



Whitefield News



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Town Balloting Friday, March 18th, 2016 Town Meeting March 19, 2016

After several years of discussion, the select board has voted and approved a change in the schedule for Town Meeting. **Voting will be held on Friday March 18th from 4-8 and Town Meeting the next day at 10 am.** Many years ago, the meeting was held in the morning and voting was conducted during the meeting. This allowed the Town Meeting to be held in the beginning of the day rather than starting in the afternoon. It was discovered that ballot voting could not take place during a Town Meeting. The schedule was then changed to conduct the ballot voting in the morning and the public Town meeting in the afternoon. It is the hope that a 10AM Saturday morning Town Meeting will be more convenient and that it will improve attendance. **So, for the first time, balloting will be held on Friday, March 18th from 4-8 pm at the Whitefield Fire Station. Also, for the first time in recent years, the Town Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 19th at 10 am at the Whitefield School.**

Some items that will be considered at Town Meeting:

- ◆ Property tax deferral for seniors.
- ◆ Coopers Mills Dam removal
- ◆ Flood Plains Ordinance

Property tax deferral for Whitefield seniors

by Peter Froehlich

Our 2016 Town Warrant shall include an article which will, by floor vote, ask if the town will adopt M.R.S.A Title 36: Taxation Chapter 906-A: MUNICIPAL PROPERTY TAX DEFERRAL FOR SENIOR CITIZENS.



<http://static.bangordailynews>

What it boils down to in simple language is that if the town votes to accept the statute, property taxes will be deferred for folks if they meet certain specific eligibility rules.

The eligibility rules are:

- 1) The taxpayer must be at least 70 years old.
- 2) They must have lived in their home for the last 10 years.
- 3) They can't currently have overdue taxes.
- 4) Their Household Income can't exceed 300% of Federal Poverty Level. (Federal Poverty level is \$11,770 for individuals. 300% would = \$35,310. But this is the "Household Income". This means the combined incomes of all those residing at the home)

Continued on Pg. 2

Coopers Mills dam recommendation

by Tony Marple

The Coopers Mills Dam Committee, and subsequently the Select Board, have each voted unanimously to recommend removal of the Coopers Mills dam to the citizens of Whitefield at the March Town Meeting. After meeting for almost a year, the committee has worked with the Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) and the Sheepscot Valley Conservation Association (SWCA is now a member of the Mid Coast Conservancy) considering alternatives for the deteriorating dam, and refining the ASF/SVCA proposal to remove it and enhance the site. The committee has also evaluated dam repair options ranging from approximately \$50,000 (preliminary estimate) of simply repairing the culverts, one source of leakage, to a full restoration costing \$462,000 or full leakage control costing \$363,000. Since none of these three options would adequately promote fish passage, the ASF would not fund the dam repairs and the town would be responsible for funding them.

As presently formulated, the ASF proposal would accomplish the following:

- ASF would construct three dry hydrants for the fire department. Two hydrants would be located upriver from the current dam site and a third would be located on the upstream side of the West Branch of the Sheepscot River behind the log yard on Route 17. The current hydrant behind the existing dam works well except during periods of low river flow. The new hydrants are designed to provide year-round water for the firefighting; ASF will guarantee their smooth operation for three years.

- ASF will fund a \$30,300 maintenance account for the hydrants, to be held by the Town of Whitefield on behalf of the Whitefield Fire Department for future maintenance or repairs.
- ASF, at its sole expense, will remove the spillway and leave portions of stabilized abutments and mill foundations for historical interpretation.
- ASF will enhance the site with landscaping designed to interpret the history of the dam and its mills, educational information about migrating fish, and improved public safety and access. The final site design details will be worked out by a small committee established by the town
- ASF will donate \$7,500 to the Town of Whitefield to be held for future maintenance and repair of the site's enhancements.
- ASF will donate \$25,000 for a fund to be held by the Town of Whitefield to help pay for protection of and improvements to river access in the town of Whitefield such as trails, canoe access, and additional river restorations as needed, in cooperation with the citizens.



Coopers Mills Dam Photo by Tony Marple

The Select Board and the dam committee will continue to refine the agreement between ASF and the Town, pending approval at Town Meeting. There would be no taxpayer funds used to implement the project.

Deferral from Pg. 1 The "home" refers to the homestead, the house and property where the homeowner lives and is being taxed, not other property (s) which the individual may own.

It works like this:

The Town places a lien on the property; the same as with other "tax acquired" property, but the big difference is that it can't become a "tax acquired property" (and sold). Under this "Deferment", when the person moves, sells their home, or dies and bequeaths their home, the town collects the back taxes, plus the regular interest, plus an extra .5% for the paperwork. The upper limit (300%) was put into place to allow for unforeseen catastrophic expenses in the year of application (medical, major repairs, etc.), otherwise the upper level of income would allow for the payment of taxes in order to avoid any interest. That's pretty much it for requirements.

