



# The Quamphegan

## From the Manager's Desk

As your new Town Manager, I am taking this opportunity to introduce myself and to share some first impressions and concerns.

Although I came to South Berwick by way of California, I've always considered myself a New Englander or at least a Northeasterner. I was born and raised in the mountains of PA (go Penn State!), educated in New Hampshire (Dartmouth College) and have had a Windsor, VT address for over 23 years (so I know snow!). After a successful Coast Guard career, I continued in my public service efforts, first as a self-employed small business owner - where I learned enough to have a deep respect for those working and able to put in the long hours and huge effort required to be a successful entrepreneur, and then in local government as a Town Administrator, General Manager and finally as Town Manager in South Berwick.

My introduction to South Berwick was during your December Ice Storm, where I was immediately impressed with the professionalism of the Town work force and the management and leadership qualities of your then Interim and now Assistant Town Manager Roberta Orsini. After an intense interview with the Town Council where they candidly shared their requirements and I responded just as candidly as to what they would get, an offer was extended and eagerly accepted. As the snow receded and Spring arrived, South Berwick revealed itself to be positively beautiful with a nice mix of built up areas, farmland and woods, a compact downtown and wonderful, engaged and friendly citizens. I have been most impressed with the volunteer spirit I have witnessed, culminating in the highly successful (and long-running!) Strawberry Festival. As time passes it has become increasingly apparent that though people may disagree with each other (or me) on the ways and the means, all care deeply about their special community. In my experience this is key. South Berwick is my fourth town to serve -- the other three are failed or failing towns, primarily because individual self-interests have taken the place of community self-interest. That has not happened here and I will do all I can to prevent it from happening.

Of course I can see plenty of items to address; local governments throughout the country are struggling during this recession. But most items can be systematically addressed slowly over time. The one major concern I have is how to engage the vast majority of you whose only contact with Town Hall is the tax bill accompanying this newsletter! While the turn-out for Town Meeting was the largest in years (about 300) that still represents less than 4% of the population and without a local newspaper or community access television, I worry that special self-interests could easily capture the process and thus the control of our Town. So I ask two things: please be vigilant about our local government and please also share with me your thoughts for improvement.

John B. Schempf

## Master Plan Vision Committee Established

The Town Council is pleased to announce the establishment of a vital new board for the community. The Master Plan Vision Committee will be charged with overseeing the effort to determine the highest and best use of the Town's Young Street property. The Town Council is excited by the prospect of this committee taking charge of the tasks required to determine what American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA, also known as "stimulus") money and/or other non-tax funding may be available for the uses suggested; which uses of the property are the most feasi-

ble and promising; and how the Town can move forward in an expeditious but careful manner given the economic climate. Jill Michaels the consultant hired to assist the Town with the development of the Library believes "The Young Street property, anchored by a new library in the historic St. Michael's church has a great opportunity to become an exciting downtown development with the support of public and private investment." This committee is to be made up of townspeople from a broad cross

section of the Town's citizenry to represent multiple viewpoints and concerns of South Berwick citizens. The vision for this committee is for a large group to then be divided into subcommittees of people who are interested and available to get to work right away. The Young Street property is a more than two acre parcel of land near South Berwick's business district and adjacent to Central School. The parcel is the site of the former St. Michael's Church building, which will become the home of South Ber-

wick's Public Library. The size of the parcel offers potential for other uses that can enhance the economic potential, livability, and vitality of the downtown. If you believe you have skills, experience and the enthusiasm to work on the Young Street property development, please contact the Town Manager, John Schempf at 207.384.3300 x 115 or [jbschempf@sbmaine.us](mailto:jbschempf@sbmaine.us) to discuss what you can contribute to this project.

## Transfer Station

At press time the Pay As You Throw (PAYT) program has been in effect for nearly 7 months. Many of our residents have chosen to hire private haulers for their disposal needs. Those who have chosen to continue to use the Transfer Station appear to have made the adjustment to this user fee approach. Below you will find a brief summary of the first 6 months finances for the Transfer Station. This accounting is as of the close of business on June 30<sup>th</sup> and will be adjusted as all payables and receipts are posted. Official PAYT Bags are currently available at the following vendors: Natures Way, South Berwick Pharmacy, The Lunchbox, Cumberland Farms (So. Berwick), Shaws (Dover), Hannafords (Dover) and Town Hall.

