriculum/curriculum**.



Reading together is one of the simplest ways to support early literacy. Former teacher and Amherst resident Mary Ireland visited the library and shared a story with her granddaughter, Maeve O'Rourke, age 2. (Photo: S. Morison.)

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SPORTS

Strong team culture makes Souhegan soccer a program to watch

BY OWEN CONFORTI
Junior, Souhegan High School

The boys varsity soccer team at Souhegan High School enters the 2026 season with a strong sense of optimism. After a 2025 campaign that saw the team fail to qualify for the playoffs, everyone in the locker room seems intent on turning the page to 2026.

The team's head coach, Elvis Zukovic, is excited about the soccer yet to be played, saying the Sabers are "eager to build on the success of the last couple of years and make a deeper playoff run."

Led by junior attackers Eric Davis and Maddox Uehling, the offense could be a regular goal-scoring threat. Davis and Uehling played primarily in the midfield last season and had not regularly seen minutes up front together until this fall. Sophomores Mason Carson and Nathan Emerson are "stepping into greater leadership roles," according to their coach.



Sophomore Rob Goodhue (No. 28) signaled to his teammates on Sept. 11. The Sabers lost to Contoocook Valley, 0-2. (Photo: Robert Tyszko.)

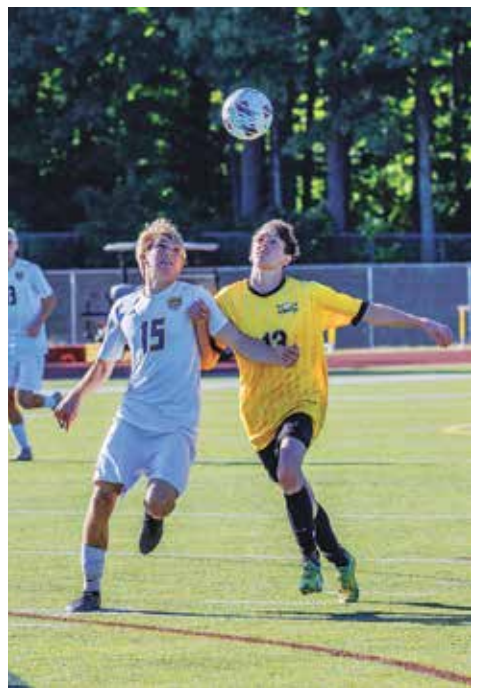
Defensively, junior Grayson Daly will be important to the team's success. He's held down the center back position for three straight seasons and will provide Souhegan with some continuity at the position. Junior goalkeeper Jeremy Jagentenfl also has plenty of experience at his position.

Despite the squad's youth, the leadership of two seniors could also prove to be pivotal. Midfielder Carpenter Berube and defender Colin Ellis-Marmonti are playing their last seasons for the Sabers. For Ellis-Marmonti, it will also be his first as a member of the varsity team. As for Berube, he has been described by his teammates, Daly and Davis, as an experienced leader.

Among the team's new additions, sophomore Cole Bison is one to watch. Bison will likely play serious minutes for the team after returning to the sport of soccer this fall, adding to the squad's depth.

What has really stood out, however, is the team's culture. "I think the commitment is there," said Daly. "When I look at the culture, now that we have guys who have played under the same coach at Souhegan, pretty much everyone on the team is ready to go." Zukovic is heading into his fourth year with the Sabers.

Davis shared a similar sentiment, saying, "I can feel the team already going in a new direction. We have a strong, youthful core of players, and I am looking forward to seeing what we can accomplish."



Senior Colin Ellis-Marmonti (No. 13) battled for the ball against a Contoocook Valley player during the Sabers' home match on Sept. 11. (Photo: Robert Tyszko.)

Ultimately, there is a real motivation to perform at a high level among this squad. Zukovic acknowledged that "the competition within our division has grown stronger in recent years," but also said, "this group has the potential to once again surprise opponents and exceed expectations."

Girls volleyball looking for a successful year

BY BRIELLE POWERS
Team Captain

With several experienced players returning to the court, the 2026 season brings an opportunity for the Sabers' girls volleyball team to build on last year's success while continuing to develop as a cohesive group. The returning players will play a crucial role in providing leadership, while the team's newcomers will bring new energy and talent to the lineup. The team's expectations this year are to work hard each day and be attentive and eager to learn. The players are expected to compete for every point, a standard that has been established in practice throughout the preseason.

Junior captains Addisyn Boyer, a setter, and Brielle Powers, an outside hitter, will lead the team this season. Both will be key contributors on the court, and as part of the team's "Own the 900" motto, Boyer and Powers plan to challenge their teammates to own every opportunity and moment on their side of the court — the 900 square feet that make up their half — and give their all in every game.

