

# Opinion

A4 February 16, 2012

WINNISQUAM ECHO

## EDITORIAL

### “Deck the Village” was a true holiday treat

*Editor's note: The following guest commentary was submitted by everyone's favorite festive couple, Santa and Mrs. Claus, who send their apologies for neglecting to send this note of thanks sooner amid the hustle and bustle of the holidays.*

After our traditionally busy Christmas season, Mrs. Claus reminds me to write with thanks for our wonderful visits - and especially the opportunity to help “Deck the Village” in Belmont on December's first Sunday. We fondly remember seeing new and old friends of all ages, the warm sunshine, festive music, bright balloons and oh, those cookies!

At the great risk of forgetting someone, let us salute the elves who made the festival memorable for all: Belmont Elementary School vocal ensemble director Jen Shaw delightfully opened the day, and the friendly Belmont Fire Department, gave Mrs. Claus and I a great ride on a truck in our most favorite color.

This year struck more excellent chords - and it was a privilege to arrive in the Village led by new Shaker School District Band Director Lauren Fountain, and the BHS marching band. Mrs. Claus and I heard them earlier in Plymouth and Laconia community events, and we salute Glenda Hill for her idea of inviting them. Mrs. Fountain let me share conducting duties for a little while, before visiting with the many Belmont children and taking a stroll through your beautiful Village center.

The Corner Meeting House was transformed as Santa's Sweet Shop with the decorating artistry of Joann Bennett and site coordinator and chief cocoa maker Alyce Jewell. A wonderful brigade of BEST/Belmont Elementary Support Team Moms, enlisted by Barbara Ribeiro provided tasty assistance as bakers, cookie craft helpers and welcomers. Artists Ginger Wells-Kay and Claudette Varney were also part of the Sweet Shop group, adding to the day's happy memories.

Near the bandstand, bright bunches of balloons were readied with a helping hand from Brian Loanes, Deb Frawley-Drake and Cindy Carroll, while seasonal tunes were played by Rob Court, who also helped this year as Master of Ceremonies. That pretty area near your Tioga River was studio for the day, as Chief Photography Elf Angela Hanson spent the afternoon capturing special memories. Karen Gilbert, Serena Moody, Ron Cormier and Mike Hanson kept that operation in good order, and we hope you enjoyed the pictures!

The Mill's Senior Center was a hive of activity with lots of crafts underway. That special workshop was coordinated by Parks and Recreation director Janet Breton, helped by daughter Taryn, Barb Binette, BJ Eckardt and Judy Sigsworth. We admired the shiny new trail groomer brought for display by Bogie Buster Russ Davis and helpers, and took a snowmobile map - in case the sleigh gets stuck some night!

We understand preparations were happening well in advance for this celebration. The Library was a bright night beacon from its many colored and white lights, added with care by David Morse and Brenda Paquette, along with a little help from friends, Belknap County Youth Services and MetroCast. (It helps to know nice folks in high places when the wreath is ready for the Mill and trees for lights!) Rotary again took charge of decorating the historic and handsome Bandstand, one of our favorites throughout the land! And Town Hall staff added their help to make sure all was bright and safe.

It was kind of Tim Hayes, one of the very first volunteers that started this festival, to again bring fresh boughs and a tree, to brighten the Village. Whether you volunteered, stopped by a workshop, attended Library Story Time, organized by Jackie Heath and her staff, or generously brought a donation for St. Joseph's Food Pantry, we are tremendously grateful for all that was done to welcome the season's spirit to Belmont Village.

Be good and generous all year, because we're watching! Merry and healthy 2012 from Santa Claus & Mrs. Claus

## PET OF THE WEEK



## AMIGO

How long wandering, injured and homeless, was this handsome black and white cat, now named Amigo?

