

## Students in the News

### Area Residents Named to Simmons College Dean's List

BOSTON, Mass -- The following area residents were named to the 2013 fall semester dean's list at Simmons

College in Boston:  
 \* Taylor Cordts, of Amherst. Her major is Exercise Science.  
 \* Kaitlyn Maloney, of Amherst. Her major is Undeclared.  
 \* Ashley Vitale, of Mont Vernon. Her major is English.

To qualify for dean's list status, undergraduate students must obtain a grade point average of 3.5 or higher, based on 12 or more credit hours of work in classes using the letter grade system.

### Area Student Named to Colby College Dean's List

WATERVILLE, ME - Area student was named to the Dean's List at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, for his outstanding academic achievement during the fall semester of the 2013-14 year.

Nicholas A. Murphy, a sophomore, is the son of Kevin and Deborah Murphy of Amherst, N.H., and attended Souhegan High School.

Students whose grade point averages were 3.68 or higher were named to the Dean's List.

### Local Students Recognized for Academic Achievement at Franklin Pierce University

RINDGE, N. H. -The following local students were recognized for their academic achievement in the spring 2013 semester at Franklin Pierce University in Rindge.

Brandon DeGrandpre of Amherst, a freshman majoring in mathematics, was named to the Dean's Honors List for the fall 2013 semester by maintaining a grade term point average of at least 3.85 on a scale of four.

Emily Parrett of Amherst, a junior majoring in mass communication, was named to the Dean's Honors List for the fall 2013 semester by maintaining a grade term point average of at least 3.85 on a scale of four.

## Amherst PTA Coming Events

The Amherst PTA, servicing Clark/Wilkins Elementary schools and the Amherst Middle School, is in the business of creating a more enriching education for our students. Through fundraising we are able to provide extracurricular programming such as visits from Wingmasters, the Living Classroom, and Steve Blunt. These, along with many more wonderful opportunities, offer our students the chance to explore our world and deepen their interest and knowledge. The PTA also hosts events for our members to attend that educate and provide families a way to have fun together. We have a very busy Spring coming up that we want to make sure all in the community know about—whether you have a student at these schools or not!

PTA Family Math and Science Night is coming your way on Monday March 10th from 6-8:30 p.m. at Wilkins Elementary School. (Tuesday the 11th is a Late Start Day for Amherst Schools). There will be puzzles and games, science experiments, and all kinds of cool STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) related things to do for kids

aged K-5th grade! Have fun while teaching your children how to observe, question, and test! This event is free!!!

Oh, the Places You'll Go!  
 AMS, Saturday, April 5, 11-3 2nd Annual PTA Fair

\$20 gets a family in the door and into a world of fun and games: pony rides, bounce houses, carnival games, face painting, Amy Conley, PTA play entertainers, cake decorating contest (categories of Middle School and below, High School and Adult), Henna Tattoos, arts and crafts, etc. Local restaurants selling food and Kona Ice selling slushes (\*portion of Kona Ice profits go back to the PTA). Come support the PTA at our annual fair and support our students curriculum enrichment programs! It is going to be an awesome day! Come join us and bring your friends!

Meadow Farms Fundraiser: MEADOW FARMS has their new spring catalog out – you liked the Fall catalog so much we raised over \$6500 for our schools last semester!

\*\*All this information and more can be found at www.amherstpta.org\*\*

## Planning for Project Graduation Continues

Plans are in full swing for another successful Project Graduation!

Thanks to the ongoing support of our community and local businesses, the all-night event known as Project Graduation has been a great success for many years. Working together, parents and community businesses help provide a safe, substance-free, fun environment for our senior class on the night of their graduation. The class of 2014 will be participating in the 9th annual Project Graduation celebration at the Hampshire Dome.

Project Graduation will be held Friday, June 13th, 10:00PM – 5:00AM at the Hampshire Dome.

This celebration takes months of planning and its success depends on community involvement. There are many ways you can help:

**VOLUNTEER** your time, energy and ideas! We will need LOADS of volunteers, for committees, chaperoning, etc. **PAY IT FORWARD!** Senior parents are not allowed to attend this event - we rely on parents for chaperoning so if you have a non-senior student please donate your time. Remember – someone else will be doing this for your child their senior year!

**CONTRIBUTE FUNDS:** We are actively seeking corporate and

small business sponsors, in addition to private donations and grants. We are grateful for any amount! Our goal is to make this event free for all students. Please send donations to:

**Project Graduation**  
 c/o Meg Dworkin  
 12 Homestead Road  
 Amherst, NH 03031

**DONATE PRIZES:** We have so many fun activities planned for our new graduates – please consider donating prizes such as gift cards, electronics, college prep / dorm items, etc. We are very flexible and appreciative of your generosity!

