



# The Navigator

The Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport

P.O. Box 31, Newburyport, MA 01950

Meetings 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays at 6 p.m. at Starboard Galley

August 16, 2019

[www.exchangeclubofgreaternewburyport.org](http://www.exchangeclubofgreaternewburyport.org)

President-Erin Fournier, Secretary-Stuart Deane, Treasurer-Barbara Griffith, President Elect-Jane Collins  
Newsletter Editor-Stuart Deane

## Meeting hosts potential member, division director

By Stuart Deane

The August 6 meeting saw the presentation of our Big “E” award, the hearty discussion of children’s “free play” with our guest speaker and the attendance of two potential members.

President Erin Fournier first expressed thanks for all the work on another successful Kids’ Day in the Park, with special thanks from event chair Jim Noyes to Mike Viccaro for scrubbing the grill the next morning and Joe Murphy and Kieran Joyce for unloading the trailer.

President-Elect Jane Collins displayed a recently-received “Retention of Members” patch from National.

Division Director Pam Perron (right, top) of the Haverhill Breakfast Exchange Club then presented us with our Big “E” patch for meeting the National check points for club excellence. She had just returned from the National Convention and encouraged members to attend next year’s convention in Colorado Springs as a “nice bonding experience.”

In attendance for all this were guests Meghan (McGrail) Holmes, daughter of charter club member Bob McGrail, and her husband Jeff Holmes, a neighborhood childhood friend of President Erin Fournier (middle photo). To further the coincidences, Jeff had not long ago done some work on the home of our guest speaker, Eliza Bobek, an early childhood education professor at the University of Lowell (right), who spent some early years in Newburyport and has since returned.

### Speaker

“I’m excited to be here,” said Eliza. “Free play is not a new idea, but it’s not how kids grow



up today. I had a nice childhood in Groveland. My mother shooed me out the door to play in the back woods with whomever was around. Now I'm a mother of two – ages five and nine. How will they grow up in Newburyport?"

"The 'Kids Thrive' movement of free-range parenting emphasizes the value, inspiration, engagement, empowerment and support of free play. Kids learn self-control and problem-solving while playing. The brain works behind the scenes. When playing, kids are learning, like they learn how to walk on their own. Parents can be there as a 'lifeguard,' intervening as necessary but not to organize or create the fun."

The problem, of course, is that parents fear their children are not safe. They feel that children are not safe if they're not at home, that they'll be abducted or molested. We don't know who our neighbors are anymore. Another factor is overscheduling of children in, for example, athletics. Then add in the obsession with cell phones and video games.

"We're having some negative effects," said Eliza. "Children have less opportunity to play and to learn self-control. Now we have to focus on elementary and middle school depression to head off depression in high school. The risk of depression is now higher than in the Great Depression.

"I'd love to see more of the 'out the door,' but..."

## Schedule

- Aug. 12: Special "Field of Honor" planning meeting at 6 p.m. at the home of member Barbara Griffith
- Aug. 20: Regular Meeting at the Starboard Galley
- Aug. 27: Board of Directors
- Sept. 2: Regular Meeting
- Sept. 5-12: "Field of Honor" on the Bartlet Mall, with set-up on the 5<sup>th</sup>, ceremony on the 8<sup>th</sup> at noon, 9/11 remembrance on the 11<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. and take-down on the 12<sup>th</sup>
- Sept. 16: Regular Meeting
- Sept. 23: Board of Directors

## "Unity in Service"

## Kids' Day Gallery



**Judge.** Yankee Homecoming chair Jennifer Duggan poses with member Patty McGrath after judging the bicycle parade.



**Parade.** Young bicyclists and carriage pushers circle the Civil War monument at Atkinson Common prior to judging for prizes.



**Entertainment.** Old friend Steve Swochak leads a sing-along.