



# The Quamphegan

## FROM THE MANAGER'S DESK

Having been here just a few weeks, it is a little difficult to share information concerning opportunities that we are pursuing at this time. Instead, I will try to share some of who I am, what has been brought before me already, and also some of what I have observed.

I am a native of the State of Maine having grown up in Salem Township and Eustis, Maine. My ancestors were actually some of the original settlers in Salem as well as Strong, Maine. When Strong's bicentennial celebration was observed, the first Town meeting was reenacted in costume and I portrayed the position of one of the original elected officials. I truly look forward to participating in South Berwick's bicentennial celebration in 2014.

Why did I apply for the position as your Town Manager? Although hard for some to understand, I left the Town of Rangeley looking for new challenges. Town management is a difficult profession to be in at this time. But with the help of all employees here I hope that we are able to meet challenges head on and look forward to new challenges in the future. The Town is blessed with a talented group of employees with a diversity of strengths that utilized to the fullest will allow South Berwick to prosper. My motto is "failure is not an option" and that will be mentioned time after time. This does not necessarily mean that we will make all the right decisions or make the right moves in every instance. We will use factual data to seize any and all opportunities, but will be open to adjustments should decisions need tweaking.

Communication and transparency at all levels in your municipal organization are critical to the success of everything we do. I intend to communicate needs but also, I intend to show everyone that this staff is a top notch group of individuals with high levels of capability. A manager standing alone will fail. A manager is only as good as the staff supporting them. I believe we are set for excellence with those you have in place.

I believe in both short and long term planning. The recession has hit all municipal governments so we are all in the same boat. Although inflation has slowed substantially, costs have not. We will never see the cost of utilities or consumables return to the level they were in any of the last five years. As we look at our budgets, zero base is not the same as it was five years ago.

Although you look to us as a service organization we have to run our operations as a business. We have to be constantly looking for more efficient ways of conducting our business (which is in reality your business) just as you do in your personal and family lives.

We are always looking for residents to become more involved by participating on boards or other special projects. Seize your own opportunities to make South Berwick all that it can be. It's okay to sit on the sidelines as a cheerleader but if you feel passionately about something we would rather hear it straight up than to have drama created by private conversations. We can always agree to disagree but as Town Manager it is impossible to please everyone every time. It takes a while to realize that but all is not lost if we maintain high levels of integrity and respect. It takes time to build trust. When I next write to you I hope that you are beginning to trust me and that you will better understand what the employees of this municipality do on a 24 - 7 basis.

I truly look forward to working with these employees to provide the services and other needs that you desire as economically as is feasible. Please feel free to share your ideas or concerns with me.

Perry A. Ellsworth

### Building Committee

This past fall the Town completed work to mitigate (cleanup) the mold, asbestos and lead paint at the Young Street property with funding from an EPA Brownfields Grant offered through Southern Maine Regional Planning and a \$40,000 match from the Town. The \$1.5 million bond approved by the voters last fall has been finalized and funds have been received for the construction portion of the project. By the time you read this, the Building Committee and Town Council will have reconvened to discuss the plans for moving forward with the construction of the Library. We anticipate the next phase of architectural drawings will be delivered in late spring and we will break ground on the project before the end of summer.

For the past several months, the Building Committee has been working on their most recent charge from the Town Council to determine the best use of the balance of the property. The Committee solicited proposals from developers and have been meeting with their first choice to fine tune a planning approach. The Town Council will have the final decision on the development of the site. It is intended that public input be a major factor in this process, with more information forthcoming shortly.

#### Committee Openings

- ◆ Community Development Committee, 4 open seats, meets the 3rd Thursday of each month.
- ◆ Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee, 1 open seat, meets the 3rd Monday of each month.
- ◆ Planning Board, 1 alternate seat, meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month.