The answer to that question will forever elude us at New Hampshire Humane Society. When Amigo arrived at our door, we immediately sort out medical care for him. His tail was beyond the reach of even the most gifted veterinary surgeon to save, and the shattered bone in his front leg dug mercilessly into muscle, and needed to be pinned back together. In spite of injuries that would cause humans to writhe and scream in pain, Amigo simply laid quietly. He is so affectionate, so sweet - he drools when petted gently.

Thanks to Dr. Chris Jaques at Interlakes Animal Hospital, his leg has been reconstructed, and Amigo is recovering well. He sports a little “schnauzer” like stub tail; very dashing.

A home that will keep him indoors and safe is what we hope for now. If you can commit to this requirement, please come and see him. If you cannot adopt him, but would like to help us cover the costs of his medical care, send a small donation - check [www.nhhumane.org](http://www.nhhumane.org) for call 524-3252; 1305 Meredith Center Rd., Laconia. Shelter is open Tuesday/Thursday/Saturday.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Hassan and Cilley

To the Editor:

Promises, promises! Pledges, pledges. Democrat / former NH Sen. Jackie Cilley will not take the pledge against a sales tax or income tax, a lightning-rod issue. Democrat / former NH Senator Maggie Hassan will. Both are filed to run for governor. Absent a sales tax or income tax, the actual pledge is to raise our property tax.

We could wish that on March 17, they'd both pledge to remember the Little People. In this climate, that's the 99 percent for whom raised property tax may hit in the form of a landlord passing it on to a tenant with higher rent; or it may mean continued pummeling of fixed-income seniors. Or it may mean more extended family members living under one

roof, and someone under that roof delaying going to college. Small businesses must pass on their costs to their customers. School boards will act on pleas for austerity cuts. As candidate Cilley responsibly explains, we need to have the discussion.

On the upcoming Hallmark card day, Valentine's Day, both Hassan and Cilley can pledge love for New

Hampshire, proven by their running for this difficult job of governing New Hampshire, with its handicaps of so-large volunteer legislature and so-decreasing support for all levels of public education.

Sincerely,  
Lynn Rudmin Chang  
Sanbornton

### Botten will make a great Road Agent

To the Editor:

I'm so very excited that Tony Botten is running for Gilman Road Agent in the March elections! Our families have been friends since they moved to Gilman

ton eight years ago, and his knowledge of the town will be, as it's been in the past, an asset. Our children are friends, and I know he is well known and trusted throughout the town.

Tony is respectful, honest and hard working. He offers a helping hand whenever needed, and can be counted on in an emergency! I trust his judgment and his many years of experience will

guide him in maintaining our roads in the most attentive, efficient, and cost effective manner possible.

Cameron AJ Hamel  
Gilmanton

### Recent “North Country Notebook” column was inaccurate

To the Editor:

Regarding John Harrigan's comments on Colebrook's Halcyon Theater in your Wednesday, Feb. 8 (in our case, Thursday, Feb. 9) “North Country Notebook”:

When Frank Baldwin built the building, the Halcyon Theater was part of the original construction, and began to operate just as soon as the construction was completed.

Further, there is absolutely no contemporary record in the newspapers that gave even the slightest hint that Frank was assembling Model T's. His large shop in back was for repairs - not an assembly line. The cement ramp that supposedly was to drive cars up to the second floor was actually a fire escape for the theater. It was designed to evacuate the entire theater of over

five hundred seats in six minutes. Since Model T's were a real tin lizzie, the parts that were found in the early 1960's when they were tearing down a small building to make way for new hangers for the airport were spare parts that had been kept on hand for re-building wrecked cars. See The Colebrook Sentinel, 17 July 1913.

Regards,  
Bud Hulse, Colebrook

*John Harrigan responds: “Nobody is going to argue with Bud, who is the town's preeminent historian, but the Ford assembly bit was accepted as common knowledge when I was growing up in the neighborhood. Alas, as with many a thing that makes a great story, it apparently wasn't true.”*

### Asking for your vote

To the Editor:

My name is Lisa Swancott. I am seeking your vote to continue working as your Selectman in the upcoming March 13 election.