### Committee Openings

- ◆ Conservation Commission, 2 positions, meets 3rd Wednesday of each month.
- ◆ Historic District Commission, 1 position, meets 2nd Tuesday of each month.
- ◆ Zoning Board of Appeals, 2 alternate positions, meets as needed.
- ◆ Board of Assessment Review, 2 alternate positions, meets as needed.
- ◆ Recreation Committee, 5 positions, newly re-established, meeting schedule to be determined.

| Revenue Acct. | Income                              | Budgeted 08/09 | Reported Thru 6/30/09 |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| R3315         | MERC Transportation Income          | 30,000         | 28,405                |
| R6330         | Recycling Sales                     | 75,000         | 45,023                |
| R6332         | Disposal Fees                       | 45,000         | 30,200                |
| R6340         | Pay Per Bag Disposal (began 1/1/09) | 60,000         | 65,908                |
|               | <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>                 | <b>210,000</b> | <b>169,536</b>        |
| Dept.         | Expenses                            |                |                       |
| 4330          | Transfer Station                    | 303,020        | 282,720               |
| 4335          | Solid Waste Transportation          | 75,927         | 70,233                |
|               | <b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>               | <b>378,947</b> | <b>352,953</b>        |
|               | <b>NET OPERATING COST</b>           | <b>168,947</b> | <b>183,417</b>        |

## Conservation

Enjoy fishing, boating, birds and hiking along the Salmon Falls River? Pick up a copy of the new Salmon Falls River Greenbelt Plan at Town Hall; it's full of information about the river and what we can do to protect it for future generations.

There will be a Beginning with Habitat presentation on Wed., Oct. 21, 2009 at 6:30 pm. Come learn how we can work together to balance growth with the conservation of habitats essential to our quality of life. Don't let the rain get you down, plant a rain garden! Planting native species in an existing or dug depression decreases stormwater pollution that runs from your property into wetlands and rivers. Learn more:

[www.raingardennetwork.com](http://www.raingardennetwork.com).

Rain barrels provide an alternative water source for your landscaping and gardening needs. The Transfer Station is offering rain barrels at a substantial savings. For more information, visit

[www.southberwickconservationcommission.org](http://www.southberwickconservationcommission.org).

For more information on these topics and the work of the conservation commission, please call 384-3300, ext. 336, or send an email to [prnel@comcast.net](mailto:prnel@comcast.net).

## Library

This summer has been one of the busiest on record for the Library. The Summer Reading Program for children is always a big draw with great programs, fun crafts, and lots of good books. Thanks to a grant from the Friends of the Library we have been able to add many award winning and schools' summer reading lists books to our collection.

Thanks to a grant from Kennebunk Savings Bank, the South Berwick, Berwick, and Hurd (North Berwick) public libraries will be able to offer a greater variety of museum passes to area residents. This is just one example of how our libraries are working together to share resources.

The increased activity for the Library has highlighted our need for a larger space. The architects hired in the spring to study the former St. Michael's Church reported that the building is feasible for a library. The South Berwick Children's Leadership Council presented the Friends of the South Berwick Public Library with a check for \$1,000 to be used for the planning of the new library. With the Library relocated to the new property, it is hoped that it will be a gateway to the downtown area.

## Senior Center

The South Berwick Senior Center at 71 Norton Street continues in its endeavor to enrich the lives of all area adults age fifty plus. There are a variety of services and activities available at the Center. A noon meal is prepared and offered three days a week with at least one special luncheon event each month. Guest speakers give periodic presentations on health, legal and financial issues of interest. Services provided at the Center include a foot care clinic and blood pressure checks. A variety of exercise classes are offered on a daily basis, in addition to line dancing every Wednesday and Thursday. Attic Treasures makes a return! This year's Attic Treasures & Craft Sale will be on Saturday, September 26th from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Join us as we pay tribute to the oldest South Berwick resident with a special luncheon on Wednesday, September 16th. Stuart Chaplin, 99 years of age, will be the guest of honor for the day's festivities. Our Annual Breakfast with Santa will be on Saturday, December 5th. We will be taking pictures and there will be two seatings for this event, 9:00 and 10:00 am. Call the Center to make your reservations.

## Tax Club

We would like to remind tax payers the Town offers a Tax Club Payment Plan. Instead of two (2) large tax payments per year, the payments would be spread over eight months. The first payment would start September 15 and end April 15. Payments are based on the committed taxes for the current tax year. Any taxpayers with outstanding taxes or a tax escrow would not qualify. Applications are available online at the Town's website, [www.southberwickmaine.org](http://www.southberwickmaine.org), or in the Town Clerk's office. Applications must be returned by August 30th. For more information call (207)384-3300.