The intent of the Statute and the Town's article is to allow assistance to qualified individuals who wish to remain in their homes while unable to increase their income (without the fear of having their homes seized for non-payment taxes), but are reluctant to ask for what amounts to what they might consider "charity". Currently, the Board of Selectmen may or may not, at their discretion, grant a "Tax Abatement". This means that the owed taxes are waived, and the back taxes, with interest are lost to the town. With "Deferment", if the criteria is met, the applicant cannot be refused, and the property taxes will just be postponed with the town eventually recouping the revenue.

Charlie Tobin Plucking Winter Memories

From My Lips To Her Ears by Charles Tobin

Yet again, I awoke with an intent to put into words a memory of an earlier time; one that came rushing back to my mind like an icy blast of cold air you might encounter rolling down your car window in February to pay an upcoming toll...long before the toasty warm convenience of E-Z Pass. To what did I owe this poignant awareness of weight? It was a very comforting weight encompassing my entire body, accompanied by a strange urge to remain completely still, lest any movement on my part would break the idyllic warmth and the blissful security. God, bless it, our house was as cold as a snowbank, or so it seemed to me. The weight was the layers of blankets upon my bed, and I would pull them over my head so my breath would help to heat up the space, and I would practice paralysis, so my feet would never drift to an "unwarmed" portion of sheet that never got warm unless you were laying on it, no matter how high the blankets were piled. Why was that, do you suppose? With reluctance teetering on phobia, inevitably, I would force myself to move out from under that ponderous weight of heavenly blankets and dash to stand on the only hot air register in my room; hoping, just hoping, that the blower was on. The sun was up, and it was Saturday, and no, the blower wasn't on, yet again.

Even to this day, when I see someone blow their warm breath on a cold window so they can trace a face or whatever, I remember my window was as dazzling as a kaleidoscope; millions of miniature prisms refracting the light from the frost that seemed constant from Thanksgiving to Easter on each individual pane. My room was on the same side of the house as the driveway, but I could only tell if we had company if their muffler was missing. I soon found it was a waste of time to scrape my window, only to have it frost up once more before I finished getting dressed. We had a wood furnace in the



Photo by Tony Marple

cellar, and I recall it was always a little bit warmer as I descended the steps to open the damper and then the door, stir the embers and start to feed the beast. The beast be fed, the door be shut, the flue be set, and I be hungry...how it all comes back, even to this day.

No earthly reason (Mom was a stickler on self-reliance); there was no earthly reason, as far as she could see it, why a boy my age couldn't iron a shirt, do his own laundry, and make his own breakfast. Yup, "must do's" as far as she was concerned; throwing in a threat of sewing, just to be factual in the discourse. How cleverly she was able to combine lessons of nature, anatomy, and religion in the span of only six seconds. It was only reasonable to ask if there were no "earthly reason", was there a heavenly reason? Sitting on the couch, from my lips to her ears, it was like a *Nat Geo* special on pumas - their speed and grace, uncoiling before my very eyes - the space that separated us was no more the body part of lip had nothing to do with being chapped, bruised, blistered, ashened, pale, but was rapidly approaching the chance of becoming fat, and that it was within her ability to make it possible for me to ask that very question, in person, up close, directly, if I didn't get out of her sight. So, hey, why not whistle while you worked? The Seven Dwarfs did it all the time, ironing wasn't so bad, and where else were you given carte blanche to play with chemicals as you honed your washing skills. To this very day I can make toast and pour cereal with the best of them. Sure wish Mom was here today to explain to Congress about "no earthly reason".

- Don't deserve...a great old Maine adage goes, "If you can't handle our winters, you don't deserve our summers!" Now it was never a matter, as I saw it, of handling winter. It was no secret that most folks felt that the handling part was clearly on the side of winter. To me and others like me, it was a matter of surviving it; especially if you get banished from the house for a demeritable act with the peace of mind that the fresh air is good for you. "Don't come in until I call for you".

I had no clue then that I was being asked to play and have fun in what was tantamount to a Siberian gulag on a real nice day by their reckoning. Make the most of it, I guess. Well, I'm out there, might as well do a little exploration down by the brook. Bundled up akin to a mummy walking in unsteady lunges through the snow, I slogged in the direction of the brook. "Hey, rabbit tracks", I think. "More tracks over there. Surely, a deer came through here last night or this morning! What the heck kind of animal made these tracks over here, do you suppose? Funny-looking, for sure! May as well body slide down to the ice, the leeward side of the bank still's got crust on it. Hey, that was fun; got to do that again. Well, maybe a little later. It's a long way back up. Hey, I'm not quite so cold down here in the gully. And look at that, would ya! A frozen water trail disappearing around those bends, but easy walking, for sure. Not sure if I could hear Mom call down here, but it's sunny, and it's Saturday! Maybe the adage is all wrong. Maybe it's the beauty of winter we don't deserve".

Maybe do it again. Now, as the days tick by with the rapidity of an untended locomotive, many are the times that I harken back to snippets of threads that together as a whole have woven the cord of my time here. They are fun to pluck out and inspect with older eyes, though older sometimes no less childlike in the appreciation of awe to revisit an event or accomplishment with clarity and maybe compassion that was not available at the time of the thread being woven. If you like, and are not bored with my plucking, we'll maybe do it again.



