

Letters & Opinion

A BIG THANK YOU to the Art Award Sponsors

To the editor:

A Special Thank You to the artists who juried the Student Art Show, Elaine Farmer, Beverly Melle, Janet Miller, and Howard Muscott. And THANK YOU to all of the Friends of the Amherst Town Library Volunteers that donated their time to the art show and to Hannford, Shaws, and Target for their donations to the Student Art Show reception on Mother's Day.

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Christine Farris
Friends of the Amherst Town Library
2015 Student Art Show

SHS School Board Addresses Best High School Ranking by US News

To the editor:

Every year US News and World Report ranks high schools across the country. Another edition was recently released and we thought it would be useful to address this particular ranking and how it is established.

To even be considered for a Best High School Ranking by the US News, a public school must be assessed for reading and math results on the state proficiency test as Step 1. They then factor in the percentages of disadvantaged students enrolled at the school. If a school passes Step 1, step 2 then assesses whether a school's disadvantaged students are outperforming disadvantaged students in the state. Schools that make it through these first two steps become eligible to be judged and ranked nationally on the final step --- college readiness performance. This portion of the ranking process is based on the number of students who took and passed AP classes and exams.

Where Souhegan fell short is in the disadvantaged student category mentioned above. Our performance of disadvantaged students is below the state average and, therefore, Souhegan did not "pass" Step 2. Only those schools who passed Step 2 were eligible to receive a "medal", and therefore a ranking. If we look at the two districts in New Hampshire who did make the top 13, and who we typically compare ourselves to, we see that Bedford's disadvantaged youth appear to do quite well on the state assessment and HB does not have a cell size large enough to report, therefore it is listed as N/A.

While Souhegan does not fall into the category eligible to be ranked, there are a number of schools in the top thirteen, or close behind, who do not perform as well as Souhegan. Six out of the thirteen top ranked NH schools have equal or lower math scores than Souhegan. Five out of the thirteen have lower scores than Souhegan in reading. Nine of the top thirteen have lower college readiness scores than Souhegan.

It is informative to see how we did in the four categories of data included for each school, regardless of whether they were eligible for a rank: student/teacher ratio, college readiness, mathematics, and reading. Looking, again, at Bedford and Hollis, our numbers are not significantly different from theirs except in the area of student/teacher ratio. The scores on College Readiness for Bedford, Hollis and Souhegan respectively are: 27, 45.8, and 33.2. Reading scores for each respectively are 3.4, 3.3, and 3.2. Math scores for each respectively are 2.5, 2.4, and 2.3.

Regarding the comparison of student/teacher ratios, this ranking is based on data from 2012-13, and therefore shows Souhegan with a 9 to 1 student/teacher ratio. However, in the last several years, a concerted effort has been made to reduce staff and increase the student to staff ratio. We are now at 10.7 to 1 which is much closer to the average.

Our goal is to always be considered a top ranked school. When we heard about the US News results, we wanted to take the time to understand why we didn't make the cut on this particular ranking. We hope this helps to clarify. For further reference, below is a link to the US News and World Report ranking process.

<http://www.usnews.com/education/best-high-schools/articles/how-us-news-calculated-the-rankings>

The Souhegan Cooperative School Board
Mary Lou Mullens - Chair, Howard Brown - Vice Chair, David Chen - Secretary, Steve Coughlan, Pim Grondstra, Chris Janson, Jeanne Ludt

Letters To the editor:

The Amherst Citizen is eager to serve as a community forum. We welcome your letters, opinions, and commentaries and make every effort to run them in their entirety. We do reserve the right to edit. The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the position of the staff of The Amherst Citizen.

Please direct your letters, views and commentary to the Editor, The Amherst Citizen, P.O. Box 291, Amherst, NH 03031-0291, or e-mail your submission to: news@amherstcitizen.com. We will attempt to run your letter as submitted (space permitting) providing it is signed and phone number is included.

Thanks to Students from Veteran

To the editor:

I would like to bring attention to and thank the following crew of Souhegan students that included Jacob Hopfenspirger, Matthew Hopfenspirger, Thomas Liott, Jack Johansen, Alex Maresco, Hamza Ewiess, Chris De-Chambeau and Wils Ezequelle.

