



# THE Positively HOLLIS POST

June 2024

"CELEBRATING HOLLIS & CREATING COMMUNITY"

Volume I, Issue 2

## SECRETS REVEALED

### Unveiling the Magic of the Strawberry Festival

by Liz Barbour



*Hulling Party, Photo Courtesy: Hollis Woman's Club*

At exactly 2 pm on June 23rd, the Strawberry Festival, a tradition of 75 years of Hollis deliciousness will begin. The Hollis Woman's Club and the Hollis Town Band will once again join forces to serve up local strawberry desserts accompanied by toe-tapping music. You can bet there will be a long line of festival goers ready to place their orders for strawberry desserts. Our advice is to arrive at Monument Square at least 30 minutes early (park at the Middle School, the Lawrence Barn, or behind the library).

When you arrive, you'll get in line, place your order, and stroll inside the Congregational Church to pick up a bowl brimming with strawberry shortcake (or a sundae, or a combination of the two). Then you'll wander out to the Common to find a spot on the grass and enjoy the concert. From the outside, the festival appears to be a simple affair, but there is so much going on behind the scenes

that we don't know about. So, let's go behind the curtain and see how the annual festival comes together. I asked HWC member Carol Birch to open her records and she shared the particulars.

Months in advance, the previous year's records are checked, lists are made, and orders are placed for 360 quarts of strawberries, 58 quarts of whipping cream, 39 gallons of ice cream, 50 pounds of sugar, and 68 pounds of flour.

Committee chairs begin calling in volunteers to hull, slice, bake, whip, scoop, carry, set up, serve, and clean up. Over 200 volunteers are needed, and no one is ever turned away. Volunteers are a mix of Woman's Club and Town Band members, Scouting troops, and Robotics team members, family, and friends. All are welcome to join in and lend a hand. "Bring your husbands, grandchildren, high schoolers, wake up your kids, bring them home from college. The more the merrier!"

*Continued page 7*

## THE PATH FORWARD

### The Farley Building Community Center

by Liz Barbour



such as windows, doors, fixtures, and equipment. The final deliverables will be the construction documents with complete dimensioned plans, elevations, sections, details, finish and equipment schedules, and specifications covering the entire building, the addition, and the rehabilitated structure.

At the annual town meeting in March, Hollis residents approved \$300,000 to advance the Farley Building Community Center (FBCC) project, marking a new phase in its development. To provide insights into the bid management package released in May, I spoke with Lynn Schur, a fellow member of the FBCC Committee. Lynn has extensive experience as an architectural designer and project manager, having worked on the Lawrence Barn and other town building committees.

Lynn explained, "The Farley Building Community Center Committee issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) in May from architectural firms to develop a complete design package. The architectural firm selected will take the concept design as presented at the Town Meeting and develop a schematic design package. In this phase, the architect and consultants will further develop and refine the design in collaboration with the Committee by producing plans, elevations, and crucial building sections and securing regulatory approvals.

In the next phase, Design Development, the engineering will commence on structure, plumbing, electrical, heating/ventilation, fire protection, energy analysis, and other project systems. Material and finishes selection is also included in this phase

Drawings will include architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, civil, interior design, and other specialties. A budget estimate is to be submitted at each phase of the design process to evaluate the cost of the proposed work and allow for changes to keep the project within budget. Proposed options for integrating sustainable design is also being addressed throughout the design process. Upon completion of all these phases, the town will have what is necessary to put this project, the rehabilitation of the Farley Building, out to bid to general building contractors. The FBCC Committee is optimistic that this work can be completed by early November 2024."

While the construction documents are being produced, FBCC Chairman Dave Sullivan continues to solicit and receive commitments from local businesses pledging to contribute to the project through material and in-kind donations. Viking Roofing, Alpine Environmental, Manifest Builders, Pioneer Tree Service, Custom View Landscaping, Daskalos Outdoor Services, and The Doty Group Landscaping have joined the project. To learn more about how your business can join this special group, contact [info@farleyforhollis.org](mailto:info@farleyforhollis.org).

