





# From our Publisher...

Since its founding, *The Sentinel* has been committed to serving the Monadnock Region with trusted, in-depth and fact-based local reporting and to being an engaged community partner.

It's a commitment we share with our subscribers and readers and the community as a whole, for our efforts to fulfill that mission would not be possible without their support and their understanding that an independent, local news enterprise can play an important role in strengthening the region.

With that in mind, we have prepared this report to highlight some significant examples from over the past year that we believe demonstrate the impact of our journalism.

As you read through these pages, I hope you will appreciate the dedication of our staff to serving the region. Even more, I hope this report will reaffirm how much we value the community's support and commitment – whether through subscriptions or generous philanthropic support – that make it possible for us to maintain a strong news staff and continue our investment in it.

There are, sadly, too many communities throughout the country and even here in New England that have become local “news deserts” as corporate or other non-local ownership has shuttered or dangerously reduced newsroom staffing. Bucking that trend here in the Monadnock Region has been made possible by the ongoing community support of *The Sentinel*.

We are extremely grateful for the support that has made our efforts over the past year possible, and we look forward to continuing to earn that support in the years ahead.

–Tom Ewing

# Meet the team...



Tom Ewing  
Publisher &  
Owner



Sean Burke  
President & COO



Kelvin Parker  
Operations  
Director



Aaron Sickler  
Director of Digital  
Operations



Shelly Bergeron  
Director of Advertising  
Operations



Dee Belanger  
Director of Central  
Services



Dayle Greene  
Accounting &  
Payroll Specialist



Linc Murphy  
Director of  
Advertising &  
Marketing



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Executive Editor  
– Local News



Cecily Weisburgh  
Executive Editor  
– Digital



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Press Foreman



Bill Bilodeau  
Managing Editor  
News Operations &  
Opinion Editor



Allison Gibbons  
Events Manager



Janis Duffy  
Accounts  
Receivable  
Specialist



Chelsea Sullivan  
Advertising  
Specialist



Joe Kocsis  
Advertising  
Operations  
Specialist



Abe Hadley  
IT Specialist



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Community News &  
Copy Editor



Rick Clark  
Copy Editor



Lucia Coutermarsh  
Business & Copy  
Editor



Liora Engel  
Breaking &  
Trending News  
Editor



Michael M.  
McMahon  
Sports Editor



Elizabeth Underwood  
Audience Development  
& Content Strategy  
Producer



Julia Badders  
Specialty  
Publications Editor



Sophia Keshmiri  
City of Keene &  
Housing Reporter



Abigail Ham  
Criminal Justice  
& Public Safety  
Reporter



Rick Green  
NH Statehouse  
Reporter



Noah Diedrich  
Education &  
Business Reporter



Elijah de Castro  
Health Solutions  
Reporter



Ethan Weston  
Senior Visual  
Journalist



Bailey Stover  
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Multimedia Account  
Executive II



Jim Concannon  
Multimedia Account  
Executive II



Kathryn Norbutus  
Print Shop



Jeffrey Matson  
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Nahomy Blanco  
Multimedia Account  
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Robert Johnson  
Multimedia Account  
Executive I



Megan Whittle  
Multimedia Account  
Executive I



Griffyn Hadley  
Press



Stacy Geno  
Circulation



Cole Chamberlin  
Circulation



Leigh-Ann Johnson  
Circulation



Ryan Johnson  
Circulation



Nicholas Rowe  
Circulation

# What our mission was...

"The first number of the *New Hampshire Sentinel* the editor issues this day. For the very flattering encouragement he has received from all classes of citizens in this town and vicinity, he returns his warmest thanks; at the same time he assures them, that nothing shall be wanting on his part, to render it a valuable Museum of interesting Intelligence and rational Entertainment.

"The task of editing a newspaper is great — to please everyone is impossible, while men have different sentiments and tastes. He will study to present his readers with an impartial history of the politics of the world. Personal Satire and abuse will never enhance the value of a publication of this kind, and ought as much as possible to be avoided.