**GET ON BOARD!** Seniors are excited about the entertainment, food, activities and prizes in the works for this special night. Please plan family events around Project Graduation so all of our seniors can attend!

- General Questions / Information: Jim Belanger onthegovet@comcast.net or Vinny Silvestri vinnysilvestri@comcast.net
- Sponsorships, Donations, Prizes: Meg Dworkin megdworkin@yahoo.com
- Volunteers: Michelle Carachio mdcaraccio@gmail.com

## Help Send a Local Student to College

**\$85,788...\$135,892...\$168,896...**

What do those numbers mean? They are, respectively, the staggering costs of an in-state, out-of-state, and private college education over four years. Students today are facing skyrocketing costs associated with attending college. More than 66% of college students take out student loans. New Hampshire students typically fall into the highest category of post-college debt, averaging \$27,000-\$32,000 to be paid back. Even our state schools are among the most expensive in the country. For many parents, these amounts are more than they paid for their homes. [Business Insider: The High Price of Higher Education]

There is a local solution. The Souhegan Scholarship Foundation is that solution—but we need your help!

The Souhegan Scholarship Foundation, a 501c3 organization, serves the college-bound students of the Souhegan Valley. Since 2004, the SSF has given more than \$105,000 in scholarships to students in Amherst and Mont Vernon, NH. Our

local high-school students have shown dedication to scholarship and community service, and deserve our assistance with the high costs of higher education. We have provided scholarships to local students who are enrolled in all area schools, both public and private, and to home schoolers.

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to our worthy scholars. Any donation, no matter how large or how small, is greatly appreciated.

There are two ways to donate! We accept PayPal credit card donations on our website, www.souhegan-scholarshipfoundation.org, or you may mail donations to us at:

**Souhegan Scholarship Foundation**  
 PO Box 323  
 Amherst, NH 03031

Visit our website to make a donation, to find the tax ID number, or for more information on scholarship applications, deadlines, and general information.

## More Letters and Commentary

## SHS Board Shares Accomplishments of Students and Faculty

### To the editor:

As we've said before, Souhegan is many things to different people. To students and parents, it is an active, vibrant place, alive with students learning during the school day, and participating in athletics and co-curriculars in the afternoons, evenings, and weekends. To faculty and staff, it's a learning community, where all are challenged to grow and improve in the mission of teaching our children. But to some voters without friends or relatives in the school, it can appear to be big building set back from the road, that only brings increased taxes. As we all get ready to go to the polls on March 11, the Souhegan Cooperative School Board wants to share some of the accomplishments of our students and faculty, so that your votes are informed not just by the dollar amounts on the ballot, but also by the results those dollars achieve.

- Souhegan has a 0% dropout rate.
- 92% percent of Souhegan's Class of 2013 attend college.
- The majority of four year college students are attending either most competitive, highly competitive, very competitive or competitive colleges.
- In 2013, Souhegan Students took College Board Advanced Placement exams in 14 different subjects. 85% of students who took AP exams scored a 3 (qualified to receive college credit), 4 (well qualified to receive college credit) or 5 (extremely well qualified to receive college credit). The NH average is 74%; the national average is 60%.
- 37 students received AP Scholar Awards.
- 84% percent of Souhegan seniors took the SATs in 2012-2013.
- 94 seniors received New Hampshire Scholars recognition in 2013.
- 3 seniors were recognized for Presidential Scholars Program.
- 2 seniors are finalists and 7 are commended in the National Merit Scholarship Competition.

- Souhegan offers 3 college credit courses with a combined enrollment of 93.
- Souhegan students had the opportunity to study in Italy, Cuba, Germany, France, Peru, Brazil and the Dominican Republic through programs organized by Souhegan Staff.
- 82 students took the National Latin Exam in 2013. 3 students earned Gold medals; 9 students earned silver medals; 12 students were magna cum laude and 6 students were cum laude.
- 5 Souhegan Students received Gold Key Visual Arts Awards and 8 received Silver Key Awards in the NH Scholastic Art Competition. 1 student received a national award for photography.
- 9 Souhegan Students were selected to NH All-State Jazz Festival, NH All-State Orchestra, All-New England Band Festival at Plymouth State College.
- Souhegan Concert Choir performed at the New York City Musical Festival and received First Place in their category.
- 6 Souhegan Students performed in the All New England Choral Festival at Plymouth State College.
- 24 Souhegan Jazz Students completed an 8-Day performance tour in Italy.
- Souhegan athletic department consists of 34 programs including 53 teams.
- 505 Souhegan students participated on inter-scholastic athletic teams.
- Souhegan athletic teams won 5 state championship titles in 2012-13. The baseball team was honored with the highest Sportsmanship rating in the state, awarded by the state based on coaches and referees input.
- Souhegan High School is consistently accessed by educators from throughout the region and country as a model for best practices; recent visitors have observed our team teaching structures, advisory program and Critical Friends Groups.