To learn more about the project and how you can volunteer visit, [www.farleyforhollis.org](http://www.farleyforhollis.org).

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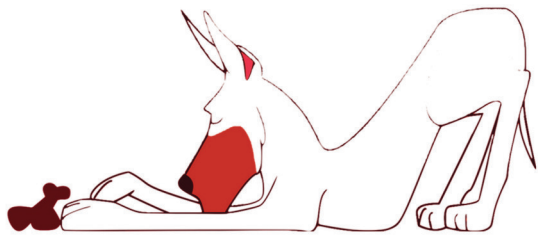
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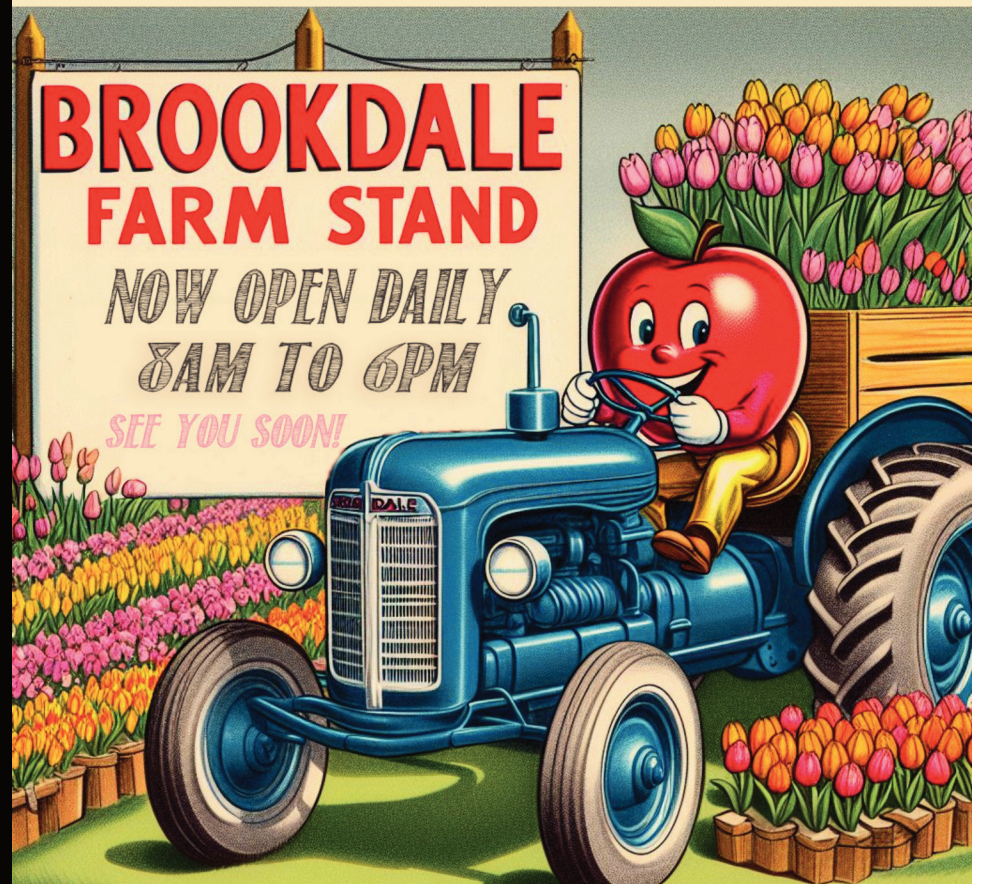


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### A Letter from the Positively Hollis Team:

What an incredible start for The Positively Hollis Post! Over 4000 copies of our first issue were mailed to every household and business in Hollis. Thank you to each of you for embracing The Positively Hollis Post with such enthusiasm.