For the past 19 years, my family and I have enjoyed the many benefits of our community as Northfield residents.

Through my involvement with the Girls Scouts/Boy Scouts, Treasurer of the Middle School PTO and High

School PTSO, volunteer work with the schools, various town committees, and local nonprofits I have had the pleasure to meet and work with many of you.

The knowledge I gained serving on the Town Budget Committee for the last six years, along with my 20-plus years in the financial industry made my appointment this past June to Selectman a smooth transition.

I have enjoyed working

with the Selectmen and town employees to help keep the Town of Northfield safe and maintained in the most cost effective way possible.

If elected, I will continue to keep the tax rate as low as possible without compromising safety or services. I look forward to continuing work with the Planning Board to update the Master Plan, working with Department Heads to plan our future needs, improving our recycling pro-

gram, and enhancing our parks through any grants available and volunteer work.

Your thoughts and ideas are always appreciated, and I look forward to hearing from you. Please call me, 630-4894, or online at <http://elect-lisa-swancott.webs.com/>. I ask you again for your vote on March 13.

Sincerely,  
Lisa Swancott, Northfield

### Is SB2 for you?

To the Editor:

After attending the Feb. 8 Shaker District public hearing, I reviewed the statements made both for and against the passage of SB2. Here are a few facts, thoughts and questions that came to mind:

• Fact: Many people are intimidated when taking part in a hand or voice vote. Their privacy is in question. The passage of SB2 would eliminate this intimidation—all votes are by secret ballot.

• Fact: There are many older folks, workers, and absent citizens who are unable to attend that could cast an absentee ballot due to infirmity; win-

ter relocation or because of their work schedules. The passage of SB2 would give these people the opportunity to take part in the process.

• Statements made against the passage of SB2:

• “People not attending the deliberative session would be uninformed voters.”

• “Decisions would be made by only a small number of people.”

• “Only a handful of people attended the (SB2) deliberative session held regarding the Belmont Municipal budget.”

As I reviewed these statements, I remembered a very

interesting fact regarding who did not attend the Municipal deliberative session:

• Fact: Not one of the people who spoke against the passage of SB2 was in attendance! Only one Belmont School Board member even bothered to attend.

Referring back to their negative opinions regarding the passage of SB2, I have a couple of questions:

• Question: Because you did not attend the deliberative session, does this qualify you as an “uninformed voter”?

• Question: Does your lack of attendance represent a lack of interest in the municipal

side of the process?

In my opinion, SB2 corrects problems that are inherent with the existing methodology used to conduct our District Meetings. The intimidation factor does indeed exist, and there are people who would like to attend but are unable to. What it cannot correct is the lack of participation and motivation suffered by too many citizens, in all aspects of our democratic process. Until that problem is resolved, only a few people will continue to represent the many.

Ken Knowlton  
Belmont

**Winnisquam Echo**  
Established October 14, 2004  
Published every Thursday at  
5 Water Street, Meredith, New Hampshire 03253  
Telephone: (603) 279-4516  
Toll Free: (877) 766-6889  
Fax: (603) 279-3331  
Frank Chilinski, President & Publisher  
Brendan Berube, Editor  
Donna Rhodes, Reporter  
Josh Spaulding, Sports Editor  
Jeff Lajoie, Sports Reporter  
Donna Fraser, Advertising Representative  
Judy Manning, Classified & Circulation Manager  
Jim Hinckley, Distribution Manager  
Email: [echo@salmonpress.com](mailto:echo@salmonpress.com)  
[jumbo@salmonpress.com](mailto:jumbo@salmonpress.com)  
USPS 024-975  
The Winnisquam Echo is published weekly by Salmon Press, P.O. Box 729, 5 Water St., Meredith, NH 03253. Periodicals postage paid at Meredith, NH 03253. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Winnisquam Echo, P.O. Box 729, Meredith, NH 03253.