**YardScaping Workshop** - Is Your Lawn Truly Green? Can we have a beautiful lawn *and* a healthy environment? Learn about the six step program to reduce your reliance on pesticides and fertilizers for the health of people, pets, and our local waters. The Town of South Berwick is sponsoring two separate workshops through the Marshwood Adult Education Department. The cost is \$5.00. Get ready for the coming spring (yes, it is coming) by learning about how you can control pests, test your soil, select plants and grass seeds that are successful, and much more. Presentation is by Master Gardener Pat Ianni. Look for a catalog around town or go to: <http://marshwood.maineadulted.org/>. Times: Thursday, March 17 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm  
Saturday, April 2 from 9:30 am to 11:30 am

South Berwick has a vibrant and productive Community Garden! A few plots are available this spring for new members. Please contact Coordinator Mimi Demers at 384-5258 or [mimian-dray@gmail.com](mailto:mimian-dray@gmail.com) for more information.

## Recreation

Thank you to everyone that helped to make our 23rd Annual Father, Special Dates and Daughters Valentine Dance a memorable evening. Look for flyers to go home for: Snow Tubing, Snow Shoeing, Winter Walks and Granite State Zoo Wildlife Animal Encounters.

Thanks to the Elizabeth Vaughan Fund the South Berwick Recreation Dept. and the Vaughan Woods State Park are able to loan out adult and children's snowshoes and Yak-Trax. This winter equipment may be used primarily at the Vaughan Woods Field and trails. You can fill out a form at the Vaughan Woods office and a picture ID will be required. So, Berwick residents may call 384-5160 or 384-3306 to reserve the snow shoes. The equipment will primarily be available on weekends and the day after a snowstorm.

Ideally the Vaughan Fund approved portable ice skating rink would be open. The Recreation Dept. wants this rink to be a success and we will continue careful planning for location, fencing, usage, maintenance, construction and assistance from volunteers, the Highway Dept. and Fire Dept. for the project to be in place for next year. We want to thank Jeff Hoerth for bringing forth this idea and request.

Powderhouse Hill has been off to a perfect start. The snow conditions have been exceptionally good. The best news is that a high percentage of skiers and boarders are young beginners and many are using a rope tow for the first time. Powderhouse is open on Wednesday and Friday from 7-9 pm and Saturday and Sundays from 12-4 (weather permitting). Thank you to the Powderhouse volunteers and to the Highway Dept. for improving the drop off area and parking.

## SoBo Central

SoBo Central was formed a year ago as a nonprofit group joining together five volunteer programs in South Berwick.

SoBo Central's mission is "to nurture the Town's unique sense of place by connecting and engaging citizens in community life and by fostering the long-term balance of the Town's cultural, economic and social well-being as well as its built and natural environment."

The tax-exempt organization now includes a sixth group - Friends of Powderhouse Hill, and is ready to take on an event of its own.

The Board of SoBo Central is now planning a lantern walk for the fall. "Everyone in Town will be invited to create a lantern and walk in a parade lighting up the fall sky," said Molly Colman, board member who is helping to organize the lantern walk. "We hope the lantern walk, and the organization as a whole will draw in residents from all parts of Town."

SoBo Central is registered with the State of Maine as a 501c3 charitable organization and includes these groups under its umbrella: Hot Summer Nights, The Food Pantry, The Fuel Fund, Green Up South Berwick, Friends of Powderhouse Hill and Smart-Growth South Berwick.

**GREASE ON STAGE** - Only 4 performances-motorcoach transportation-great seats-all adults welcome. Sunday, May 1st for the 6 pm performance at the Wang. \$99 includes transportation from the Community Center. For more information call 384-3310.

## Food Pantry

Thanks to the generosity of many donors and the countless hours of labor provided by a small group of volunteers, the South Berwick Community Food Pantry has been providing food/personal care items to residents in need for seven years. The Pantry has continued to improve and to expand the selection of food/personal care items available.

The Pantry is open every Thursday from 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm and the first and third Friday of each month from 10:00 am to 11:30 am. Any resident in need of help with food is encouraged to visit the Pantry.