You can expect issues in March, June, September, and December, featuring stories celebrating our community's spirit. Subscribe to [positivelyhollis.com](http://positivelyhollis.com) for new weekly stories delivered to your email. We invite you to send your stories to the website and the PH Post. Submission guidelines are at [www.positivelyhollis.com/submission-guidelines](http://www.positivelyhollis.com/submission-guidelines).

We look forward to sharing more stories, news, and community highlights with you in the coming months.

With Gratitude,  
The Positively Hollis Team  
(Kristen, Liz, Julie, Sharon, and Dave)

### The Positively Hollis Team

Visit our website for more info!  
[www.positivelyhollis.com/about-us](http://www.positivelyhollis.com/about-us)



Kristen Peik



Liz Barbour



Julie LeDoux



Sharon Swart



Dave Parry

## Hollis Agriculture's Role in Local and Regional Food Security

by Jeff Begin



"Welcome to Hollis, An Active Farming Town." Those are the words that greet motorists entering Hollis. But what does that mean today? Surely longtime Hollis residents remember a time when there was a farm in any direction you looked and of every stripe: fruits, vegetables, dairy, and livestock just to name a few. As the population in southern New Hampshire grows and changes, including in Hollis, how important is Hollis agriculture to the state and the region today?

As it turns out, it's very important.

Hollis became a center of agriculture centuries ago for a variety of reasons, with one being the excellent soils in town. Hollis has a high concentration of quality farmland relative to the rest of New Hampshire. As one might expect with a nickname like The Granite State, much of New Hampshire is very rocky and, let's say, vertical. This leaves very little space for growing crops except in a few select areas, Hollis being one such area.

The USDA maintains nationwide maps of soil types and ranks soil by agricultural usefulness. From a perspective of agricultural use, soils are classified in descending order Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance, Farmland of Local Importance and finally Not Prime Farmland. The vast majority of soils in New Hampshire are classified as not prime farmland and largely unsuitable for crop production. Good farmland is hard to find in New Hampshire.

Realistically, fruit and vegetable crops are only economically viable if grown on good soil. Depending on whom you ask, it may be that only prime farmland and farmland of statewide importance are economically viable for fruit and vegetable crops.

According to USDA data from 2022, Hillsborough County has by far the highest number of acres in commercial vegetable production in New Hampshire, totaling 961 acres. That is 31% of the total vegetable production acres in New Hampshire and more than twice that of Merrimack County, the next largest. Even within the larger context of New England, Hillsborough County boasts the highest dollar value for direct marketed produce in New England.

Within Hillsborough County, two towns produce the vast majority of fruit and vegetable crops: Hollis and Litchfield. Litchfield's productivity is down to the prime soil and flat land that abuts the Merrimack River - anyone driving on Charles Bancroft Highway will notice that.

But Litchfield pales in comparison to Hollis in terms of prime soil. Roughly speaking, Litchfield has around 900 acres of land with prime soil which is half of Hollis' 1,800 acres of prime soil, according to USDA data.



Photo credit: Bill and Colby Hall

### Down in the Dirt

#### Begin Family Farm, Hollis NH

You can find their fresh produce at Milford and Bedford Farmers Markets, or through their CSA. For information, visit [beginfamilyfarm.com](http://beginfamilyfarm.com).

#### Narrow Pines Homestead, Hollis NH

Check their farmstand daily at 300 Broad St. or call for delivery. For information: email: [Narrowpineshomestead@gmail.com](mailto:Narrowpineshomestead@gmail.com); Facebook: [facebook.com/narrowpineshomestead](https://facebook.com/narrowpineshomestead).

#### Singing Pond Farm, Hollis NH

Jack Perez is growing 36 different crops and 76 total varieties of vegetables and flowers on 1/8 of an acre. Singing Pond Farm is selling at area farmers' markets. For locations, visit [singingpondfarm.com](http://singingpondfarm.com).

#### Utangard Farm, Hollis NH

Utangard Farm specializes in hatching and selling American Bresse chicks, heritage turkeys, and quail. For information email: [info@utangardfarm.com](mailto:info@utangardfarm.com). Facebook: [facebook.com/UtangardFarm](https://facebook.com/UtangardFarm).