## Strawberry Festival

Once again the Strawberry Festival was a huge success with over 20,000 people in attendance. This was due mainly to the large number of community volunteers who helped out with the hulling and all the work that went into working under the strawberry tent. This year there were a lot more berries to hull, but thanks to all the volunteers who got the job done. Thank you for all stepping forward as volunteers and working so hard to make this annual event one worth having again next year. The committee members would like to thank you very much for making the overall festival work less difficult. As always your help will be needed again next year. This year we received a number of requests for funds and we were able to honor many of the requested grants. The total amount requested was \$15,977 and we were able to honor \$12,000.

## Recreation

Look for upcoming programs for South Berwick Recreation such as Kids Yoga, (register online at [www.childlightyoga.com](http://www.childlightyoga.com)) Pee Wee Soccer with Coach Catalina Bakas starts Sept. 14 & 16 for 5 wks for \$25. Also coming is the Fall Mad Science Program, Preschool Adventures, Senior Center Line Dancing, Men's Open Gyms, and the Hawk Challenge.

Register online for any of these programs at the Town's website, go to Departments then Recreation for all programs available.

A big thank you to the Summer Day Camp and Adventure Camp Staff for the best of times in 2009! Thank you to the instructors for the tennis program, the preschool playground art and the volunteers for pickleball.

## Food Pantry

On September 9, 2009, at 6:00 PM, the South Berwick Community Food Pantry is hosting an Open House. You are invited to come and see all the great changes that have taken place at the Pantry in the five years since it opened. The Pantry is operated by volunteers and depends totally on donations. Refreshments will be available, so please plan to stop by and check it out! The Pantry is located on the corner of Goodwin and Ross Streets.

## Volunteer Network

The South Berwick Volunteer Network is a group of individuals who volunteer their time to provide transportation to medical appts. The need in the community is great. If you are interested in either coordinating rides via the hotline or driving please leave a message for Zelda Kenney at 384-3311.

## 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. You purchased your property after April 1. However, for practical purposes we want to make sure we recognize you as the new owner so you can pay your tax bill, therefore, you are listed as the "In-Care-Of" for both the September 2009 and March 2010 tax bill.

### Did You Miss the \$177.84 Property Tax Saving?

For those property owners who are eligible for a Homestead Exemption, but did not apply by April 1, 2009, you missed a savings of \$177.84 for this fiscal tax year. If you are a Maine resident, owned and lived in your home for 12 months you have a good chance of qualifying. Call, come in, or download an application form from the Town's web site [www.southberwickmaine.org](http://www.southberwickmaine.org) by going into Department and click Assessing.

## Old Berwick Historical Society Fall Programs - FREE

**Berwick Academy Campus Historical Tour** - September 19th at 1:00 pm - 1791 House, Berwick Academy

**Mapping Controversy: The Colonial Definition of the Massachusetts Bay and NH Boundaries** - September 24th at 7:30 pm, Berwick Academy

**Coastal Ghosts, Lighthouses, Legends & Hauntings** - October 22nd at 7:30 pm, Berwick Academy

**When Lincoln came to Dover** - November 19th at 7:30 pm, Berwick Academy

**THE LIGHTING UP BALL** - November 7th at 7:30 pm, Spring Hill Restaurant



**The Community Chorus at South Berwick** Invites singers to join this South Berwick-based 65 singer regional chorus. Rehearsals start Sept. 14th. For more information visit our website: [www.CCSB-SING.org](http://www.CCSB-SING.org) or Call Director Harry Moon at 384-7059.

"A Christmas Garland - Noel Alleluia" ushering in the holiday season with chorus, harp, instrumentalists and soloists.

December 5 and 6, 2009 in Newington (Holy Trinity Lutheran Church) and South Berwick (Performing Arts Center at Marshwood High School).

**Island Adoption Project** - The Town is looking for an individual who may be interested in coordinating the Island Adoption project. Many of the islands in our community are lovingly tended by generous volunteers. The coordinator's responsibilities are to check in with current volunteers on an annual basis, advertise available islands, apply for grants if time allows and write an occasional article for this newsletter. If you are interested in this project, please contact Roberta Orsini at 384-3300 x 113.

Thank you to all our current volunteers for their efforts to beautify South Berwick. A full listing of islands available for adoption is available on the Town's website.