"While almost all Europe is engaged in bloody warfare, and the United States are on the verge of a political tempest, we are all anxious for information; & what better mode of communicating events was ever invented than a Gazette?

"The Farmer, for the trifling sum of 150 cents is able to discourse upon the political concerns of his country, and hold a contest with the greatest statesmen. Gentlemen of literary abilities are invited to adorn the pages of this paper with original productions — every attention will be paid to communications of this kind whether of a moral or political nature."

—John Prentiss, Publisher, March 23, 1799



# What it became...

"The reader of *The Keene Sentinel* will feel a sense of belonging and will be inspired and empowered to engage in community. This is made possible by an innovative, caring, proactive and responsive news organization that serves as a trusted source and civic partner."

# How we grew...

When *The Sentinel* first started in 1799 as *The New Hampshire Sentinel*, our mission was rather straightforward — outside of the lofty language of the time, that is.

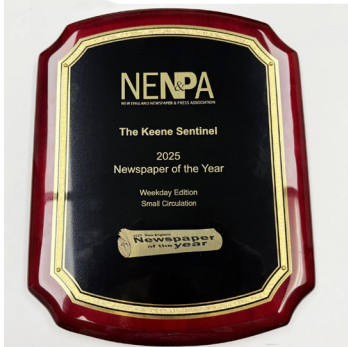
Our founder, John Prentiss, swore to do his best to provide valuable and factual information to our community. More than 226 years later, that is still our North Star. We know that this doesn't mean we'll be perfect, but we'll do our best and always address and correct any mistakes we might make.

As a local paper, we have a larger role to help people in our community feel seen and valued. In this we strive to also showcase everyday life here in the Monadnock Region: to help neighbors get to know each other and see this place they, and we, care so deeply for.





# Our accomplishments...



We've had many achievements to recognize and share this year!

This fall, we were named 2025 Newspaper of the Year by the New England Newspaper and Press Association (NENPA)! This is something we're extremely proud of since the competition is judged by readers and audience members. The judges considered criteria such as quality of reporting and writing, photos, design and presentation, digital offerings and overall value to the community. This is the sixth year in a row that *The Sentinel* has been recognized as either Newspaper of the Year or a runner-up for the honor. We last won the top award in 2022.

In June, Michael M. McMahon and Abigail Ham both received recognition from the New Hampshire Press Association in its Distinguished Journalism Contest. Mike received first place in the sports writing category for his piece remembering Monadnock Regional High School's varsity girls basketball coach Rob Colbert. Abbie earned second place in environmental reporting for her article about the impact of a grid-tie denial on Worker Bee Farm's hopes to go solar in Alstead.



*The Sentinel* picked up five NENPA awards in March from Mike; Julia Badders, our specialty publications editor; and former staffers James Rinker and Hannah Schroeder. James received first place in the business/economic category for his article on how businesses were eliminating their DEI initiatives and second place in the racial, ethnic or gender issue coverage category for his article on gender-affirming surgeries. Hannah was honored with first place in the personality photo category for her image of Marilyn and William MacLean's wedding and second place in the portrait photo category for her image of cow-cuddling at a Harrisville farm. Mike earned second place in the sports story category for his article on Monadnock Regional High School's powerlifting club. Julia and Mike were also honored in the special section/editorial supplement category for our annual Players of the Year section.



We are so honored by these accomplishments and are grateful to our community for all of their support. This would not be possible without you.

# From our president...

All of us here at *The Sentinel* are dedicated to our mission of journalism as a community service. We understand the critical importance of engaging, informing and empowering you with the news and information you need, and serving as a foundation for an informed, connected and prosperous community. From our dedicated newsroom team to all those here who support and enable it, we're a media company wholly focused on the betterment of our community.

As we reflect on 2025, we are proud of the progress we've made in serving you, whose support fuels everything we do.