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Continued on pg. 7

# SUMMER FUN HOLLIS STYLE

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## Hollis Summer Camps

### The Care Farm

287 South Merrimack Rd. Hollis, NH  
Farm camps for both typical youth and those with disabilities ages 5-16 yrs.  
www.thecarefarmnh.com

### Hollis Art Space

30 Ash St. Hollis, NH  
Art camps and workshops for preschool ages to adult.  
www.hollisartspace.com

### Beaver Brook Association

117 Ridge Rd. Hollis, NH  
Adventure camps for K-9 yrs., teens, adults.  
www.beaverbrook.org

## Hollis Fishing

Rocky Pond  
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## Hollis Boating

Rocky Pond Boat Launch  
Flint Pond (www.flintspnd.org)

## Hollis Area Hiking

**Beaver Brook Association**  
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www.beaverbrook.org

### Hollis Town Forest Trails

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www.hollistrails.org

### Andres Institute of Art Trails

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## Hollis Experiences

### Fulchino Vineyard

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## Hollis Area Public Gardens

### Beaver Brook Association

### Maple Hill Gardens

13 Themed Gardens

### The Lucie Beebe Garden

(Located behind the Historical Society Wheeler House)

### The Adam Verrecchia Memorial Community Garden

(The Congregational Church of Hollis)

## Hollis Area Museums & Galleries

### Hollis Arts Society

Gallery On West Pearl, Nashua, NH  
hollisartsociety.org/home/galleryonwestpearl

### Hollis Art Space

www.hollisartspace.com

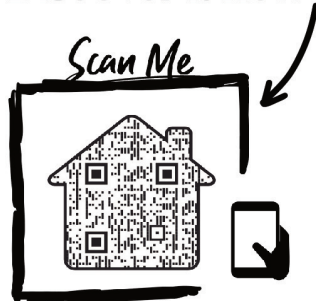
### Hollis Social Library

Library Art Gallery, Local Museum Passes  
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**Thumbs Up!** to the wonderful members of the Beautify Hollis Team. Julie Gross, Carli Ford, DJ, Juliana Rowland, Deborah Lussier, Eliza LeCours, and others have been picking up trash along So. Merrimack to not only “clean up Hollis”, but to protect wildlife and even people who are out walking along our beautiful roads. Small plastics, broken glass bottles, and sharp metal are potential hazards, let alone an eyesore. Thank you again for all your efforts.

- Pamela A.

**Thumbs Up!** to the HB Cucumbers Facebook Group who were superheroes who helped me with my move.

- Sue B.

**Thumbs Up!** to Morgan, the young lady who walks her mini pony O’Reilly down the sidewalk through the center of town. It’s got to be the cutest sight. Only in Hollis!

**Thumbs Up!** to Amanda Chapman, a Hollis resident, fosters dogs for Operation Delta Dog, benefiting veterans with disabilities. You can foster a dog too! Visit [www.operationdeltadog.org](http://www.operationdeltadog.org).

Please submit your positive Thumbs Up comments via email: [positivelyhollis@gmail.com](mailto:positivelyhollis@gmail.com).



## Cook's Corner

Submit your recipes to [positivelyhollis@gmail.com](mailto:positivelyhollis@gmail.com).

### Strawberry Fool

(Serves 4)

- 1-quart local strawberries stemmed
- ¼ cup sugar, plus 2 Tbs
- 1 cup heavy cream or whipping cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Fresh mint leaves for garnish

#### Directions

Thinly slice ½ qt of the berries. Crush the remaining berries gently with a fork in a bowl. Combine all the berries with ¼ cup of sugar and let them sit for 30 minutes to bring out the berry juices.

Combine the heavy cream, 2 Tbs sugar, and vanilla in a mixing bowl and whip until soft peaks form.

Gently swirl the berry mixture into the whipped cream - do not mix it so thoroughly that it looks like pink yogurt, it should look “marbled.” Spoon into glasses and decorate each serving with reserved strawberries and a sprig of mint. Serve immediately or refrigerate for up to 12 hours.

