

Events Calendar

SHS SKI & SKATE SALE

The Souhegan High School Boys Varsity Hockey Team will be hosting their annual Ski & Skate Sale on October 22nd and 23rd in the cafeteria at Souhegan High School.

Consignment items can be dropped off on Friday evening, October 22nd from 4:00PM-6:30PM and on Saturday, October 23rd from 7:00AM-8:30AM. The Sale will be held on Friday

night 7:00PM-9:00PM and Saturday 9:00AM-1:00PM. Both new and used items will be available for purchase; available items may include cross country skis, downhill skis, snowboards,

boots, poles, skates, roller blades and winter apparel. In addition, representatives from Rodgers Ski & Sport Shop will be available both days. For additional information, please contact

Patty Casey at caseyamherst@comcast.net or Annmarie Hayden at annmarie_hayden@hotmail.com.

MOMS (Mothers Offering Mothers Support) Club of Amherst Announces 2010-2011 Meeting Dates

AMHERST—The east and west sister chapters of MOMS® (Mothers Offering Mothers Support) Club of Amherst recently announced their 2010-2011 business meeting schedules. Route 101 delineates the split into East and West chapters.

The East chapter meets 9:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. on the third Tuesday of each month. The West chapter meets 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. Both groups' meetings convene in the basement of the First Baptist Church of Amherst, 25 1/2 Middle Street.

MOMS Club of Amherst is a chapter of MOMS Club International, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting stay-at-home mothers and their children. Our sister chapters offer playgroups, outings, craft days, cookie decorating days, various special-interest offerings (coffee, book, exercise, scrap booking and recipe clubs), a babysitting coop, community service/fund raising opportunities, and a monthly Moms' Night Out. Children are welcome at all events.

To learn more about our club visit <http://sites.google.com/site/amherstmomsclub/> or e-mail us at amherstmomsclub@yahoo.com.

2010-2011 Meeting Dates:

EAST—	WEST—
October 19	October 20
November 16	November 17
December 21	December 15
January 18	January 19
February 15	February 16
March 15	March 16
April 19	April 20
May 17	May 18
June 21	June 15

D.A.R. Visits Chapters in Keene

The Captain Josiah Crosby Chapter, D.A.R. will visit the Mary Varnum Platts Chapter and the Mercy Hathaway White Chapter in Keene on Wednesday, October 13th. Members are reminded to make a reservation for this visit with Jacqueline Marshall, 673-8029. At 10:30 A.M. on the 13th those going will gather in the parking lot of The Meeting Place at the West end to car-pool to Keene. For further information please call 673-7190.

Photographers Forum Camera Club Meeting

Photographers Forum Camera Club's next meeting is Monday, Oct 18 at 7:15 p.m. at Bishop Guertin High School in Nashua. We are an informal club offering educational programs for all ability levels and the opportunity to meet people with similar interests. The categories for our Oct. 18 competition meeting are: Assigned: "Things That Fly," Challenge: "Creative" and Open Subject. We meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month. Be our guest for your first meeting. Dues are \$30/year thereafter. For more information go to photographersforum.org, email colettecristp@earthlink.net or call 880-1420.

Final Amherst Town Band Concert

Saturday, October 16
Noon Pumpkin Festival Parade, Keene For more information about the band, see their web site: www.amhersttownband.org.

Department of Public Works

Amherst Transfer Station Hours

Tuesdays:	12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Thursdays:	12:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Friday:	7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
Saturdays:	7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Town News

Historic Amherst

Deaf-Mutes in Amherst in the 19th Century

Part Two: Mr. & Mrs. Kent, Miss Rebecca McCluer, and Mr. & Mrs. Worcester

BY KATRINA HOLMAN

In the late 1800s, Amherst was home to three couples and an unmarried woman who were deaf-mute. Not one of them was born in Amherst, but they all attended the same school for the deaf and dumb in Hartford, Ct., and became members of the New England Gallaudet Association of Deaf Mutes, whose roster in 1857 included Amherst residents John O. David, George Kent, and Rebecca McCluer, as well as Frank Worcester of Dracut, Mass., and Thomas N. Head of Hooksett, N.H.

George Kent & Lucretia Barnard

When George Kent (1813-1883) was two years old, he got sick with spotted fever during a local epidemic. He recovered and nothing unusual about him was noticed – until one day his father was about to drive his horse and chaise into the barn and called to George playing there to get out of the way. But the little boy took no notice. Becoming somewhat uneasy, Mr. Kent dismounted and entered the barn. Only when he stamped his foot to emphasize his words did his son look up. Guessing the truth, the father took the boy in his arms and carried him into the house. The first person he met was his daughter Mary, who must have been 11 then, and giving George into her arms, he said: "Mary, this child is deaf, and you must care for him as long as he lives." And so she did. Read on.

At the age of 12, George was sent from his home in Chester, N.H., to the American Asylum in Hartford for 5 years, together with his best buddy, Thomas N. Head of Hooksett, who was born on the very same day and was deaf since a fever at age 6 months. They were among 64 newly admitted pupils.

