



From the Manager's Desk

As my three year anniversary as your Town Manager passes I would like to thank everyone for their continued support of the staff and programs here within the municipality. South Berwick is a close knit community with residents that not only care about one another but are engaged in making it be all that it can be. Most recently this was evidenced by our Giving Tree here at Town Hall. All ornaments were chosen from the tree this year and a small surplus of gifts provided gifts to children whose families needed help at the last minute. We thank you for your donations that brightened the faces of those that have less.

Since the last Quamphegan the town lost one of its valuable, longtime employees. Roberta Orsini accepted a position with the Portsmouth Public Works Department. Roberta, who is known by all for her involvement and dedication within the community, was the Assistant Town Manager and filled in as Interim Town Manager multiple times. Her background in this community and our operations were critical to the successes over the years. Although her multi-faceted talents are missed, we wish her only the best in her new challenges.

We are lucky to have the talent and longevity within our staff to pick up, yet again, the heavy workload that Roberta carried. Part of my objectives this year is to create a sustainable workforce plan. The input of our Town employees and their assistance during this time is critical to our present successes and the long-term effectiveness of our operations.

We have started the budget process and are truly at the point where we have to shout out "Uncle!" Budget reductions over the last three years have not positioned us into a sustainable future. All departments continue

to look at what is necessary to maintain essential services. Our collaboration continues with North Berwick in sharing our assessing costs and solid waste transportation. We are also collaborating with Berwick in sharing code enforcement and dispatch costs. The Council has been meeting with Eliot and Berwick Selectmen to look at further collaboration efforts. The Council, School Board, and Eliot Selectmen are also meeting monthly to examine ways to reduce costs through sharing of resources or joint activities or purchasing.

We ask you to "think outside the box" along with us to find ways to reduce spending both short and long term. Change will come hard, but if we get everyone involved it speeds up the process.

The winter has started off as many of us remember it used to be. The Public Works Department has done a great job of keeping our roads safe. Unfortunately, the freeze/thaw conditions associated with such a cold winter, do create potholes. Please be aware that our employees and vehicles may be in the road as we try to keep up with this never ending chore.

One of our goals for this year is to have the public become more engaged by increasing opportunities for transparency in our operations. We provide our agendas and minutes for all meetings on our Town Website. We record our meetings live, or for review later on the Town Website—simply click on the Online Services link to view them. We encourage you to attend our meetings. Last but not least my door and the doors of my staff are open unless we are in a meeting. Come in and get straight answers if you are wondering about something or have ideas on how we can improve our services.

We have many opportunities for you to get involved and we look forward to your participation in the continuing efforts that make South Berwick such a wonderful place to live.

Another hot topic for the Town this year is revenue sharing. The South Berwick Town Councilors work to utilize any revenues to our municipality from the State, to reduce the amount of the commitment when they set the tax rate. As we move forward with our budget process we try to predict what those revenues from the State might be. Last year, we lost about \$170,000 in revenue sharing from the State. We were scheduled to receive the same reduced amount again this year until the Governor's Task Force could not find additional cuts to make in the State budget. At this point, we might receive only \$115,214. That would be a reduction of \$426,186 in revenue sharing funds in the last three years. That equates to approx. 7 tenths of one percent on the mil rate needed to fund the operations of the town. In reality the 5% rate of revenue sharing (not to be confused with the 55% school subsidy), that was established 40 years ago, would have us receiving in excess of \$700,000. Your Councilors and I have testified against these cuts in Augusta.

Please contact your Representatives in Augusta and tell them that taking money from us to balance their budget creates the a greater hardship on the local taxpayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Perry A. Ellsworth

SOBERTIP

South Berwick Police Department and Choose To Be Healthy Coalition Launch Anonymous Service.

SOBERTIP, is a tool for youth and adults in South Berwick and Berwick to anonymously submit crime-related tips.

To submit an anonymous tip:

1. Text "SOBERTIP" plus your tip to 274637 (CRIMES); or
2. Download the free "Tip Submit Mobile" app for iPhone or Android systems; or
3. Submit a tip online at the South Berwick Police page at www.southberwickmaine.org.

Tips are encrypted so the sender's identity is not known, and they are sent immediately to the South Berwick Police. The service is NOT for emergencies or urgent matters.

Pay-As-You-Throw Trash Bags

Over the past few months, we have received numerous complaints concerning the quality of our PAYT trash bags. Upon investigation, we have determined that the majority of the complaints were concerning the draw string portion of the bag.

We have made the decision to return to the original twist tie bags. They will be in stores soon. We truly regret any inconvenience the old bags may have caused you.

Transfer Station Hours

Sunday: 7 am to 12 pm
Wednesday: 7 am to 6 pm
Saturday: 7 am to 6 pm

Phone: 384-3309



Throughout 2014, be on the look out for this banner. It announces events and information, all celebrating the 200th Anniversary of the 1814 Incorporation of South Berwick! For a complete list of 200th Anniversary events, visit the Town website at www.southberwickmaine.org and sign up to receive emails with announcements and notices. To learn more about your town's history you can contact Norma Keim, at 384-2915 or nrkeim@comcast.net

Town Hall Hours

Monday & Tuesday: 9 am to 4 pm
Wednesday: Closed
Thursday: 9 am to 6 pm
Friday: 9 am to 1 pm

Phone: 384-3300

Fax: 384-3303

Message From The Assessor's Office

Property Values: Why has my property value not changed in the last five years even though changes related to the real estate market have been widely reported in the news? Economic conditions, prior to the stock market crash were still reflecting a rise in property value and at that time assessments in South Berwick were at an average of 74% compared to market value. Reduction in market values since the beginning of the downturn caused the town ratio of assessments to rise from that average of 74% prior to 2008, to reflect an average assessment today of 100%. The real estate market correction in effect, caused market values and property assessments back in line with each other.