## Viking Roofing Raises the Roof Once Again for Hollis

As the Farley Building Community Center project progresses, Viking Roofing, led by Hollis residents Jeff Taylor and Cindi Owning, join in to support another town restoration. Jeff, a Farley School alumnus, and Cindi are deeply committed to their community. Viking Roofing, a Lawrence Barn and Noah Dow Cooper Shop donor, exemplifies local business dedication to community initiatives. Both restoration projects were funded largely by donor partners in the building industry. So, what drives a business to donate to a local community project in such a significant way? I asked Cindi to explain her motivation.

"My father, a small business owner, taught me the importance of community involvement as a business owner. I've always believed that investing in others and the community is key to a truly fulfilling life. Jeff and I have committed Viking to several Hollis restoration projects. In 2005 we installed the Lawrence Barn’s metal roof, joining other businesses in the project. In 2022, we helped reroof the Noah Dow Cooper Shop. Now, the opportunity to reroof the Farley Building, once Jeff’s alma mater, holds a special significance for us. We urge businesses and residents in Hollis to join us in this exciting project in whatever capacity they can."

The Farley Building Community Center Committee invites construction-related businesses to join their Builders' Partner Circle for impactful material and in-kind donations.

Email [info@farleyforhollis.org](mailto:info@farleyforhollis.org) for details and learn about Viking Roofing at [www.vikingroofingnh.com](http://www.vikingroofingnh.com)!



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**Reviews & Reflections from Readers**



**“Bravo! The Positively Hollis Post is fantastic- I’m so enjoying reading it!”**

Hollis residents have taken to social media and flooded our inbox with emails, expressing their excitement at holding a physical newspaper in their hands. The Positively Hollis Post has struck a chord with the community, filling a void that many didn't realize existed.

“I am a relatively new resident in Hollis and was very happy to receive the initial issue of The Positively Hollis Post. I read it cover to cover,” remarked one reader, capturing the essence of what we hope to provide – a welcoming source of news, stories, and community connection for everyone.

“Got ours yesterday. What a welcome addition to the community. Something like this has been needed. Great job.” Comments like this tell us that a local newspaper is just what Hollis has been missing.

Your feedback is important to us. Email us at: [positivelyhollis@gmail.com](mailto:positivelyhollis@gmail.com) to let us know your thoughts about The Positively Hollis Post.



**Our Golden Spotlight Shines on Sandy Belanger: Hollis’ First Female Police Officer**

*by Liz Barbour*

I bet you didn’t know that in the early 1970s Hollis resident Sandy Belanger, a wife, and mother of 4 children, was appointed as the first volunteer female police officer in Hollis. She was assigned to assist with domestic complaints and juvenile offenses. Sandy brought with her a woman’s compassionate approach and a mother’s common sense.

**Tell us how your career in law enforcement started. What training did you have?**

In the early 1970s, the Hollis police department needed a female officer to help with domestic calls and issues with juveniles, so I volunteered. Our training sessions were conducted weekly and held in the Hollis Elementary School library. My firearms training included shooting rats at the Hollis dump on Sunday evenings. Jim and I would take Wednesday afternoons off from our shop and ride horseback into the Hollis Town Forest to make sure there was no danger of fires or other trouble.

**Sandy, I understand that a Nashua Judge appointed you the first Hollis juvenile officer.**

The courts in Nashua did not want to see our relatively minor juvenile issues, so the judge told me to use my judgment and figure out reasonable punishments. A common punishment was washing the town’s only police cruiser, washing windows for the local businesses, cleaning playgrounds, etc.

**You have served Hollis in many ways. Can you share a few initiatives you helped with?**

Together, Jim and I got the Boy Scouts going again and in 1992 we were asked to get the VFW started in Hollis. We also got the Rotary to come into Hollis. Dr Gilmore asked some of us to start a rescue squad in Hollis and he was our instructor. We got an old hearse as the first ambulance in Hollis.