For our readers, we've continued to strengthen the journalism you rely on. We've expanded our digital offerings, deepened our local reporting, diversified the media platforms we're on and invested in coverage that helps you stay engaged and informed about the things most important to you. Whether through breaking news, in-depth

# By the numbers...



3,504 print & digital subscribers

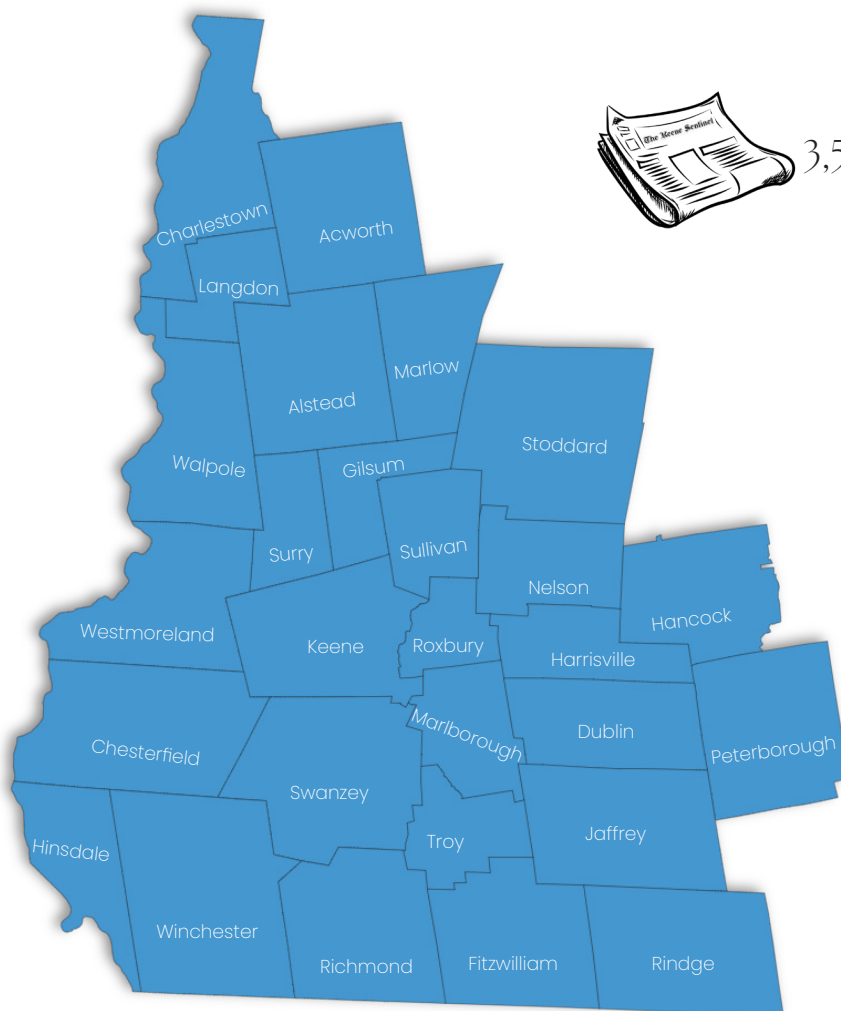


7,300 Followers



Over \$120,000  
fundraised  
Over 160 community  
donors

140,900 average Unique  
Visitors per month  
884,200 average Pageviews  
per month



community stories or trusted public service reporting, our goal remains to deliver journalism that adds value to your life.

For our advertisers and business partners, we've focused on creating smarter, more effective ways to help you reach customers. We've brought new solutions, improved digital performance insights and expanded opportunities across print, online and event marketing. We worked closely with businesses of all sizes across the Monadnock Region to ensure our platforms support your growth and help you build meaningful connections with your customers.

Our progress has been fueled by people who understand that a healthy newspaper is an essential part of a healthy community. Your support enables us to not only report the news, but also progress toward sustainability.

Thank you for being part of this mission and momentum. Together we'll continue to strengthen *The Sentinel's* role as a trusted, community-powered institution and cornerstone of local, trusted news and information.