They recently came to my residence and raked my lawns and flower beds. They did an exceptional job and their efforts are greatly appreciated by this Amherst native and veteran, aged 87 years.

Charles W. Stickney
Amherst

Thank You, Jeanne, and Welcome!

To the editor:

The Souhegan Cooperative School Board would like to thank the candidates who volunteered for the vacant school board position, as well as the open Community Council seats. We realize that everyone's time is precious, and appreciate the willingness to volunteer their time for the good of our school, and students.

We would like to thank Nan Stearns and Jane Niles for their years of service on Community Council. They were such an asset to the Council and will be greatly missed. At the same time, we are very excited to have Vanessa Foley and Terri Behm joining Community Council next year. We are confident they will fill the very large shoes Nan and Jane are leaving.

The board vacancy left by Fran Harrow also resulted in big shoes to fill. Fran's wisdom and dedication will be sorely missed by all. While Fran's term was not due to end until March of 2017, the appointed position only remains in effect until March of 2016, at which time the position is open for election.

The Board would like to thank Kathie Nunley for applying for the interim position, and being willing to serve in that capacity. We would also like to congratulate Jeanne Ludt on her appointment to fill that vacancy. The majority of the board felt it was best to fill the interim position with someone who had previous experience and could easily take on some of the committee responsibilities that Fran had assumed while on the Board. We are thankful to Jeanne for her willingness to jump right back in. Jeanne's knowledge of all aspects of the budget, policy, and the school will allow the board to continue our work without missing a beat. Thank you, Jeanne, and welcome!

Sincerely,
The Souhegan Cooperative School Board

Community Council Announces New Executive Council

To the editor:

As the 2014-2015 school year comes to a close, Souhegan High School's Community Council finishes another busy year. The community members that represent Amherst and Mont Vernon want to share an update from Souhegan High School's governing body.

Currently, there are two proposals that have been discussed and will be voted on in the next few weeks. One of these proposals seeks to create a curriculum advisory committee. If approved by Community Council and the SAU 39 school board, this committee would work with administration in an advisory role regarding curriculum changes at Souhegan High School. Gigi Klipa, Souhegan's Dean of Faculty, submitted this proposal, with the goal "to bring student perspective and voice," to the curriculum process.

The second proposal recently brought to Community Council by Alex Bedard, a senior at Souhegan, seeks to increase the parking fee for students from \$100 to \$105, with the \$5 increase going to Community Council operations and scholarships. Over the past few years, Community Council has encountered increasing difficulty in raising funds. Unlike traditional student councils at other schools, Community Council is a governing body of the school, and it currently doesn't receive funding. Community Council funds provide for its operating expenses including office supplies, support for school activities such as FangFest, Souhegan's school spirit week, and a small scholarship offered to a graduating senior.

In the past few months, the Council has also reviewed the following proposals: discontinuing participation of the NH Scholars program (this proposal failed, Souhegan continues to participate in the program); amending the school's withdrawal policy to give students a WD on their transcript without a 0.0 factored into their GPA, if they withdraw before the halfway point in the academic year (this proposal passed and will take effect in the 2015-16 school year).

Community Council is pleased to introduce the new Executive Council for the upcoming school year: Claire Foley, Moderator; Rosie Garvey, Clerk; Alex Glavin, Communicator; Mitch Greany, treasurer. Paris Dzen will be working with Alex Glavin, as the Communicator-in-training. We are sad to see two valuable community members leave their positions on the Council. Both Jane Niles and Nan Stearns will not be returning next year. While we will miss them and their contributions made to the Souhegan community, we are pleased to welcome Terri Behm and Vanessa Foley as new community representatives, appointed by the Souhegan School Board.

In the last few weeks of school, the Council will continue reviewing proposals and preparing for the 2015-16 school year At-Large representative elections.

We welcome community participation and invite you to attend our meetings. Meetings are most Mondays from 2:20-3:20pm at Souhegan High School. More information can be found at <http://www.sau39.org/Page/256>.