**Can you share a story that makes you smile?**

Jim and I helped revitalize the Boy Scouts in Hollis. We didn’t have enough fathers as Scout leaders, so I was name a Boy Scout "Mistress."



Once, the male leader could not attend a meeting so I went to the meeting to represent the troop. Well, his son was so proud, he introduced me as his Dad’s Mistress!

**What has been the most rewarding or best part of your life thus far?**

The night my grandson was born at home, I was the first to hold him. It was a terrible stormy night. The medical help did not make it. We did get a few of the nurses we knew in town to come in to help and all went very well. The first thing in the

morning we took Mom and baby to the hospital to be checked and cleared. The next step was to go see Nancy at the Town Clerk’s office and register his birth. That is a time I will treasure forever.

Read more "Golden Spotlights" at [www.positivelyhollis.com/golden-spotlight-1](http://www.positivelyhollis.com/golden-spotlight-1)

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### Hollis Agriculture's Role (Continued from page 3)



That means about 9% of all acreage in Hollis is prime soil. It's worth noting that not all of this prime acreage is in agricultural use, as there are several similarities between good farmland and good building sites. Hollis' prime farmland is an enormously important natural resource within New Hampshire. There are only so many pockets with land suitable for large scale fruit and vegetable production dotted throughout the state and Hollis is one of those pockets. It's not as though it's feasible to create more prime farmland, even if marginal land can be improved.

Agriculture in Hollis and by extension the town's prime farmland are critical resources to the food supply of the town, state and region. That's not to mention the beauty that the region's residents and visitors get to enjoy: that of the bucolic orchards and rolling hills of corn dotted throughout town.

Given the critical nature of agriculture in Hollis, it is up to all residents to be good stewards of the town's farmland. Among other things, that includes being mindful when using the many trails that traverse Hollis' agricultural lands. Even on town-owned land, it's important to only walk on marked trails and remain out of crop production areas during the growing season. This may seem like overkill, but farmers are legally obligated to comply with the federal Food Safety Modernization Act of 2011, or FSMA. This act regulates unauthorized entry into food

production areas. Pathogens that cause foodborne illness are often carried by domestic animals and can transfer to produce if animals roam through cropland.

Living with agriculture requires a little extra care and common sense but given the beauty of Hollis and the importance of Hollis' agriculture to the stability of the regional food supply, it would seem to be a price worth paying.

So the next time you drive past a sign reading "Welcome to Hollis, An Active Farming Town", you'll know this is far more than just a slogan.

—  
*Jeff Begin is the owner of Begin Family Farm and a member of the Hollis Agricultural Commission. Jeff joins Positively Hollis as a regular contributor.*

*Reach out if you have an article you'd like to share!  
positivelyhollis@gmail.com*



### Secrets Revealed (Continued from page 1)

The fun begins on the Friday morning before the festival when 50 volunteers gather in the basement of the Congregational Church to begin washing, hulling, and slicing over 500 pounds of strawberries at record speed, finishing up in 2 ½ hours. It all sounds very mundane, but don't be fooled, the ladies are having a blast! Talking over bowls of sliced berries, laughing at stories told from across the tables, and smiling as one bowl filled with sliced berries is replaced by an empty one. When the berries have all been sliced and packed into bins, they are loaded and driven to large coolers at Brookdale Fruit Farm. On Saturday, 12 ladies return to the church to measure, mix, and bake 63 pans of shortcake totaling over 1000 flaky shortcake biscuits.

Early Sunday after church service, the kitchen is once again a hub of activity. Ten KitchenAid mixers stand in a colorful row ready to whip bowl after bowl of sweetened cream. The sliced berries are delivered and sugared. The shortcakes are cut and placed in bowls ready to be topped with ladles of berries and a hefty dollop of whipped cream. In years past, tents were put up by band members, and volunteers scooped and served from underneath. Today, tables are set up inside the church to serve. Forty servers and ice cream scoopers will stand at the ready for the 2 pm ringing of the bell, and the first baton swing of band leader Dave Bailey. Last year 1150 desserts were served. The record to beat is 1293 set in 2017. You'll be happy to know that if there are any leftovers, they are sold at the end in bulk, so stick around.

