

Scouting for Food - Help us fill the truck again this year!!

To the editor:

Did you realize that one of every three people served by food banks is a child? At soup kitchens, one of every four people in line is likely to be a child. Over thirty percent of local households being helped by our food banks and pantries include children. This year's Scouting for Food effort will benefit more than 175 food pantries and soup kitchens throughout New Hampshire. Can you spare a few cans of food to restock the pantry shelves for the hungry kids and their parents?

The Scouting for Food program makes it easy for you to contribute. On Saturday, November 7th, scouts from Amherst and Mont Vernon will deliver bags and an information sheet to your home. On the following Saturday, November 14th, put the food items that you're donating in the bag and leave it outside in an easily visible spot for the scouts to pick up. We make it easy for you to give!

Please mark your calendars and watch for sales on the most needed items, such as gravy, cranberry sauce, stuffing, pancake mix and syrup, juice boxes, peanut butter, and canned meats, fruits, and vegetables (no frozen or perishable items or glass containers, please!).

The scouts will be working hard to pick up all the bags of food, but if we miss your house, please drop your bags to us on Nov 14 at the Meeting Place Plaza from 10a to Noon and help us fill up the truck. The families of Amherst and Mont Vernon have a tradition of donating generously, and there is no better way to start your season of giving than by giving to others!

Our partner for this year's Scouting for Food program is the New Hampshire Army National Guard. Scouting for Food would not be possible without their very generous support. For more information call the Daniel Webster Council, Boy Scouts of America at 1-800-221-0009 or visit our website at www.nhscouting.org/scoutingforfood.

Thank you,
Alyson Miller & Ann Hartman
Scouting for Food - Mont Vernon / Amherst

No Need To Worry

To the editor:

I felt a great relief after reading the letter. Indeed: no need to worry about any "health care" as Mr. Geis promises us prompt end of times. I'm just hopeful that Mont Vernon will avoid the fate of Sodom & Gomorrah.

My gratitude to Mr. Geis for removing a need not only in health care reform, but of health care itself. I have already informed my primary care physician and cancelled my upcoming appointment.

Boris Khazanov
Mont Vernon

Thank You, Citizens of Amherst, Mont Vernon and Milford!

To the editor:

Over the past three months, five Life Scouts of Troop 613, Amherst, NH, have worked diligently on their Eagle Service Projects. With the support of residents and businesses of Amherst, Mont Vernon and Milford, they have successfully completed each project and will soon be going before their Eagle Boards of Review.

Mitch and Matt Hunt, freshmen at Souhegan High School, each worked on separate projects for Opportunity Networks, building an entertainment center with shelving and a reading desk, also with shelving. George Osborne, a recent Souhegan graduate and now a freshman at Wentworth Technology Institute, planned and led a project to remove invasive plant species from around the fishing pond at the Peabody Mill Environmental Center. James Velino, a freshman at Souhegan High School planned and led a project to build two foot bridges on the Pulpit Brook Hiking Path on the Joppa Hills Farm property for the Amherst Conservation Commission. Jack Downing, a junior at Souhegan High School planned and led a project to repair the three observation platforms at the Ponemah Bog for the New Hampshire Audubon Society, also adding two benches to each platform.

Part of the project for four of the five projects also involved fund-raising. Whether it was selling Krispy Kreme Donuts, holding a rummage sale or a bake sale, the funds went to support the sponsoring agencies, Opportunity Networks and the Amherst Conservation Commission.

The Scouts of Troop 613, adult leaders and parents provided the manpower to execute these challenging projects. Local businesses such as P J Currier, Lowes, Home Depot and Wilkins Lumber provided materials at discount to assist in these worthy projects. The Boy Scouts of America practice "Leave No Trace" in all of their activities. In the case of these five projects, the Scouts left this town a little nicer than they found it. Amherst and Mont Vernon can be very proud of these fine young men for their dedication and citizenship. They indeed have lived up to the third part of the Scout Law, "A Scout is Helpful".

John Downing
Scoutmaster
Troop 613

Raising the Dead Conscience This Halloween

To the editor:

In light of the recent murder and attempted murder in Mont Vernon this month, one would think we'd see fewer gruesome Halloween displays this season, but driving to and from our surrounding communities this is unfortunately not the case. My question is, "How desensitized have we become?" What does it take to cause us to think twice...or think at all...that some things are just not funny anymore. Do we have to wait to meet evil face to face, wait for it to destroy and traumatize our own families before we realize there is nothing entertaining about it?

