

Letters To The Beacon

I am writing in thanks to the Andover and East Andover fire departments and the Andover EMS team.

On November 4 at 11 PM, I called 911 after my woodstove hit 900 degrees and was still climbing, and there was a loud rumbling that sounded like a jet engine in the chimney. The Andover first responders arrived within 10 minutes and immediately got to work assessing the situation and doing a thorough check of the chimney and surrounding areas. Moments later the East Andover firefighters arrived as backup, along with the EMS team.

The firefighters had their newest tool, a thermal imaging camera, which they used to check for hot spots in the chimney and surrounding walls. After seeing this camera in use, it is clear that this is an invaluable piece of equipment that will make our firefighters even more proficient and effective. Most impressive of all, however, was the extremely efficient, professional, and caring manner in which all the firefighters handled the situation.

I extend my sincere gratitude to each and every one of the first responders, firefighters, and EMTs who were here to help on the night of November 4. I know we are always reminded to reach out and thank the people serving in

the armed forces, but let's not forget to thank those who serve and protect us every day and night right here in our own home town.

Sincerely,

Eric J. Themen
and family

Wonderful November, 2010.

- Special program at the Andover Lions Club meeting with Sue Christiansen and Joyce Egge as speakers. The Lions committed to support the project to mail goody boxes to our service members in the war zone.

- Veterans Day celebration at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen. It is always an inspirational ceremony. I make it a habit to attend on Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The many veterans organizations and active duty military display their talents to honor those who have passed before us. You can't help but come away inspired but humble.

Each year there is an elementary or middle school on the program with a group to sing or recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Normally it has been the Boscawen school. This year it was the Lakes Region Christian School that sang the national anthem and recited the Pledge of Allegiance. In addition they

performed a medley of the songs of the various military branches, finishing with my favorite, the US Air Force song.

If you haven't been to the veterans cemetery, you should visit there in respect to our fallen service members.

- Waiting For Superman, the movie. We visited the Red River Theatre, a beautiful and comfortable movie theatre in Concord to see the movie. It is a documentary with a setting in various schools that depict the many problems with our education system. It includes various alternative schools and charter schools that have made a big improvement to the system. However, children are on waiting lists to get into the schools, and it shows the heartbreaks of some students who are left out due to space. The movie identifies the causes of the breakdown of our school system and some suggestions on correcting it. It is a movie well worth attending

- And of course, the 2010 election. The pendulum swung back to a reasonable and responsible course, after having gone far left two years ago and things got out of hand. That is what is so great about this country – with corrections every two to four years, it keeps the Ship of State on a reasonable course. God Bless the United States of America and the State of New Hampshire.

Bill Leber

month at Art Urie's office, as we look to the future. Democratic Representatives Deb Wheeler and Joy Tilton lost by barely 200 votes, and we know there's interest and hope out there.

Many thanks go to the following for all of their help in the November elections: Bill Bardsley, Dean Barker, Robin Boynton, Steve Darling, Mary Hiller, Mario Ratzki, Art Urie, and again and especially to Bill Bardsley, who, for over 35 years, has worked tirelessly, persistently, and faithfully for the Democratic cause, and who is the best political mentor one could imagine.

Janet Moore

After working as a teacher at AE/MS for more than seven years, I am finding out now that some things don't matter.

It began last fall after the Town put pressure on the School Board to decrease the school budget. The School Board then asked the teachers to renegotiate teacher salaries for the 2010-2011 school year. The teachers, aware that our salaries were within the bottom 30% compared to teachers in other New Hampshire communities, refused. Without re-negotiations, we thought that our salaries and benefits would be safe – at least for another year.

However, I found out that it didn't matter that the teachers refused to renegotiate. The School Board reduced my position anyways to four days per week, which means that my salary decreased by \$9,000, my healthcare costs increased by \$3,000, and I no longer have any retirement benefits.

If I had just received my degree today and started my teaching career at AE/MS in the position that I accepted seven years ago as a full-time teacher, I'd receive more benefits and earn more money than I do now. So after working for AE/MS for seven years as its only physical education teacher, it is as though I have never taught at AE/MS at all.

I have always been dedicated to my students. That doesn't matter.

I am a department of one at AE/MS.

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