So, what happens if it rains? HWC President Susan Benz was the festival chairperson last year and faced that issue head-on. "We keep a very close eye on the weather forecast. Last year, the forecast was for 'scattered thunderstorms'. Band leader Dave Bailey had to make the difficult decision to move the festival indoors to the Middle School. We simply could not take the chance and get caught in the rain. The band's instruments are under threat, and people don't want to stand out in the

rain. If rain is a concern, a decision is made by 11 am so we have time to do all of the 'rain event' changes," Susan told me. The logistics of moving the festival indoors are mind-boggling.

"We have a few hours to move everything up to the Middle School. Signs need to be put up to direct people. The food, supplies, and paper goods are all driven up. That includes bins of strawberries, whipped cream, etc. It's not a trivial process, so the band and the club REALLY hope for good weather! That said, last year's festival was held inside even though the rain held off. Amazingly, we did almost as well as if it were outside! There's no easy way to predict turnout, so we appreciate when people come regardless of the weather."

As I finished up the last of the details for this story, Carol Birch asked a favor of me. "The Hollis Woman's Club would like to give a special thank you to all of the individuals and organizations who volunteer to make the festival a success. We'd also like to thank the Congregational Church for graciously offering the use of its kitchen, Hardy Hall, and the church lawn. And special thanks to Brookdale Fruit Farm for the use of refrigeration for the prepared berries."

If you go, bring a blanket to stretch out on, grab extra napkins, and save room for seconds because you are guaranteed the best strawberry shortcake for miles around.

#### **Strawberry Festival and Band Concert**

Sunday, June 23rd from 2-4 pm  
Monument Square

#### **What to expect:**

Note: Cash is preferred  
Homemade strawberry desserts  
Artisan and Craft Vendors  
Kids Games and Face Painting  
Raffle to lead the Town Band as they play Stars & Stripes  
To Volunteer send an email to Susan Benz: susan.benz@gmail.com

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**COME SEE SOME FRIENDLY FACES!**

### **KATHRYN PEIK-JORGENSEN, D.M.D.**

Dr. Kathryn Jorgensen grew up in Hollis, NH and received her undergraduate degree in Biotechnology and Molecular Biology from Assumption University in 2015. After working as a dental assistant for several years, Dr. Jorgensen attended Tufts University School of Dental Medicine, graduating in 2022. She enjoys spending time with her husband Luke, dog Astrid, cat Avery and her family. She is also an avid horseback rider so if you see her out for a ride say hello!

### **AIMEE WRIGHT, D.M.D.**

Dr. Wright grew up in nearby Wilton, NH. After obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Biology at Keene State College, she worked as a dental assistant, finding a passion for dentistry. She attended Boston University to obtain a Masters in Oral Health Science and a Doctor of Medicine and Dentistry. Dr. Wright joined Landmark Dental in 2020 and is currently living in Milford with her husband Adam and son Oliver where she enjoys gardening and cooking in her spare time.

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## Positively Hollis Prepares Lunch for Hollis Seniors



*Lunch is served! Ed Peik and Liz Barbour. Photo Courtesy: Bob Heyer*

Positively Hollis honors our seniors by providing a delicious hot lunch on the third Thursday of each month. Volunteers Leslie Peik and Liz Barbour have been preparing and serving the monthly meals since July 2023. If you would like to join Liz and Leslie to help, send us an email at [positivelyhollis@gmail.com](mailto:positivelyhollis@gmail.com).

Many of the recipes sponsored by Positively Hollis can be found in the Cook's Corner section of our website. The Hollis Seniors are always happy to welcome new members. If you are interested in joining the Hollis Seniors, please visit [www.hollisnh.org/seniors](http://www.hollisnh.org/seniors).

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