

Whom so proudly we hail: 9/11 heroes remembered, honored, with flag display and ceremony

Remembering 9/11 in Newburyport and Amesbury

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Newburyport — Old Glory will fly proudly in Amesbury and Newburyport this weekend as both communities commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

The Newburyport tribute begins Sept. 9 with the posting of flags in the second annual Greater Newburyport Field of Honor at the Bartlett Mall on High Street, while in Amesbury a two-hour Evening of Heroes is planned for Sunday evening in Landry Stadium behind Amesbury Middle School on Main Street.

"The Evening of Heroes gives us a chance to honor the heroes in our lives," said Amesbury resident Rosemary Werner, who started planning the event with her committee last October, "and the sacrifices they made, not only those in the military but also our teachers and moms and dads.

"Ten years out we've moved on, but 9/11 gave us a greater awareness of police department and fire department and emergency responders. We looked at them differently after that and we looked at each other differently after that. 9/11 made us realize we will never again wait to tell someone we love them."

The Exchange Club's Field of Honor

The Exchange Club of Greater Newburyport is hosting the second annual Greater Newburyport Field of Honor this weekend from Friday through Tuesday, with a special Field of Honor Dedication Program on Sunday at noon.

"It's on 9/11 so we remember that horrific day with a solemn and respectful event," said Kathleen Bailey, president of the Exchange Club and chairperson of the event. "It's not a fair, not a festival. It's a time to remember those we love and cherish."

The Field of Honor begins Sept. 9 with the posting of hundreds of American flags, each three by five feet standing eight feet tall in perfect rows to pay tribute to the strength and unity of Americans and to commemorate the 10th anniversary of all those of died on Sept. 11, 2001; fallen servicemen and women; those currently serving in the military; veterans, and first responders.

The hour-long Dedication Ceremony will feature remarks by elected officials and music by bagpipers, Newburyport musicians, and the Merrimack Valley Townsfolk.

"We will have the Verbal Wall," Bailey said, "when we recite the name of every person honored by one of the flags. Please join us and walk this awe-inspiring display of flags. This is the perfect opportunity for all of us to unite as a community to remember and pay tribute to our heroes."

Proceeds from the sale of flags will go to the Michael B. Christensen Family Resource Center, Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, Kids as Peacemakers, and other area charities.

Amesbury's Evening of Heroes

Amesbury's Evening of Heroes, which will be held at Landry Stadium on 9/11 from 7 to 9 p.m., will feature the flying of more than 200 Hero Flags as well as 50 state flags carried into the stadium by 50 boy scouts and held by 50 AHS athletes during the ceremony. The Hero Flags were purchased by area residents in honor of heroes in their lives.

Cashman Elementary School Gavin McGrail will have the honor of leading the Pledge of Allegiance with his classmates.

"Last spring our grade-three students wrote essays on heroes." CES Principal Lou Charette said, "and the committee running the evening chose a winner, Gavin McGrail."

Girls scouts will march to the center of the field to the music of the AHS Band and remain standing for the reading of "I Am the American Flag" by U.S. Marine Staff Sgt. Earl Day, who grew up in Amesbury and came home to participate in the Evening of Heroes.

"I was honored to be asked to do the reading," Day said. "I joined the Marines in July 2000, and I was scheduled to get my wings on 9/11/2001. 9/11 has shaped my life. My entire career has been the global war on terrorism."

Now stationed in North Carolina, Day is a helicopter crew chief, part of a four-man crew on an attack helicopter and served in Iraq in 2003, 2005, 2006, and 2007, and in Afghanistan in 2004.

Music will include the Evening of Heroes Chorus comprised of 80 singers from Amesbury, Salisbury, Newburyport, Methuen, Merrimac, and South Hampton, N.H.; Amesbury soloists, and 20 bagpipers will march down center to chairs in front of the veterans playing "Amazing Grace." Following the pipers will be representatives of American Airlines and United Airlines.

Elected officials and members of the Amesbury clergy, police and fire departments will speak, and there will be a memorial flyover and a 21-gun salute.

"I think the Evening of Heroes is a lovely idea," Werner said. "It gives us a chance to shine here in Amesbury and honor the heroes in our lives. Ten years after 9/11 I think we are stronger, more resilient, and we're still standing. It will be a great patriotic evening."

The Evening of Heroes is sponsored by The Provident Bank, Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank, and Institution for Savings. All proceeds from the event will go to the Wounded War Project.

WHAT Field of Honor

WHEN Ceremony, Sun., Sept. 11, noon, rain or shine

WHERE Bartlett Mall, High Street, Newburyport

COST Free and open to the public

TAKE NOTE The flags will be on display Fri., Sept. 9 - Mon., Sept. 12

INFO www.healingfield.org/newburyport-ma-2011; 978-255-2184

WHAT Evening of Heroes

WHEN Ceremony, Sun., Sept. 11, 7 p.m., rain or shine

WHERE Landry Stadium, Main Street, Amesbury

COST Free and open to the public

TAKE NOTE Buses will take people from Amesbury High School and Cashman Elementary School parking lots to Landry Stadium at 5:30 p.m., 6 p.m., and 6:30 p.m.

INFO 978-388-4863

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