- Souhegan works in conjunction with Brown University to host teachers from China visiting to examine best practice.
- The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) has engaged Souhegan in a project highlighting quality performance assessments; Souhegan will be featured for its best practice.
- School Reform Initiative (SRI) uses Souhegan High School for site visits to observe best practice.
- Teacher recognitions: 2013 New Hampshire Art Educator of the Year, Martha Rives; 2013 NH recipient of the Presidential Award for Mathematics and Science Teaching, Jenny Deenik.
- Souhegan Business Partnership Board includes representatives from Souhegan High School staff, local professional communities and alumni organized to promote extended learning opportunities, job shadowing, internships and mentor programs.
- Souhegan High School students completed 20,151 hours of community service including volunteer work with local veterans, non-profit groups and senior citizen organizations.
- A Souhegan 2013 graduate was named Daughters of the American Revolution state winner of the Good Citizen Award.

To vote on the budget, warrant article, and candidates for School Board, voting will be held on TUESDAY, March 11, 2014. Amherst residents vote at Souhegan High School, 6AM to 8PM. Mont Vernon residents vote at the Mont Vernon Village School, 7AM to 7PM.

*The Souhegan Cooperative School Board*  
 Howard Brown, Mont Vernon;  
 Steve Coughlan, Amherst; Pim Grondstra,  
 Mont Vernon; Fran Harrow, Amherst;  
 Chris Janson, Amherst; Peter Maresco,  
 Amherst; Mary Lou Mullens,  
 Amherst, Chair

## Support for Amherst Schools Budget FY15

### To the editor:

In consideration of the upcoming town vote regarding the Amherst School Budget, I am appealing to all citizens of our town, to take a little time on Tuesday, March 11, 2014, and vote IN FAVOR of the school budgets. We have had the privilege to send at least one of our children to each of the Amherst Schools since 2000. Over the last few years, I have been fortunate enough to take the time and regularly attend the School Board Meetings. I have gained more knowledge and a greater appreciation of how our schools function. Despite the economic downturn and decrease in enrollment from 6 years ago, the Amherst School Board and Administration continue to provide public education that is second to none.

We are grateful and appreciative for the efforts the School Board, Administration, principals, teachers, and support staff who have wisely use our resources to cultivate an environment that enables our children to maximize their intellectual and academic potential. When our children matriculate to the Souhegan Cooperative High School, they are more than prepared to accept the challenges of a leading high school.

That is evident in the fact that the high school has enjoyed a 0% dropout rate of the last 2 years. Also, that 92% of the graduates go on to college. This is no accident, but due in fact to strategic planning on the part of the Amherst School Board and Administration that begins with kindergarten.

We also would like to congratulate the Amherst School Board, the SAU39, and the Ways and Means Committee for working together in harmony, making the tough choices, and yet crafting a budget that continues to support the educational values and philosophies that are so beneficial to our children and community.

Again, to the good citizens of the Town of Amherst, please take a little time on Tuesday, March 11, 2014, and support your schools by voting IN FAVOR of the budgets.

*Sincerely,*  
 Dwayne Purvis - Parent and Citizen  
 Amherst

## The Money Election

### To the editor:

The 2012 Presidential election cost \$2.6B. About \$1.3B was spent by the candidates. The balance represents "influence spending" by political action committees (PAC's) and other organizations, promoting or attacking particular candidates or issues. Running for office costs money. The money is raised through the donations of a relatively small number of individuals. Lawrence Lessig, in "Republic Lost," says we really have two elections for every race: the money election, and the voter election. The money election determines who can compete, and the scope of the campaign they can run.

Many see nothing wrong with all the money that pours into our elections, calling it a matter of "free speech." Here is the problem: (1) our elected officials are primarily indebted to donors who support their campaigns, not those who vote for them; (2) those who fund the candidates do not represent the public, but have their own agendas. The voter election is democratic, the money election is not. There are only about 140,000 "relevant funders" of our elections, about 0.05% of the voting age population. Some of them also donate millions to "independent" PAC's. While no money changes hands overtly, the funders expect a return on their investment. It is not surprising that a senator who denies climate change receives donations from oil industry executives; or those opposing tax reform get large donations from corporate CEO's and hedge fund managers. Our democracy is broken. The money election breeds corruption. Our representatives should be responsible to the voters alone.