The blood and gore aspect of Halloween (this is not about banning the holiday and the harmless side of it) is a microcosm of the things we dabble with without thinking twice, but much more serious than the sinister yard décor and vile costumes we purchase (things called "just decorations") is what we allow ourselves and our children to see and hear every day from the mainstream media that is funneled into our living rooms and more often than not downloaded into bedrooms as fast as the cable lines can carry them. TV shows that star serial killers is "just entertainment," violent rap is "just music," dark storylines centered on crime are "just thrillers," and interactive games where killing is your primary goal is just "hand/eye coordination." How many "justs" could it take to create a monster? Waiting to find out is not the answer. Let's not be afraid of saying "No" anymore, to finally set some limits in order to protect a conscience from deadening. Would we still allow certain practices if we thought that maybe, just maybe there is something taking place at a deeper level? Something in the conscience that is being created or destroyed, darkened or desensitized? I hope not.

As parents, as caretakers of this town, we cannot assume that our children especially are impervious to the influences around them. If you live in a foreign country long enough, you'll likely end up speaking their language. We call this education by immersion. So why is it that one would think that our children won't internalize and then mirror some of the things they see and hear?

The bottom line is that evil is a very real, deadly, and powerful force and like cancer it may start small but grows and kills. That is its function, its cause, its mission and the first thing it kills is the conscience. Let's expose this truth, the seriousness of dabbling with evil. Let's not believe the lie that it's no big deal, a lie that downplays and disguises it as entertainment. Anyone who has ever met evil face to face would never call it such so why should we? Let's wake up our deadened senses and HATE evil in any shape and form, holiday or no holiday. Let's hate it and what it does to our children, families, and societies, and then want nothing to do with it, especially not supporting it as entertainment. Nowadays there is so much enthusiasm about going "green" but the more important pollution we need to be concerned about is the blackness and the filth that has contaminated our culture, our homes, even our hearts. Let's start embracing the color "white" and adamantly preserve a purity that has been sabotaged for too long.

A mother of Amherst

The Answer Is Not Increased Taxation

To the editor:

On October 21st the chair of the NH House Ways and Means Committee held a forum on the subject of taxation in New Hampshire. I found some of the facts and projections most interesting. Here are some of the facts presented by two economists and one demographer.

The good news for us is that New Hampshire has the lowest tax burden, is the safest and healthiest state in the nation. The bad news is that we are an aging state (the 4th oldest). Our population is deficient in the percentage of citizens in the work force ages of 30 to 40 years of age. Also, while we have a low overall tax burden, we have high business taxes.

New Hampshire is highest state, by far, in its dependence on the property tax as the primary income source. This dependency has the advantage that it is a tax that citizens pay once or twice and are well aware of the expenditure of their money compared to a sales tax where it goes out a little at a time. Second the property tax is a stable tax and does not change greatly in good or bad economic times as is the case with an income or sales tax.

There was consensus among the three presenters that enacting an income or sales tax was not the solution. An income tax would result in the exodus of the elderly and higher income residents; these are the individuals who encourage business start-ups and pay the largest percentage of interest and dividend taxes. Other states have tried to lower property taxes with a broad based personal taxes or casino gambling, without success, except to increase the out-migration of wealthier or senior citizens.

The answer is two fold. First we need to attract more industry as well as the educated work force age citizens to our state. This will result in better demographics, and continue the growth in the state business tax income, our greatest source of revenue. More good paying jobs will keep our children and grand children in the state and stop the exodus of our work force population. But business tax revenue alone will not result in a fiscally stable state. Second a major effort must be made for state and municipalities to drastically cut spending. In the past two legislative terms the state budget has increased over 25% alone. We must reorganize state and local government. Major savings can be obtained without affecting services. One example is the reduction of school administrative costs by consolidating the SAUs. Another is by eliminating duplicative county functions or even eliminate county government. And major cost reductions can be achieved in each and every state agency. All state and county departments should be required to evaluate and prioritize the programs in departments.

If we don't take a concerted effort to encourage business growth and reduce spending, New Hampshire will become one great retirement home with an ever diminishing quality of life.

You might say after reading this, "You politicians needed a forum of experts to tell you this?"

Robert H. Rowe
Representative from Amherst and Milford



Amherst Cub Scout Pack 613 visited Battleship Cove in Fall River, MA on Sept. 26 to explore the world's largest collection of historical naval ships. The cubs and their parents spent the night aboard the USS Massachusetts and enjoyed a program that included a living history presentation by a soldier who served on board the ship during WW2. You can join Scouts at any time! For additional information on Boy Scouts in the Nashua area, please contact John Pelletier at 603-391-6399 or visit www.nhscouting.org.

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