Respectfully submitted,
Leslie Formby
Community Member
Community Council of Souhegan High School

Purple Lilacs

Waiting with patience,
Through winter's ice and snow
For May to finally arrive
With its soft winds and cloudless skies
For the buds of deep purple
A gift of time,
Their blooms can only be enjoyed and savored briefly
Like thieves, we cut them wherever they bloom
And bring them into our home
For every vase and pitcher
With their announcement of spring,
They fill the air with a light heavenly sweetness
Which lasts for just a day or two
After waiting all year for these lovely flowers,
I realize how so much has changed
and I wonder what next year's blooms will bring
Already anticipating life's finale for this fleeting moment,
I stop myself and breathe them in
Their scent lets me know I am home,
Life is beautiful,
There is love,
And how now
Everything
Is purple lilacs again.

By Susanna L. Hargreaves
Amherst

Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Collection - Thursday June 4, 3:00-7:00PM

Nashua Public Works Garage, 9 Stadium Drive, Nashua

Residents of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Hudson, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Mont Vernon, Nashua, Pelham, and Windham: \$10 user fee per vehicle, additional charges for quantities exceeding 10 gallons or 20 pounds, additional charges for electronics recycling. For more information and a complete list of accepted items, please visit: <http://www.nashuapc.org/hhw> or call 424-2240.

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| <p>Household Hazardous Waste Collection Accepted Items
Air Conditioners
Anti-freeze
Adhesives
Fluorescent Bulbs
Drain Cleaner
Driveway Sealer
Electronics
Fertilizer
Herbicides
Hydrochloric Acid
Lead Paint
Light Fixture Ballasts
Lithium Batteries
Mercury
Metal Polish
Mixed Gasoline
Ni-CAD Batteries
No-Pest Strips
Oil-Based Paint
Oven Cleaner
Paint Thinner
Pesticides
Pool Chemicals
Rodent Killers
Strippers
Varnish
Wood Preservatives</p> | <p>Prohibited Items
Latex Paint - If you have full or nearly full cans of latex paint that are still useable, you can donate them to the Habitat for Humanity ReStore at 352 Amherst Street, Nashua.
Fire Extinguishers
Return free of charge to ASAP Fire Company, 90 Progress Avenue, Tyngsboro MA 01879
Smoke Detectors - contain radioactive material</p> | <p>and must be returned to the manufacturer.
Carbon Monoxide Detectors - Most carbon monoxide detectors do not contain radioactive material and can be put in the trash after removing the battery.
Radioactive Compounds - Consult the manufacturer.
Used Oil - As long as the oil is not mixed with anything else, you can bring it to your local transfer station or a participating store.
Auto Batteries - The towns of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Litchfield, Merrimack, Nashua, Pelham, and Windham accept auto batteries from their residents at their transfer stations or landfills. Auto batteries can also be recycled at a participating store.
Propane Tanks - The towns of Amherst, Brookline, Hollis, Litchfield, Merrimack, Milford, Nashua, Pelham, and Windham accept propane tanks from their residents at their transfer stations or landfills. Check with your local municipality to see if there are any restrictions on the size of tanks that are</p> | <p>accepted.
Creosote - Call a private contractor.
Asbestos - NH DES List of licensed contractors
Medications - Do NOT flush medications! The Drug Enforcement Administration is no longer sponsoring Nation Drug Take Back collections. However, many local police stations provide drop boxes for the public to dispose of unwanted prescription medications. Most are open to anyone, not just residents of that community. If you have questions about using the prescription drug disposal boxes, please contact the local police station. Amherst—Prescription Drug Disposal Box located in Police Station lobby.
Sharps - Sharps may be brought to St. Joseph's Hospital 172 Kinsley St, Nashua at any time. Home syringe users must place their sharps in a sealed sharps container, liquid laundry detergent bottle, or fabric softener bottle. Containers must be taped shut and marked "used sharps." Call 882-3000. Sharps can also be brought to So. NH Medical Center, Nashua Call 485-3806.</p> |
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120 Route 101A
Amherst, NH
(603) 880-8471



Cliff Ann Wales
Publisher & Editor

Jim Wales
Advertising & Production

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Phone: 672-9444 Fax: 672-8153 e-Mail: news@amherstcitizen.com

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e-Mail: news@amherstcitizen.com

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How to contact us:

Phone: 603-672-9444

Fax: 603-672-8153

Mail: PO Box 291
Amherst, NH 03031

eMail: news@amherstcitizen.com

Ads: ads@amherstcitizen.com

on the World Wide Web:
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