-Sean Burke

## From Rick Green...

It's toward the end of the year when New Hampshire's senators and representatives start writing legislation.

Even though the actual language for many of these proposals isn't available yet, the public can see the titles of these bills. Some are intriguing and would have major local impacts, so instead of waiting for the finalized language, I contacted lawmakers directly to get information on these bills and what's on their minds.

One bill I wrote about would cap spending at school districts across the state. Major budget increases would not be allowed without the approval of two-thirds of local residents. This could have a direct impact on local schools and, potentially, the property taxpayers who fund them.

Another seeks to encourage companies to expand child care options for their workers. The bill would give them a state tax break for investments that extend child care capacity. Reports continue to indicate a lack of affordable child care serves as a barrier to economic growth and a hardship to parents.

Legalizing marijuana for recreational use remains on the agenda but prospects for passage appear slim. One bill seems to have a good chance of passing in the House, but not in the Senate. If it does clear both chambers, it would still have to be signed by Gov. Kelly Ayotte, who is against legalization.

I'm determined to keep watching out for our community by monitoring legislation, even before it's fully written.

## From Elijah de Castro...

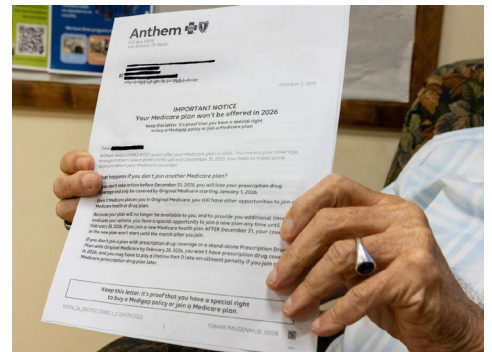
This year, the Monadnock Region Health Reporting Lab covered health in a variety of ways, including analyzing public health data, making public records requests and investigating social responses to health problems.

All these types of journalism came together in a piece I did on how the withdrawal of multiple Medicare Advantage plans from the state created an urgent situation for seniors in Cheshire County.



Richard Godek, 81, of Winchester, is one of many Medicare Advantage customers who got a notice in the mail that their plan would not be offered in 2026.

Photo by Ethan Weston



The letter from Anthem that Richard Godek received telling him his Medicare Advantage plan would not be available in 2026.

Photo by Ethan Weston

With only two Medicare Advantage plans left in the county, I reported on how local seniors were facing the prospect of returning to traditional Medicare, which is more expensive.

The piece is rooted in local storytelling, but is ultimately one that has implications for the changing tides of state and federal health policy. The bureaucracy of health insurance plans, whether public or private, are a major source of pain for people in the Monadnock Region.

I believe that the story's greatest impact was that it brought the stories of local seniors facing financial insecurity to thousands of people. It's this type of impact that I'll continue chasing into the new year.

## From Abigail Ham...

We exist to provide the public two services: information and a platform for their voices to be heard.

As controversy over a proposed gravel pit unfolded in Keene and Sullivan, we were there to keep the public informed with the most up-to-date, accurate information. State law, local ordinance and administrative processes can be frustratingly opaque, so we broke them down and explained things step-by-step to make sure the information was accessible for those the project could impact.

We also gave residents who said they were dismissed by the gravel company the ability to get a fair hearing in the eyes of public opinion.

In May, I met Dwayne Nettleton at his home on a back road in Gilsum. He showed me the damage to his property that he said was caused by blasting from a nearby gravel pit, and we talked about his frustration with what he described as the company's lukewarm efforts to help him.



Keene's Planning Board meeting on Aug. 25 to consider an application for the expansion of a gravel pit.  
Photo by Abigail Ham

For Nettleton, the story wasn't about him anymore – it was about showing people how the company operated.

For its part, the company said it wasn't responsible for the damage to Nettleton's property.

Five months and many stories later, the gravel company announced it was withdrawing its proposal to do more excavation in Sullivan.