The starting lineup will also feature several players expected to see significant playing time throughout the season. Freshman right side Alina Van Regenmorter, sophomores Emmy Rucker and Charlotte York at middle, sophomore libero/defensive specialist Sasha Turbal, junior outside hitter Madison Pettus, and senior libero/defensive specialist Kylie Shannon will round out the team.



Addisyn Boyer (No. 23) set the ball to Charlotte York, who prepared for a hit during the team's scrimmage against Bedford on Sept. 2. (Photo: Amanda Benson.)



Welcome to SAU 39

Preston Yerrington has joined the district as its new assistant athletic director. Yerrington brings experience in athletic operations, coaching and program leadership, along with a master's degree in sport management and a certificate in athletic administration from Southern New Hampshire University. Most recently, he served as assistant director of operations at Prospects Athletics at The Sports Mill in Manchester and previously coached baseball at Trinity High School. In his new role, Yerrington will work with students, coaches, families, and staff to support a positive and successful experience for SAU 39 student-athletes. (Photo: M. Warren.)

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SPORTS

Souhegan golf eyes return to the top this season

BY JD CONFORTI
Junior, Souhegan High School

After winning three consecutive state championships, the Souhegan High School golf team came up just one stroke short of the championship during the 2025 season. This season, the Sabers are hoping to reclaim the Division II title.

Already this fall, Souhegan has demonstrated the same dedication and talent that have made the team so successful in the past, noted Coach Eric Kostecki. Players have shown their commitment to the team by putting in consistent hard work and practicing throughout the summer for the 2026 season. Practices at Amherst Country Club and Ponemah Green have focused on a variety of skills, including chipping and putting at the range.

The team has also emphasized the mental preparation needed for important golf matches, especially among its younger players.

"Golf is such a mental sport," said Kostecki. "While we compete as a team, out on the course it's just you against yourself, so being mentally prepared is essential. Composure, a level head, and a positive attitude are what separate good rounds from great ones."

At the heart of any great team are its players, and the Souhegan golf team is no exception. Senior team captain Jake Wilson is a key leader on the team, carrying momentum from his second-place individual finish at the 2025 state tournament into this upcoming season. Other returning golfers include seniors Patrick Bryson, Alex Trudel, and Gus Stevenson, as well as junior Ian Kaveney. Tyler Hartson, an up-and-coming player for Souhegan, has already shown talent on the team, demonstrating that Souhegan golf has a promising future ahead.

Among both players and coaches, there is a feeling of optimism about the season. Kostecki stated, "The team's outlook for the season is very promising. We've been fortunate to have experienced and talented golfers these past few years, and this season is no exception."



The Souhegan High School golf team is looking forward to a strong 2026 season as returning players and newcomers come together on the course. (Courtesy photo.)

At the opening match at Owl's Nest, Souhegan started the season with a second-place performance, ahead of both Plymouth and Timberlane and just three strokes behind St. Thomas. Wilson shot a 36, Souhegan's lowest score, followed by Bryson and Kaveney, who each shot a 37.

As for the rest of the season, the team has a clear goal in mind: the championship. Junior Graham Hayes said, "We won three years in a row and then lost by one stroke last year, so we want to get back on top."

Sabers return with championship experience

BY KELLI BRALEY
Athletic Director, SAU 39

The Souhegan High School field hockey team is off to an exciting start this season, returning nearly its entire roster from last year's championship squad after graduating just two players. That level of experience has helped the Sabers build strong chemistry and confidence early in the season.

With a combination of veteran leadership, developing players, and a commitment to playing for one another, Souhegan is looking to build on last year's success while continuing to grow throughout the season. The team's energy, work ethic, and depth have contributed to a strong start, and the Sabers are looking forward to what lies ahead.



Taking a knee at the St. Thomas game on Aug. 28 are Abby Mayo, Mariellah Dart, Oriannah Dart, and Ella Russell. (Photo: Robert Tyszko.)



Senior Avery Wyborney showed focus and determination in the team's first game of the season against St. Thomas on Aug. 28. The Sabers won 5-0. (Photo: Robert Tyszko.)

FUN FACT

Before wooden golf tees were invented in 1899, golfers built small mounds of wet sand to tee up.





COMMUNITY

Growing together through Girl Scouts

BY HILLARIE MCCLURE

Growing up, Tabatha Moriarity wasn't a Girl Scout, but she has learned firsthand the value Girl Scouts has brought to her daughters' lives.

"There's just something about it. I'd love for every girl to try it once," Tabatha said.

Her daughters, Annabelle and Magnolia, became involved in Girl Scouts seven years ago. When COVID-19 hit, Magnolia's Daisy troop needed someone to take the lead, so Tabatha became a troop leader in September 2020.

