

POLE CAPPING 2026

Good morning!

It's great to see so many of you out here, especially on a day when the weather could've gone either way. Because let's be honest: Pole Capping is always a little bit of a gamble. Some years it's sunny and glorious. Some years it's snowing. One year it hailed. But here we are, showing up anyway.

Which is kind of the whole point.

When we moved here almost 20 years ago, we had no idea what Pole Capping was; I'm sure many of you had a similar experience. Our first time out was in 2008, on a cold and rainy day, back when the first Saturday in April was also the start of Babe Ruth baseball and softball. My oldest son ended up in the Globe holding his hands over his ears because of the musket fire, while wearing his brand-new tee-ball hat; it was a cute photo, and a memorable day. I've been at just about every Pole Capping since then.

Pole Capping is full of meaning, but deep down it reminds us of something simple: the most extraordinary moments in our history didn't come from superheroes. They came from regular people. People who lived right here...

and probably spent their early Aprils complaining about the weather too.

After all, New Englanders have got to New England...

Back in the spring of 1775, when Bedford's liberty pole went up, it wasn't raised by famous leaders or folks with monuments named after them. It was raised by neighbors: tradesmen, wheelwrights, farmers, teachers, cobblers. Local people. People who did *not* wake up that morning thinking, "Well, today's the day we take a bold stand for freedom and make history."

They were just ordinary Bedford residents doing something gutsy because it needed to be done.

In that spirit, a few weeks later when the alarm sounded on April 19, the Bedford Minutemen marched. Among them were Captain Jonathan Willson, a farmer with ten kids (which honestly might have made going to Concord feel like a break from the home front), and Job Lane Jr., twenty-five years old and probably imagining a long life still ahead of him.

When these two friends got together just down the road from here on the evening of April 18 to make plans, they had *no idea* that 250 years later we'd still be telling their story.

If you want a modern comparison, head on down to Red Heat later tonight, find two guys who look a little suspicious, and see what kind of trouble they might be cooking up.

That's pretty much how I imagine Willson and Lane looked like hanging out on the last night of their lives.

They didn't think they were making history. They weren't trying to be remembered. They were just doing what their community needed.

And that's the lesson that carries to us today: **extraordinary things usually start with ordinary people who decide, "Alright. Let's go."**

That spirit is still alive in Bedford. We see it all the time. We see it in the citizens who spend their evenings at Town Meeting. We see it in neighbors who shovel someone else's sidewalk, and in the people who are fighting hatred and bias in the schools. We see it in the folks who run Bedford Santa, who set up meal trains, who take pictures for Bedford Snapshots.... all of them doing it all quietly, without a press release or a photo op, and certainly without expecting any glory....

After all, this is Bedford, not Lexington.

Most of the extraordinary things in this town happen without anyone noticing... which is probably why they're extraordinary.

And you don't have to do something dramatic to make a difference. You just have to show up, care, and take responsibility for something bigger than you.

That's what the liberty pole stands for. Not just freedom, but community.

Not just independence, but interdependence.

So as we watch the Minuteman climb the pole today, remember: this tradition exists because ordinary people long before us stepped up when it mattered.

If Captain Willson and Job Lane Jr. could see us here today, gathering in their honor two and a half centuries later, I'm pretty sure they'd be shocked. Flattered, absolutely. But shocked. And I think they'd say the same thing:

"You don't need to be special to do something great. You just need to be willing."

So happy Pole Capping Day, Bedford.

Here's to the ordinary people, past and present, including the relentlessly ordinary Dan Brosgol, who make this town what it is.

Thank you.