Dwayne Nettleton stands next to the lift in his garage that he uses to work on his truck on May 9 in Gilsum. A crack in the foundation that runs through the garage makes him nervous to use the lift at full height. He says the cracks began appearing during blasting at a gravel pit just over the hill from his house.

Photo by Ethan Weston

## From Noah Diedrich...

In late September, I covered an event at Keene State College that featured Chris Herren, a former professional basketball player. Herren spoke bluntly to a crowd of roughly 1,000 people about his experiences with opioid addiction and his recovery.

The event aimed to spread awareness about the efforts to build a women's sober housing facility in the Monadnock Region, as none currently exist.

While there are many recovery resources in the area, the lack of sober living options for women makes it hard if someone is on probation, as they can't leave the county.

A few days after the story ran, the folks at Cheshire County Drug Court, who are spearheading the project, thanked us for helping to spread the word.

At a time when many journalism outlets are struggling, it is very gratifying to know that our work has an impact and is appreciated by people who live and work in the Monadnock Region.



Former NBA player Chris Herren spoke about his struggles with drug addiction on Sept. 24 at Keene State College.

Photo by Noah Diedrich



Officer Joel Velez puts a pack of bottled water in the back of a car on July 11 at Keene Public Works. "Rick Cohen rocks," one person exclaimed as they drove away. Cohen is the executive chairman of C&S Wholesale Grocers, which donated water to Keene when the city was under a boil water advisory.

Photo by Ethan Weston



From left, Donna Roscoe, Peggy LaFreniere and Carol Bercher lift weights on Oct. 28 during an Age in Motion class at the EMM Memorial Community Center.

Photo by Bailey Stover



Jason Burnham Sr. gives Denise Isakson a kiss on March 28 in a pay-by-the-week motel room where they were staying.

Photo by Ethan Weston



Right: Meadow Cantrell, 11, pulls neighbor Emory Carey, 6, back up the sledding hill during Winter Fest 2025 on Feb. 8 in Keene.

Photo by Ethan Weston

Left: Brayden Steward, 3, carries a ball while running under a parachute on Oct. 14 at a Special Olympics Young Athletes practice.

Photo by Bailey Stover





Above: The Keene High student section plays a game of human ring toss with the school's cheerleaders at the football team's home opener on Sept. 5.

Photo by Bailey Stover



ConVal midfielder Ryan Pimental tries to comfort defender Esben Andersen after the team's loss to Campbell in the D-II State Championships on Nov. 7 in Exeter.

Photo by Bailey Stover



Kids compete in a pickle-eating contest at the Winchester Pickle Festival on Sept. 27

Photo by Ethan Weston



Kelly Trombley entertains her 17-month old twins Lucas, left, and Joseph, right, while waiting for her turn to pick out food for her family on Nov. 4 at Feeding Tiny Tummies in Keene. Trombley said the items she receives at the food pantry help supplement what she is able to purchase.

Photo by Bailey Stover

## From Sophia Keshmiri...

In my time at *The Sentinel*, I've written many stories about some of the most difficult situations unfolding in our community. But equally important are the programs and people working to make our community better.

I've been very inspired by such positive reactions to these types of stories I've written, such as an article about families graduating and being helped by the Keene Housing pilot program Homes for School, and another about a family partnering with Habitat for Humanity.

While journalism historically has focused on problems, we also want to report on responses to those problems that are working — called Solutions Journalism — as in the case of Homes for Schools, which works to get unhoused families with elementary-age children into permanent homes. Looking forward, I'm interested in writing about outcomes when it comes to the different social service programs and initiatives I cover.

Something the newsroom has been really focused on is reporting stories of high interest to readers. I want to take my cues from readers and give the community more of what they are interested in!

## From Michael M. McMahon...

I've covered my fair share of state championships during my days here in the Monadnock Region and in Massachusetts for *The Boston Globe*. All of them had a buzz in the atmosphere. How could they not? It's a life-changing game day for so many. I know it was for me when I was in high school.