"We met outside in the fall and winter to ensure proper social distancing, but regardless of how cold it may have been, we were just happy to be together," she said.

Since then, the Moriarity family has become deeply involved with Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains. Within the past year alone, Annabelle earned a Silver Award, Magnolia earned a Bronze Award, and Tabatha received both the Volunteer of Excellence and July Volunteer of the Month awards.

Annabelle's Silver Award is the highest honor a Girl Scout in grades six through eight can earn. After learning about book deserts, or places where people do not have access to books, she collected more than 1,000 donated books from the community and created literacy kits that included books, craft supplies, and literacy resources. The kits were donated to public schools in Nashua, local Boys & Girls Clubs, the Nashua Children's Home, and other organizations in the community.

Magnolia earned her Bronze Award alongside four other girls from Amherst Troop 60162 for their project, "The Patriots of Amherst, NH." The girls developed cemetery maps and biographies of each Amherst patriot who fought in the American Revolution.

In addition to receiving the Bronze Award, Magnolia was also recognized for the project through the inaugural Civics in Action: 50 Students, 50 Stars program. The initiative honored students in grades K-12 who have applied foundational knowledge to civic engagement activities that have enhanced the lives of others. Magnolia's fellow troop member, Amherst resident Arwyn Westbrook, was also recognized as one of the 50 honorees.

While her daughters have earned honors for their accomplishments, Tabatha has been recognized for her dedication and commitment as a volunteer. She works to ensure inclusivity for all girls, meeting them where they are and helping them grow into more confident and capable versions of themselves.

For the Moriarity family, the Girl Scout experience is far from over. This fall, Troops 60162 and 58250 will participate in a camporee at nearby Camp Kettleford, help collect Halloween candy for Amherst Village trick-or-treating, and compete in a Pinewood Derby with local Cub Scout Pack 613. Magnolia's troop also hopes to visit New York City in the new year.



Annabelle, Magnolia, and Tabatha Moriarity (from left) have been involved with the Girl Scouts for seven years. (Courtesy photo.)



In May, Magnolia received special recognition from New Hampshire Secretary of State David Scanlan as part of the Civics in Action: 50 Students, 50 Stars program. (Courtesy photo.)



COMMUNITY

Amherst mother-son duo takes on Africa's highest peak

BY STACEY MORISON

For nine months, Dr. Diane Shieh worked her way from "the couch to Kilimanjaro."

The long-time Amherst resident had never considered herself a mountain climber or even a routine hiker. In fact, she has a simpler way of describing her outdoor credentials: "I'm not really a camper!"

But with her son, Justin, heading into his senior year of high school and Diane celebrating 25 years as a practicing orthodontist in town, the two decided it was time to mark their milestones with an unforgettable adventure.

Their destination was Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest free-standing mountain in Africa at 19,341 feet above sea level. The dormant volcano in Tanzania rises above the surrounding plains, and climbers pass through five distinct ecological zones on the way to Uhuru Peak, the summit.

For Diane, getting to the top began long before she set foot on the mountain. She spent nine months building her endurance with running, cross-training, and strength training. She resolved not to be the weakest link in the group of climbers, which created a mindset she carried onto the mountain: "I'm not going to fail."

As the trip approached, she still wondered whether she had done enough.

Her son, a 17-year-old three-season athlete, relied on his youth and general athleticism to carry him through the climb. His approach to training was simple: he didn't.

"I watched the wrong YouTube videos!" he said. "I would've benefitted from more cardio. My mom totally killed it and was super diligent with her prep work."

The pair opted for the Northern Circuit, a nine-day route that takes a more gradual approach to the summit than some of Kilimanjaro's shorter routes, allowing climbers more time to acclimate to the altitude. Both fared well, aided by altitude medication and the gradual ascent.

They were part of a seven-person climbing group, strangers before the trip. There were five women in their 50s and 60s, bookended by Justin, the youngest by far, and another man in his 60s. Over nine days, the strangers became a team, motivating and supporting each other.

While some of their fellow climbers were coming from warmer states like California and Texas, Diane and Justin were accustomed to cold weather. Near the summit, temperatures dropped to around 0 degrees, which proved considerably more challenging for their companions.

"I think living through New Hampshire winters prepared us!" said Diane.



Diane Shieh and her son, Justin, celebrated reaching the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in early August. They both agreed that the hardest part of the experience was going for nine days without a shower. "I really value hygiene after this trip!" said Justin. (Courtesy photo.)

Then came summit day. The group began climbing before dawn and reached Uhuru Peak just after sunrise. After taking celebratory photos, the reality of what they had accomplished overwhelmed them all. Tears flowed freely, intermingled with joy and exhaustion.