As a descendant of Hon. Joshua Atherton, famous for surviving in town despite having been a Tory, George had close family connections in Amherst: one of his mother's sisters married David McG. Means and lived at 6 Courthouse Rd.; another of her sisters married Dr. Matthias Spalding and lived at 19 Main Street; and their only



George Kent & his wife, née Lucretia Barnard

brother, Chas. H. Atherton, lived at the southeast edge of the village. What ultimately brought George to Amherst, though, was that his oldest sister Abigail at age 32 married widower Robert Means Jr., aged 48, who died eight years later with no issue. Junior had inherited the Col. Robert Means Mansion on Pierce Lane, but not lived there after he married. His widow acquired and moved into the Means Mansion, and made it the home of her widowed mother and brother George too. Abigail (Kent) Means is the one who went to Washington, D.C. to serve as official hostess for President Franklin Pierce 1853-54 because the grief-stricken, despondent First Lady would not receive publicly. Abby Kent and Jane Appleton were childhood friends who shared Means cousins of 6 Courthouse Rd. and both married in 1834; through her marriage, Abby (just 3 years older) became Jane's aunt.

George married in 1844. (He may well have been encouraged by the example of his classmates John O. David and Philenia Emerson, deaf-mutes who had tied the knot in 1840, started married life in the very same house, and by this time had two hearing daughters.) George's bride was Lucretia Barnard (1814-1902) of Nantucket, Mass., deaf from birth, who had arrived in Hartford the year after he did and spent 5 years there until she was 17. She was 30 when they married. Mrs. G. Kent was a

sweet and gentle woman. She would sometimes express her insight into the personality of her friends and neighbors by mimicry that seemed founded on perception of character, not just the outward idiosyncrasies of the body. George & Lucretia adopted Mrs. Kent's hearing niece, Lucretia Myrick (1840-1900), also born in Nantucket, before she was 10. In 1852 their only child Anna was born, able to hear, and big sister "Lu," a conscientious, sensible and loving person, was like a second mother to her. Annie turned out to be musically gifted, a good pianist.

When Abby died in 1857, she willed the Means Mansion to her sister Mary. In a deed of Oct. 1861, Mary Mason (Kent) McGregor, "in consideration of his good and upright character and as a token of my sisterly affection," quitclaimed "unto my brother George Kent of Amherst... the dwelling house and land in Amherst, known as the Mansion house estate of Colonel Robert Means, the same premises conveyed to me by my beloved sister the late Abby A. Means by her will, to be his during his life; and if George should die before his wife Lucretia B. Kent, then said estate is to belong to Lucretia while she remains his widow, and at the death of Lucretia, [it] shall belong to their daughter Anna during her life and to any lawful issue of Anna during their lives... This gift is made that my brother and his wife may be sure

of a right in this house and estate during the life of either." (Does that bring a lump to your throat too?)

Although George was listed in censuses as farmer or gardener, his chief occupation evidently was fishing. The local newspaper chronicled the angling exploits of "our jovial friend" with exact tallies from 1868 through 1878. In five months of 1871 he took 771 trout, 421 pickerel, and 1138 fish of other varieties. But George was also active in the deaf-mute association, offering hospitality when the board met in Amherst and being elected state manager in 1864. (That was the year he had a close call, when he was "run over by two rowdies, on Sunday, while returning from meeting, and his arm broken just above the elbow.") George had an expressive countenance, "like a rugged mountainside across whose surface storm and sunshine reflected nature's moods," said Anne M. Means in her memoir.

George Kent and Tom Head (whose deaf wife hailed from Franctown) would celebrate their joint birthday together, alternating at whose home. At their 62nd in Hooksett in 1875, "the most interesting feature of the occasion was the speeches made by the deaf mutes [including Amherst's John O. David], which on being interpreted, were found to be rhetorical, logical, and full of pointed illustrations and pertinent anecdotes," reported the Suncook Journal. Indeed.

Anna Kent became Mrs. Charles T. Carruth in 1884, the year after her father died at age 70. Her mother and Lu lived on in the mansion, and it became the Carruths summer home.

Rebecca McCluer

Rebecca A. McCluer (1825-1866) lived in the household of Samuel B. Melendy, partner in the whip factory, working for the family as a domestic (1850, 1860 censuses). Her deafness was caused by a brain fever when 1-and-a-half years old. She left her Nashua home at the age of 13 to attend the school in Hartford for 5 years, supported by the state of N.H. Her parents lived in Mer-

Continued on page 6 ▶

All The Presidents' Women continued from page 1

Moulton and Fran Baron in multiple roles. Joseph Zamparelli, Jr. is the director of the production. Lynne Moulton has performed several roles for Delvena Theatre including her IRNE nominated Martha in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and Sissy in *Piece of My Heart*. She received her acting training at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, under the direction of Sir Robert Palmer; and, at Trinity Rep Conservatory. Fran Baron is a playwright who has written, produced, and performed in many shows in the Mas-

sachusetts North Shore area over the last 20 years. Fran's most recent performances were as Amelia in *Where 'Ya Been, Amelia*; Narrator in *A Christmas Carol*; and, Lizzie Borden in *Something is Out There*. Joseph Zamparelli, Jr. is an actor, director, and producer. A graduate of Boston College (Psychology/Theater Arts), he went on to the professional training program at Circle in the Square Theater School in NYC. In addition to commercial film and television work, he is Producing/Artistic Director of BostonAlive.

Founded in 1992, the Delvena Theatre Company has performed at various venues, most often at the Boston Center for the Arts. The company was nominated for five Independent Reviewers of New England awards. Its production of *'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?'* was on Theatre Mirror's Best List for acting, directing and production. Presentations of *'Anna Weiss'* and *'Beyond Therapy'* were included on Theatre Mirror's best play list and *'Blue Heart'* was placed on Aisle Say's best list.

The American Connection series continues with its final program on November 9th with *"Picturing America: Art and American Identity."*

This event is free and open to the public. You can register for this event and all the upcoming year's events by calling 673-2288, emailing library@amherst.lib.nh.us or by visiting our website at www.amherst.lib.nh.us and selecting "Calendar of Events."

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