But the NHIAA boys basketball Division I title game in March between Keene High and Bedford felt like the stuff movies are made of. The largest congregation of Keene fans I've seen at a local sporting event made its way to UNH to see the Blackbirds pursue the program's first state title. It was not to be, as Keene lost 51-50. But what a story it was.

Led by Javon Massiah and Jamal Stanley, the Blackbirds displayed skill and showmanship not seen here in decades. With a cohort of experienced players like Kasen Abbott, Will Fontaine, Fitch Hennessey and others tossed in, it was a combination of talent bound to break out.

They were a team bonded by heavy hearts in a community hit with tremendous



Fans react after Javon Massiah throws down a dunk in the second quarter of the NHIAA Division I boys basketball state championship on March 16.

Photo by Ethan Weston

grief over the previous 14 months. They were there for Andy Colbert, freshman coach and varsity assistant, when his father, Rob Colbert, Monadnock girls and former Keene State head coach, passed away the previous January. They were there for Massiah, who played his way to first-team all-state following the death of his father and his sister two months apart just before the season. The community was there to wrap its arms around them in support.

It all led to one wild hoops season: Three one-point games in the tournament and a state final that came down to a midcourt buzzer beater that painfully kissed the front rim. The response we got from anything Keene High basketball-related only affirmed how important this was to our community.



Javon Massiah prepares to dunk the ball during the New Hampshire D-1 boys basketball finals against Bedford on March 16.

Photo by Ethan Weston

## New initiatives...

We kicked off 2025 with the launch of *The Keene Sentinel* Local Journalism Fund and Community Advisory Board. These two initiatives were created to help us thrive as a sustainable, robust, local news provider and to allow us to continue to serve as a trusted source, reflecting a range of voices and fostering respectful conversations to strengthen our communities.

We value the opportunities to engage with our community and expand the way we reach people.

To develop this approach, our Community Engagement Team hosted an in-person listening session in the spring and tabled at a variety of events, including the Hinsdale Farmer's Market, International Festival, Pride Festival and SwampBats games. We've also worked on expanding the reach of our own events.

In September we started developing a multimedia studio, purchasing a backdrop, lighting equipment and more – thanks to donations to the Local Journalism Fund – so we can expand our forms of journalism to include studio work, video, podcasting and more.

We've also re-positioned *Sentinel Solutions* to be a full-service multimedia advertising agency, with capabilities in print and digital advertising, digital marketing, events, reputation management and a host of other services.



## From our editors...

As we reflect on 2025, we're proud not only of the accomplishments of our staff in serving the community this year, but also their drive and commitment to the work that lies ahead. In daily journalism, there's always a "next day" to think about.

This year, we've continued to widen the ways we reach community members with news and information, whether it's through video, our app or our Instagram (please follow us if you haven't already!). As technology and the way people use it changes, we keep evolving in how we deliver the news.

In October, we produced a multi-day series marking the 20th anniversary of the flooding that devastated the area, especially in Alstead, and took the lives of seven people. It was important for us to remember those who died, the efforts of first responders, and how the disaster changed lives, infrastructure and emergency preparedness. We used words, photos and video to tell these stories, and these forms together provide a rich experience for our community, including seeing and hearing from people in their own words.

This was truly a team effort, from our reporters to our visual and audience journalists, to our editors and designers.

Other work we're proud of this year was coverage of the Keene High basketball team's historic run to the state finals; our comprehensive town and school district meeting coverage; the multi-day effects of a major Keene water main break; a local woman's months-long search for shelter; a series on how Charlestown's highest-in-the-state property tax rate mirrors many towns' struggles to reinvent themselves in a post-manufacturing era; an alleged local human trafficking case; and troubles for senior citizens over Medicare Advantage changes.

We also now have an editor dedicated to breaking and trending news, to keep up with the fast pace of news.

None of this would be possible without you. We thank you for letting us serve this community.

-Anika Clark and Cecily Weisburgh