Photo by Tony Marple



Photo from the Glendon Jackson collection: courtesy of the WHS

Photo of Roy Hapgood (b.1887-d.1963), grandfather of David Jackson, taken sometime in the late 1920s at his home on Rt 218. David grew up at this homestead which most recently is known as the "Bradford place". David recalled that his grandfather (who plowed the roads in winter) "made this two part rig with his Cletrac Dozer which he would drive into the framed plow structure, and the plow wings had to be manually lifted with chains. The only heat was from the dozer engine." As a boy, David played atop this abandoned plow contraption which was discarded across the road for a number of years.



(Photo courtesy of: <http://cdn.farmersalmanac.com/wp-content/>)

The Valentine's Day storm of 1940 caught everyone off guard. 60 mph winds left 10 ft. drifts in some areas. It claimed 31 lives in New England and took several days to clean up.

Winter Poems

by Judith Robbins

Metaphysician in Overshoes

Thoreau walked in overshoes
 across the tundra of Walden Pond,
 fish wondering at the winter fool
 as they sleepily watched his shadowy foot
 pass over, truant from another school
 treading ideas as they did water
 in the open stillness of life alone.

Q. Why Don't You Move South for the Winter?

It's as simple as rosy fingers of dawn
 at quarter of seven
 reaching to God's line of vision

as simple as crow pecking at bones
 on the compost heap
 covered with snow

as simple as branch of stag sumac
 rimed in frost
 already anticipating night's cold

when we will sit by candlelight
 watching the fire
 refusing the flip of a switch.

There They Go

The split tips of winter fingers
 begins today with the left thumb.

The unrelieved chapped skin
 divides with a silent sigh, only

noticed when the throb sets in
 pushes up like an infant's lips

crying for sleep or food or
 drink, any form of relief.



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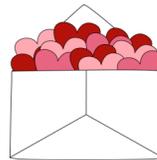


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FEBRUARY 2016 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

- 1st **Coopers Mills Fire Dept.**, All are welcome. No obligation. 7 pm
Kings Mills Fire Dept., 7 pm
- 2nd **Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 3rd **Arlington Grange Pot Luck & Meeting**, 6 pm pot luck, 7 pm meeting.
Whitefield Historical Society meeting 6:30 pm
Floodplain Management Ordinance The Planning Board is scheduled to meet 6 p.m. at the Whitefield Town Office at 36 Townhouse Rd. to discuss the proposed floodplain management ordinance. This proposed ordinance is scheduled to be voted at the annual Town Meeting on March 19, 2016.
- 4th **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscoot General, 10 am
- 5th **Whitefield Food Pantry**, St. Denis Hall, 1-3 pm
- 6th **Annual Kid's Cross-Country Ski Clinic**, Excellent instructors will lead participants through fun games, and lots of exploring in order to learn the fundamentals of xc-skiing ages 5-12. *Limited scholarship positions available. FMI: write to andy@hvnc.org, or call 200-8840. Every Saturday until Feb.6th
- 8th **Whitefield Municipal Fire Dept.**, Fire Station, 7 pm
- 9th **Women of Whitefield**, Sheepscoot General, 10 am
Select Board, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 11th **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscoot General, 10 am
RSU School Board Meeting Chelsea School, 6:30 pm
- 14th **Valentine's Day**
Whitefield Athletic Association (WAA), Whitefield School, 6 pm
- 16th **Select Board**, Fire Station, 6 pm
- 17th **Planning Board**, Fire Station, 6:00 pm
- 18th **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscoot General, 10 am
- 19th **Open-Mic Night**, Sheepscoot General, 7-9 pm
- 20th **DRUMMING CIRCLE**, Sheepscoot General, 6:30 pm. Open to the public, all ages
- 23rd **Women of Whitefield**, Sheepscoot General, 10 am
Select Board, Fire Station, 6 pm
Public Hearing on deferred property taxes for qualified elderly citizens. Whitefield Fire Stations, 6 pm
- 25th **Senior Men's Group**, Sheepscoot General, 10 am



Do you have an event? Contact whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com
We'll add you to the town calendar website and newsletter.



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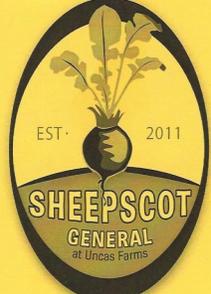
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A Thank You to our youth -from the community

Whitefield School's National Junior Honor Society was very busy just before Christmas vacation. The students, under the direction of Miss McCormick, cooked approximately 100 pounds of turkey as well as potatoes, squash, and stuffing. They put together 100 meals and delivered them to people in our community. The group selected people who may have been shut in, elderly, or just needed some cheering up to know that someone was thinking of them during the holiday season. They plan to make this a yearly event, so please let them know if you have someone to add to their list for next year! Thank you, from all who received this kind gift of caring.



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