The celebration was relatively brief. With groups arriving from several different routes, the summit quickly became crowded, and the climbers spent only about 20 minutes at the top before beginning their descent.

Even so, the moment was enough.

"It was an amazing sense of accomplishment," Justin said. "I am so fortunate to have shared this trip with my mom. I definitely learned so much about myself and what it means to persevere."

"You work so hard for it," Diane said. "There are days when we still pinch ourselves and ask if it really happened."

The experience also gave the group of climbers a bond that has continued long after leaving Tanzania. They remain in touch and hope to reunite for a half marathon in May 2027 to continue to stay active, stay connected, and experience new things together.

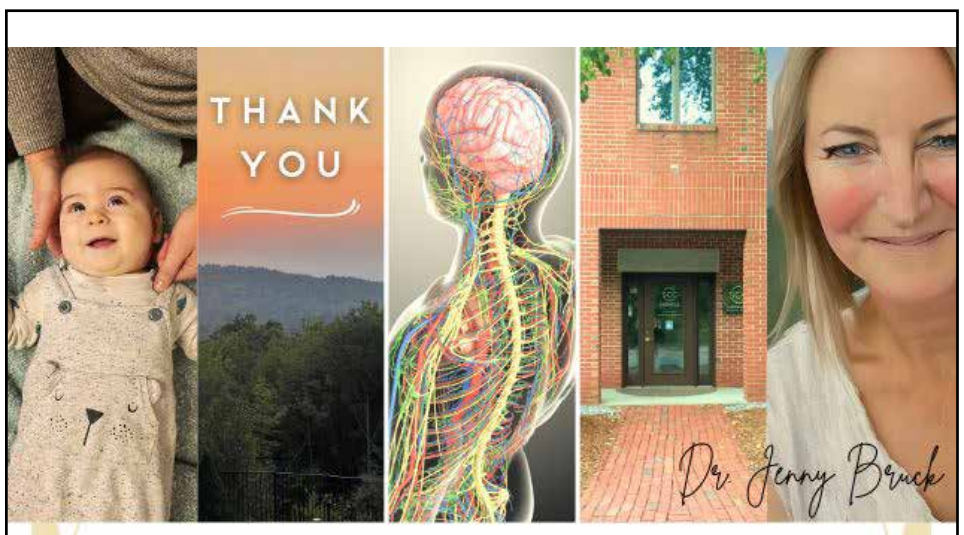
For Diane, summiting Kilimanjaro was a "once-in-a-lifetime" adventure — one she would gladly repeat.

"You never know what you can accomplish until you try," she said.

Maintaining Ponemah Bog

Local volunteers (from left) Mike Golightly, Luccas Booth, and Steve Pugh worked to repair and replace planks at Ponemah Bog Wildlife Sanctuary in August. The trail consists largely of narrow bog bridges made from 16-foot-long, 2-by-8-inch hemlock planks weighing 60 to 70 pounds each. Volunteers carry the planks by hand to work sites and carry out the old, decayed wood. *(Photo: George Rollend.)*





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LIBRARY NEWS

Library to host Book Club Open House

BY MAXWELL BLANCHETTE
Library Assistant , Amherst Town Library

The Amherst Town Library will host a Book Club Open House on Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 2 to 3:30 p.m. The informational session will showcase book clubs offered at the library, explain how to start a book club, and feature light refreshments and book talks with reading suggestions.

Circulation and Readers Services Librarian Alexa Moore said the program is designed to introduce residents to the benefits of book clubs. "The intention is to provide resources to book club members and highlight opportunities available to non-members," Moore said. She noted that book clubs offer social, intellectual, and communal benefits that can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age or background.

To expand its book discussion offerings, the library recently began hosting drop-in book clubs each month. Called ATL Reads, the clubs offer both afternoon and evening meetings, with a variety of titles selected throughout the year. Moore hopes the added flexibility will encourage readers who have never considered joining a book club to give one a try.



Copies of a book club selection sit ready for checkout. (Photo courtesy of the Amherst Town Library.)

Library Assistant Julie Spokane, who manages the library's book club ordering, said the library supports more than just the groups it hosts. "We have over three dozen local book groups we order books for," Spokane said. "This alleviates the burden of readers spending hundreds of dollars on book club books every year." In addition to providing books, the library offers suggestions for book selections, along with resources for developing discussion questions and running a group.

All are welcome to attend the Book Club Open House on Oct. 6 at 2 p.m. For more information about the open house, ATL Reads or the library's book club services, visit **amherstlibrary.org**.

Your next favorite read

BY AMY LAPOINTE
Director, Amherst Town Library

LIFE OUT OF ORDER
by Audrey Niffenegger
Explore love, resilience, and hope across different decades in the story of Alba, daughter of Henry, the protagonist from the bestselling novel "The Time Traveler's Wife."