Exemption programs: Property owners who qualify for any of the exemption programs available in Maine such as the Homestead, Veteran or Blind Exemption, and who are not currently receiving it, need to submit an application on or before April 1st in order for any exemption they may qualify for to be reflected in the September tax bill.

Strawberry Festival

In honor of the 200th Anniversary of South Berwick, the Strawberry Festival Committee, is working to make this years Festival very special.

As always, we need volunteers. Last summer the Festival was a huge success with over 20,000 people in attendance. This success was due mainly to the large number of volunteers who helped out with the hulling on Friday, and all the work that went on Saturday under the strawberry tent.

If you would like more information on how you can become a volunteer, please visit our website at www.southberwickstrawberryfestival.com

Volunteer Network

The South Berwick Volunteer Network (SBVN) provides free transportation to our non-driving neighbors so they can access the first rate, and in some cases, life-saving medical services available in our area. Current needs of residents have created an urgent need for more volunteer drivers. If you are seeking a rewarding volunteer opportunity, or you need transportation to a medical appointment, please call the South Berwick Volunteer Network at 384-3311.

Recreation Department

Think Spring! Join the Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 19th, 2 pm at the Great Works School. Open to Preschool, Kindergarten and 1st Grade children. Play games, dance with the Easter Bunny and hunt for eggs.

Thanks to the Strawberry Festival for their grant to fund the Wildlife Animal Program. Be on the lookout for dates for this program and come out to learn more about Artic Animals.

Library News

The Library is looking more complete as furniture and equipment are put into place. A new focal point of the library is the Circulation Desk. This stunning piece was designed and installed by F.A. Wildnauer Woodworking of South Berwick.

The Friends of the Library have raised more than \$930,000! A great **BIG** thanks to all of the people, businesses, and organizations who have contributed to the fundraising!

Does your son or daughter love LEGO's? Then come check out our new LEGO Club for children ages 3-12. It will be held the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 3:30 to 4:30 pm.

We also have our first Library Winter Series including a visit from acclaimed chef and South Berwick resident Jim Haller. He will read from his novel in progress: *Salt & Pepper Cooking: The Education of an American Chef*, on March 19th at 7:00 pm.

As always, we have our on-going story-times for young children and book discussion group for adults.

Community Chorus

~ 2014 Spring Concert ~
Welcome Spring

A concert on the coming of Easter, Spring, and Renewal, Featuring "Top of the Hill" by Sarah Orne Jewett. Performed in recognition of South Berwick's 200th Anniversary, written for CCSB by local composer Kevin Siegfried

Saturday, April 5, 7:30 PM
Newington, NH

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

Sunday, April 6, 3:00 PM
South Berwick, ME
Lady of Angels Catholic Church

Thank You For Supporting The Annual Giving Tree!

On behalf of everyone at Town Hall, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation, for your thoughtful and generous support of the Annual Giving Tree this past Holiday Season.

Through the wonderful support of the community, we were able to provide a very, Merry Christmas to over 80 children. The Annual Giving Tree continues to be a success because of your continued support.

We are truly grateful for every one's support. Your generosity adds to the many reasons why South Berwick, is a great place to live! **Many Thanks!**

Community Garden

Did you know that South Berwick has a vibrant and productive Community Garden? It is located near the soccer fields on Willow Drive.

To inquire about available plots for this spring, please contact Mimi Demers at 384-5258 or mimiandray@gmail.com.

Conservation Commission

Earth Day Roadside Cleanup: Take part in our annual Earth Day roadside cleanup on Saturday, April 19th. Pick a road to clean up, and bring the trash to the transfer station between 7 am and 6 pm. Help make your road the cleanest in town!

What's In Your Water?:

Well water testing will be conducted by Nelson Analytical in Kennebunk. The basic complete test includes the following: total coliform, e-coli, nitrate, chloride, hardness, pH, iron, manganese, & sodium, for \$50.00. Add an arsenic test for \$15.00. You can pick up kits after April 1st at the Code Enforcement Office in Town Hall. Please return the kit to Town Hall on Saturday, May 10th, between 9 am - noon.

For more information about any of these projects please contact the Conservation Commission by phone at 384-3300 x336 or email prnel@comcast.net

South Berwick Cemetery Association

The South Berwick Cemetery Association has been in existence since 1881 and oversees the care and maintenance of Woodlawn and Portland Street Cemeteries on Agamenticus Road and Pleasant Hill Cemetery located on Wadleigh Lane. There are over 500 veterans' graves maintained in those cemeteries and the number continues to increase.

Fundraising over the last 2 years has been very successful with a number of donations from local citizens. Former residents Mr. & Mrs. Richard Chick of Poland, ME have made contributions in 2012 and 2013 for the repair and resetting of over 50 headstones in Woodlawn Cemetery. This year will see the launching of an annual fund drive to help with the rising costs to keep these cemeteries maintained. The South Berwick Cemetery Association is a 501C3 non-profit organization so all donations are tax-deductible.

Food Pantry

Since 2004, the mission of the South Berwick Community Food Pantry has been to provide a supplemental food source to individuals and families in our community who are in need of food. The pantry is located at the corner of Dawson and Goodwin Streets, and it is open every Thursday from 6 pm to 7:30 pm & the 1st & 3rd Friday from 10:00 am to 11:30 am.

Recently the volunteers at the Food Pantry were able to provide fifty food baskets for those in need for both the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday season. We wish to thank the individuals who made donations towards the food baskets. They were greatly appreciated.