The solution: reduce the influence of large donations, and increase the number of donors. Congress will never change election finance laws if they think they won't get adequate campaign funding. But consider this: If only 10% of those who actually voted in 2012 gave \$110, perhaps encouraged by federal matching or tax incentives, that would completely fund 2012-style Presidential campaigns. Some want to donate more, to include candidates for other federal, state and local races, PAC's, political parties and advocacy organizations. Fine, but let's limit total annual political contributions to \$3,000 per person. "Free speech" should not mean that a few get the biggest PA system money can buy, while the rest of us must simply shout. The volume of political speech should depend on the number of people speaking with one voice, not the size of their wallets.

*John G. David*  
 Amherst

**Review the Sample Ballots on pages 6 and 7. Make your selections and bring with you to the polls.**

## Raising The Minimum Wage Is Not The Answer

### To the editor:

In the past few decades New Hampshire has gone from being the best state for business to one of the worst. Now our legislature will further the decline by passing HB 1403 to raise the minimum wage. While well intended, raising the minimum wage is not the path to increased wages for New Hampshire workers. If the bill passes it will reduce jobs and wages in our state. Here is why. In the 1960s, wages in our state were appallingly low. Then Sanders Associates started and Digital Equipment relocated here. Wages skyrocketed throughout the state. Why? High paying jobs come from quality employers, not as a result of government legislation.

To increase the wages for all New Hampshire workers we must encourage businesses to relocate here and for existing companies to grow and prosper. This should be our goal but it won't be as easy as in the past. Here is why: Our legislature has been short sighted; when revenue is needed we have raised the business taxes again and again. Now we have high business taxes. Add to this, we are one of the states burdening business with massive regulations. Also New Hampshire is not a right-to-work state. Further we must consider our high cost of living and utility rates. Add to this is the fact that the New Hampshire Constitution that does not allow for special tax incentives to encourage business to relocate to our state.

So now, we are going raise the minimum wage. To me that will further send the message that New Hampshire is not a business friendly state.

I urge you to contact your legislator and request that they not vote for HB 1403 and to pledge to vote for reduced business taxes and regulations. Once again, we can become a state that attracts quality companies.

*Representative Robert H. Rowe*  
 Amherst District

## Overturn Citizens United

### To the editor:

Citizens United, a conservative advocacy group, accepted corporate funding to create a 90 minute attack film against a presidential candidate. Fearing that the Federal Election Commission (FEC) and laws on campaign finance would prevent them from establishing it as a video-on-demand, they sued the FEC. The U. S. Supreme Court in its 5-4 decision went much further by overturning the previous century of case history and legislation on financial campaign reform. The court ruled that corporations have the unrestricted right to spend money to influence elections guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution. Essentially they established the legal principle that corporations are persons and money is free speech.

Since this decision, an enormous amount of money from corporations as well as wealthy individuals has poured into national and state political campaigns laundered through front organizations such as Citizens United. Many of these fronts are 401 (c)(4) "social welfare" organizations that can spend 49% of their incomes to influence political campaigns without having to disclose their financial donors. By targeting certain campaigns and working with corporate and industry lobbyists, this money can be channeled to threaten particular candidates with funding of their opponents' campaigns, thus corrupting our political system. And there is no way for the public to know who is behind the corruption. This makes it much harder to advance legislation in the public interest that affects corporations such as healthcare, environmental safety, Wall Street excesses, workers' rights, consumer protection, monopolistic practices, business tax loopholes, etc.

Because freedom of religion is also guaranteed by the First Amendment, legislators from Arizona recently decided that religious freedom of corporations could also be used to restrict access to customers who violate the religious beliefs of the corporation – a thinly disguised bill to discriminate against gays. Fortunately, Arizona's governor was smart enough to veto this bill since it would have created a very large loss of revenue to the State.

Both of these applications of the Citizens United decision dilute the freedoms of individuals while transferring basic rights intended for persons to corporations. Adam Smith in The Wealth of Nations as well as several presidents including Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower have warned about the damage to free market capitalism and our form of government by the unrestrained concentration of power in large businesses. Money is not speech, but it is power.

A nationwide effort sponsored by several cooperating organizations to overturn the Citizens United decision has come to New Hampshire. Thirteen State legislatures and over 500 cities and towns in the U. S. A. have already passed resolutions to support this effort. On March 11, the ballots of 26 NH towns, including Amherst and Milford, will include these resolutions as petition warrant articles (#41 in Amherst and #25 in Milford).

Please defend individual freedom in NH and the U.S.A. by voting for these petition warrant articles.

*Jack Conaway*  
 Amherst