PARTITA
by Barbara Kingsolver
Shifting between past and present, the story unfolds a passionate, life-changing love affair between a music conservatory student from a dysfunctional home and the man who broke her heart and changed the path of her life.

THE FAMILY CROSS
by James Patterson
Patterson's 36th Alex Cross thriller might be his most exciting yet, as brilliant psychologist Cross investigates a string of murders that baffle the FBI.

MISS WOLCOTT'S GHOST
by Louise Penny
Beloved author Louise Penny returns with another Inspector Gamache novel filled with a murder investigation, lost documents, old lies, and a gathering of ghosts.

THE RUSH: CALIFORNIA GOLD, THE CIVIL WAR, AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD
by Nathaniel Philbrick
Philbrick delivers another readable, narrative history, this time a panoramic epic following the characters who raced west in pursuit of wealth and power.

VIBE: THE SECRETS OF STRONG CONNECTIONS IN A LONELY WORLD
by Adam Grant
Grant uncovers the key to building meaningful human connections and interacting with others, one of the most pressing challenges of our digital age.



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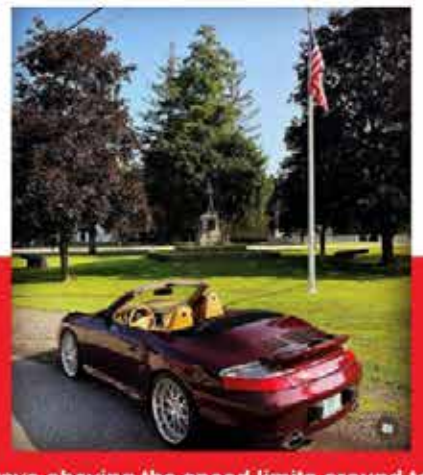
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The Simple Things

An ode to Coleman

BY TOM FISHER

I pumped the fuel tank piston 35 times and turned the control knob, greeted by the pleasingly familiar scent of white camp gas. Through gritted teeth, I touched a match to the burner — fearful of a massive fireball and an equally unwelcome appearance on WMUR's "Breaking News." The stove instead gurgled and sputtered before the burner caught with a muted WHOOSH. The flame soon settled to a steady, hissing blue.

FIRE!! I HAD MADE FIRE!

Watching my uninhibited victory dance — reminiscent of Tom Hanks in "Castaway" — the neighbors probably thought I'd gone mad.

We found the Coleman camp stove on a high shelf in Dad's workshop when he passed in 2015. Dented and forgotten — only the unexpectedly powerful tug of childhood memories spared the pine green stove the unkind fate of the dumpster.

Our mercurial dad was Vulcan-in-flannel, most at peace in the wilderness. He ran a tight camp with confident dominion over the vagaries of weather and Murphy's law. When Dad was happy, we were all happy.

His well-used stove provided satisfying, warm meals in remote places like Grand Lake Stream, Cherokee Lake, the Niobrara River, and Neah Bay. My first brook trout and Chinook salmon were cooked on this Coleman.

Resurrecting the stove flooded my heart with nostalgia, but its story couldn't end with a brief, triumphant test lighting. The stove still had utility, a mission to fill and new memories to create for our family.

Laura and I took a camping trip to a boat access cabin 30 miles from the Canadian border. The entire menu was planned around the capabilities of the stove and a well-seasoned cast-iron skillet and griddle.

We ate at dawn as mist rolled off the mountains and across Umbagog Lake. Waves slapped the hull of our skiff at the dock as loons mournfully called in the distance.

Breakfast was fried eggs and Spam, accompanied by strong coffee from a percolator. Laura and I grew up on Spam and brought it along principally out of nostalgia. It was tasty, but saltier than the Dead Sea. We chalked up our reaction to more refined adult palates but resolved to buy the low-sodium version next time.

Laura finished her breakfast with a contented sigh and patted the stove, thanking it for the comfort of such a satisfying meal. She's grateful that way.

On the shores of Umbagog, Vulcan's metaphoric baton had passed to me. Alpha to Omega, I was now the Fisher family provider of woodland comfort and the creator of memories.



The author puts his father's Coleman camp stove back to work, heating coffee just as it did on family camping trips. (Courtesy photo.)



A salty blast from the past makes its return to the breakfast table, cooked to crispy perfection in a cast-iron pan. (Courtesy photo.)

It was a magical moment, but sadly the demands of modern life often eclipse and marginalize the importance of such simple, elemental pleasures.