## Senior Center

There is always something happening at the Center...we invite everyone to stop by and check it out. The age to become a member is 50, but we welcome all adults regardless of their age. We offer a walking class every weekday morning from 9:00 to 9:30 am (2 mile walk), line dancing on Wednesdays and Thursdays, a strength training class on Mondays and Fridays and an exercise class on Mondays. Lunch is available on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Other activities include Wii bowling, bridge, cribbage, whist, basket weaving and Bingo. You will find our monthly newsletter, which describes all our activities, trips and special events being offered at the Center on the Town's website at [www.southberwickmaine.org](http://www.southberwickmaine.org)

## Assessing

### New Property Owners after April 1

Why is the previous owner on your tax bill? Maine Law requires the taxes to be committed in the name of the owner(s) of record as of April 1. If you purchased your property after that date and we have received a deed indicating transfer of ownership we typically send tax bills "in care of." Please notify us of any change of address if Town correspondence or the tax bill was forwarded via an old address.

Your tax bill is comprised of three separate assessments reflecting your portion of the local costs associated with the school district, county government and local government. If you have any questions regarding the cost of school funding, contact the Superintendent's Office at 439-2438; the County portion, contact the County Commissioner's Office at 324-1571 or the local portion, contact Town Hall at 384-3300.

## Conservation Commission

**Open Space Planning:** Open space planning was started in 2009 and we are continuing to develop a plan that South Berwick can use as a resource to conserve open space, protect water quality and preserve the rural character that makes So. Berwick a special place to live. An informational meeting will be held in the spring of 2011. Please check the Town website for the date.

**What's in your water?** Well water testing, basic test for \$50 saving you \$15. Add an arsenic test for \$15 and save \$10. Test kits are available in the Code Enforcement office at the Town Hall. Return to the Town Hall on Saturday, May 7th between 9 am and 12 pm.

**Live on the cleanest street in Town:** Take part in our Earth Day Adopt a Road Clean Up on Saturday, April 30th, 2011.

## South Berwick Rescue

As 2010 comes to a close and a new year begins, we at South Berwick Rescue would like to extend our thanks to the residents of South Berwick for your continued support. The staff and volunteers of Rescue answered over 770 calls this year, making it a record year for us. In addition to an increased call volume, we also held community CPR classes and participated in many community events including Touch-A-Truck, Kids' Day, and the Strawberry Festival to name just a few. We have also participated in blood pressure clinics at the Community Center and helped with flu vaccinations at the High School.

We look forward to serving the great community of South Berwick in the coming year. Thank you again for your support and have a healthy and safe 2011!

## Library

The Library has some exciting news. You can now find our catalog online and even renew and request books from your home computer. This is thanks to a grant from the Davis Family Foundation, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, and the Friends of the South Berwick Library. Please visit our website at [www.south-berwick.lib.me.us](http://www.south-berwick.lib.me.us) and look for the "online catalog" icon. That link will take you to where you need to go to see what we have to offer and create an account. Please either call or stop by the Library should you need assistance. Through our cooperation with the Berwick and Hurd libraries there are links to their catalogs also. South Berwick residents are able to obtain library cards at these libraries for free.

We are also now able to offer e-books through our membership in the State's downloadable consortium. Again, through our website, you can access approximately 2000 e-books along with the same number of audio books. The information and software you need to participate in this program is offered at the books website. This has proven to be a popular service with minimal cost to the Library. We look forward to the beginning of the new library project. We appreciate the support that the community has shown. Thank you, South Berwick!



### Thursday Night History Lectures – Old Berwick Historical Society

Please join us for these popular programs! We meet at 7:30 pm at Berwick Academy's Jeppesen Science Center, Fogg Entrance #2. (Parking lot at top of hill.) More information at 207-384-0000 or [www.oldberwick.org](http://www.oldberwick.org).

Feb. 24 - "Dressing a Colonial Lady"

March 24 - "Views from Rosemary Hill - A Historical Journey"

April 21 - "12,000 Years Ago in Keene, NH: Paleo-Indian Life at the Tenant Swamp Site"