Coleman camp stoves were introduced in 1923. Our Model 425 was first offered in 1953. In any variant, Coleman stoves are paragons of elegant simplicity, function and durability — once promoted by outdoor luminaries like Ted Williams. Along with baseball and the Stovebolt-six Chevy pickup truck, Coleman camp stoves are a ubiquitous part of our cultural fabric.

The folks who designed our Coleman stove are probably long gone now, but what an enduring legacy they left behind. I thank them for helping recapture fond memories — and for the promise of new ones.

See you out on the lakes and trails.



Meet Tom Fisher! Tom is a retired consulting partner and author who has lived in Amherst for 22 years with his wife, Laura, and two sons. He will be contributing a regular column to The Bear, where he'll share his thoughts, observations and perspective on a range of topics.

KIDS' CORNER

All about Oreo

BY ADELYN BARTELS, *age 8*

Oreo is my best friend. She's my kitten. She's fluffy and cuddly. I got Oreo for my birthday and she is the best birthday present ever! I was shocked and thought she was a stuffed animal at first, but then I saw her move her head.

I chose the name Oreo because she's black and white just like an Oreo — she's black on the outside and white in the middle.

I like to cuddle with her when I watch movies and at nighttime. Something silly she does is try to climb up walls and try to eat my hair.

I help feed Oreo, and I make sure the gate is closed when the dogs come inside. I also play with Oreo. She likes to play with toys that hang from a string. I make toys and houses for her to play in too.



Adelyn cuddled with Oreo for a little bedtime reading. (Courtesy photo.)

Happy Halloween!

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S S I D G P J A B H K O I Z X B O I R E
P U M P K I N H T X G R A V E Y A R D T
K Q O P K F K M U F B M N R O C P P G O
G V I L J P W Z M L D K S E F H M Q A N
M O O N L I G H T D V S P E L L D R D O

1. GHOST **2.** BROOMSTICK **3.** COSTUME **4.** MOONLIGHT **5.** SPIDER
6. MONSTER **7.** GRAVEYARD **8.** SPELL **9.** CREEPY **10.** VAMPIRE **11.** SKELETON
12. CAULDRON **13.** MUMMY **14.** SPOOKY **15.** PUMPKIN **16.** COBWEB
17. CANDY **18.** HAUNTED

ALL AROUND TOWN

Town Calendar

THUR 10/1, 9AM: Amherst Garden Club monthly meeting at Messiah Lutheran Church. Guest speaker John Forti will present "Growing a Nation: Evolution of Gardens in America." Program begins at 10:30am. All are welcome.

SAT 10/3, 8:30AM-12:30PM: The Fells Community Yard Sale at 1 Fells Drive. Furniture, puzzles, sports equipment, and more. 12 participating homes. No rain date.

SAT 10/3, 10AM-2PM: Open House at the Amherst Fire Station to kick off Fire Safety Week. Obstacle course and touch-a-truck for the kids. All are welcome.

SAT 10/3, 10AM-3PM: Girl Scouts Expo at the NH Sportsplex in Bedford. A chance to see what Girl Scouting is all about. Tickets and more information at **girlscoutsgwm.org**.

SAT 10/3, 4PM: Twilight Hike and Ghostly Tales at Peabody Mill Environmental Center. Join local author Susanna Hargreaves for a trail hike and reading from her book of ghostly stories. All ages welcome. Register at **amherstnh.recdesk.com**.

SUN 10/4, 3PM: Blessing of the Animals at the Congregational Church. No registration required. More details on pp. 1-2.

MON 10/5, 3-4PM: Fairy House Fest at the Amherst Library for ages 6-9. Create enchanting fairy homes using twigs, moss, bark, and leaves. Registration required at **amherstlibrary.org**.

TUES 10/6, 2-3:30PM: Book Club Open House at the Amherst Library. Enjoy light refreshments and learn about the different book clubs offered at the library. More details on p. 12.

TUES 10/6, 6-8PM: Public information and input session at the town hall to discuss future use of town-owned property at 7 Thornton Ferry Road II. For details, contact **Kjobin@amherstnh.gov**.

THUR 10/8, 7-8PM: Amherst Garden Club Side Shoots presentation on "Dividing Perennials and a Few Bulb Tips for the Winter," presented by Laura Kozel. At the Amherst Library. Registration required at **amherstlibrary.org**.

FRI 10/9–SUN 10/11: Annual Milford Pumpkin Festival on the Milford Oval. Details and schedule of events at **milfordpumpkinfestival.org**.

SAT 10/10, 8:30AM: Annual 5K and Kids Fun Run to benefit the Boys & Girls Club of Souhegan Valley (56 Mont Vernon Street, Milford). Registration and more information at **svbgc.org**.

SUN 10/11, 2-3:30PM: Amherst Land Trust Guided Walk of Lindabury Orchard. Details at **amherstlandtrust.org/events**.

MON 10/12: Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day. No school for SAU 39; town buildings are closed.

TUES 10/13, 1-2PM: ATL Reads Book Discussion of "The Music of Bees" by Eileen Garvin. Registration required at **amherstlibrary.org**.

WED 10/14, 6:30-7:30PM: ATL Reads Book Discussion of "The Music of Bees" by Eileen Garvin. Registration required at **amherstlibrary.org**.

SAT 10/17, 10AM: Howl-o-ween 5K to benefit Animal Rescue League of NH. Dress in costume and run/walk with your pet. Details at **rescueleague.org/howloween5k**.

SAT 10/17, 5-7PM: Campfire Nights for middle schoolers (ages 11-14) at Peabody Mill Environmental Center. A night hike, crafts, games, and campfire fun. Register at **amherstnh.recdesk.com**.

SUN 10/18, 1-2:30PM: Unpacking the Declaration of Independence at Milford Community House (5 Union Street, Milford). Hosted by the Capt. Josiah Crosby chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. All are welcome.

TUES 10/20, 10-11:30AM: Caregivers Circle at the Congregational Church. A monthly support group, free and open to the public. To register, contact **pastorcharlotte@ccamherst.org**.

WED 10/21, 6:30-7:30PM: Teen Art Program at the Amherst Library. Spooky and colorful skull art for ages 10+. Registration required at **amherstlibrary.org**.

THUR 10/22, 5-6PM: Portable Generator Safety presentation at Buck Meadow, hosted by Amherst Fire & Rescue and Souhegan CERT. No registration necessary; all are welcome.

SAT 10/24, 1-3PM: Pumpkin Fairy House craft at Peabody Mill Environmental Center. All decorating supplies will be provided, along with fall refreshments. Register at **amherstnh.recdesk.com**.

SUN 10/25, 1-3PM: Goldens on the Green. A fun afternoon for golden retrievers and their owners. More details on pp. 1-2.

SUN 10/25, 4-6PM: Trunk-or-Treat at Souhegan High School, hosted by the Amherst Police Department. Come in costume and collect treats at this family-friendly Halloween celebration.

TUES 10/27, 2-3PM: Free digital literacy workshop for older adults at YMCA (24 Stadium Drive, Nashua). Topic is "Understanding Your Smartphone." Register at **unitedwaynashua.org/digital-literacy/**.

THUR 10/29, 7-8PM: An Evening of Poetry at the Amherst Library, hosted by Susanna Hargreaves. Bring a poem to share. Registration required at **amherstlibrary.org**.

SAT 10/31, 5-8PM: Happy Halloween! Doors on The Green for younger children from 5-7pm. Door to door trick-or-treating in the Village from 6-8pm. See pp. 1-3 for more details and road closures.





Nipmugs Chapter celebrates 50 years

BY GAIL PITUCK
Nipmugs Chapter President

The Questers is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping history alive through education, preservation of meaningful places, and the funding of restoration projects. The Nipmugs Chapter No. 814, a local Questers chapter with members from Amherst and neighboring towns, recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Chartered on June 15, 1976, the chapter marked the milestone by gathering at the Covered Bridge over the Nashua River in Pepperell, Mass. The location also tied into the chapter's 2026 focus on the American Revolution and learning the stories behind the stories.

One of those stories is that of Prudence Cummings Wright, who in April 1775 rallied a group of women to stop Tory spies at Jewett's Bridge, the site of the present-day Covered Bridge. The Nipmugs members found Wright's story particularly fascinating and chose to explore the history surrounding the site as part of their anniversary celebration.

The Nipmugs Chapter welcomes new members. To learn more about the chapter, upcoming events and programs, visit its Facebook page at **facebook.com/nipmugs.chapter.of.questers**.



Members of the Amherst-based Nipmugs celebrated the chapter's 50th anniversary with a gathering at the Covered Bridge in Pepperell, Mass. (Courtesy photo.)

August Amherst Home Sales

Town Transaction Report Provided by The Corr Group

THE CORR GROUP REAL ESTATE



Office: 603.213.8257
20A Northwest Blvd #155
Nashua NH 03063

Address	Beds	Baths	Sq Ft	List Price	Sale Price	Sale Date
5 Farmington Road	4	5	3,925	$975,000	$1,100,000	8/3/2026
26 Williamsburg Drive	4	3	3,032	$796,000	$810,000	8/3/2026
11 Nathan Lord Road	5	4	3,167	$839,900	$850,000	8/3/2026
481 Boston Post Rd	3	2	1,531	$699,999	$710,000	8/3/2026
3 Renee Drive	2	2	1,260	$599,000	$599,000	8/4/2026
27 Colonel Wilkins Rd	4	4	2,750	$849,900	$835,000	8/4/2026
17 Candlewood Drive	4	3	2,544	$825,000	$825,000	8/5/2026
2 Debbie Lane	2	2	1,260	$615,000	$625,000	8/5/2026
37 Standish Way	3	3	2,406	$750,000	$625,000	8/12/2026
24 Beaver Brook Circle	3	2	1,729	$599,000	$630,000	8/12/2026
2 Barrington Way	6	5	4,147	$1,575,000	$1,575,000	8/14/2026
7 Corduroy Road	1	1	880	$254,500	$280,000	8/17/2026
33 Border Street	2	2	1,608	$465,000	$485,000	8/18/2026
33 State Route 101A	3	1	1,406	$549,000	$487,500	8/20/2026
3 The Flume	4	4	3,384	$1,195,000	$1,300,000	8/21/2026
15 Pinewood Drive	5	4	4,152	$949,900	$899,900	8/24/2026
61 Stearns Road	2	1	908	$425,000	$425,000	8/25/2026
16 Hillside Avenue	2	1	718	$275,000	$285,000	8/27/2026
10 Candlewood Drive	4	3	2,951	$789,900	$790,000	8/28/2026
4 Clark Island Road	3	2	1,326	$925,000	$800,000	8/31/2026

Note: Square footage is above grade.
Average days on market: 26

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Local CTE programs give Amherst students a head start

BY RACHEL BARKER SWEENEY

Souhegan High School students can earn college credit, industry credentials, and real-world work experience well before high school graduation through three area career and technical education (CTE) centers offering more than 30 career pathways, including health science, cosmetology, Air Force JROTC, business, automotive technology, and marketing.

Roughly 54 Souhegan students are attending CTE programs this year, according to Tim Cotreau, director of school counseling at Souhegan. Cotreau has seen participation steadily increase during his 10 years at Souhegan, along with a shift in how students think about their futures.

"There's been a generational shift to being pragmatic about employment," Cotreau said. More students are looking to establish clear career pathways while avoiding unnecessary debt. In response to growing interest, Souhegan has increased efforts to raise awareness of the programs and ensure transportation is available.

Students may apply to Milford's Applied Technology Center, Nashua Technology Center, and Palmer CTE Center at Alvirne High School. The two-year programs generally run throughout the school year, with instruction incorporated into the students' regular school day, and transportation is provided.

Souhegan senior Jack Preston is in his second year of the electrical technology program at Nashua High School South. He describes himself as someone who likes to stay active and work with his hands. He began attending the CTE program during his junior year.

Preston said CTE programs give students an opportunity to step outside their comfort zones, learn something new, and explore a subject that interests them more deeply. The program also helped him secure a summer internship with a local electrical company.

"I was able to gain a lot of experience in just the few months I was there," Preston said.

For Preston, the program has helped turn an interest into a career path.

"My plan is to take the knowledge and experiences I have gained from CTE and carry them with me to trade school, where I plan on becoming an electrician," he said.

CTE programs are supported by federal, state and local funds and are offered to students tuition-free. New Hampshire's investment in CTE gives students an opportunity to explore potential careers and develop employable skills while still in high school.

"Career and technical education plays a pivotal role in building the workforce of tomorrow in our state," Gov. Kelly Ayotte said in a press release regarding CTE in New Hampshire.

Milford High School's Applied Technology Center (ATC) is the closest of Souhegan's three CTE partners. "Amherst is a great supporter of the program, and we adore working with them. Their students are amazing," said Samantha Belcourt, ATC's CTE director.

Milford's ATC combines classroom instruction with technical training and career exploration. Each program has an advisory committee made up of education and industry volunteers who help guide students through connections, interviews, mentors and internships.

Engineering and culinary arts are among the more popular programs chosen by Souhegan students. Through the engineering pathway, students can earn college credits through Manchester Community College that may transfer toward an applicable program. They can also earn SOLIDWORKS certification, an industry-recognized credential in 3-D modeling software.

Milford's culinary arts program includes a student-run restaurant, Windows on West Street, which is open to the public for lunch two days a week. Students gain front- and back-of-house training, college credit, and ServSafe certification while serving affordable, student-created meals.

The CTE application process generally begins during the winter, with deadlines varying by center. Students interested in CTE are encouraged to speak with their Souhegan counselor early. Homeschooled students are also eligible to apply.

To learn more and to see the full list of programs offered at each CTE location, visit **sau39shs.ss20.sharpschool.com/student_services/course_selection_resources**.



Souhegan senior Jack Preston is gaining hands-on experience in the electrical technology program as he prepares for a future career as an electrician. (Courtesy photo.)

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