



Whitefield News

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October 2014

Planning Board Update

The Planning Board concluded our final draft of amendments to the Whitefield Development Ordinance on September 17, and it was posted to the town website

(<http://www.townofwhitefield.com>) and printed copies were made available for the public to inspect at the Town Office. The purpose of these amendments, as we explained at Town Meeting last March, is to correct certain legal defects in the existing ordinance, to set specific standards for mineral extraction/gravel mining, and to add definitions. The Town has posted legal notices of a public hearing to be held at 7:00 pm on Monday, October 6 in the Whitefield Fire Station meeting room, at which time public comments will be heard and discussed.

We urge all residents of Whitefield to read the document and to come to the hearing with any questions or concerns they may have about it. Our intent is to have the amended Development Ordinance voted up or down on Election Day, November 4 by secret ballot. If we judge that the public response at the October 6 hearing requires us to revise our draft, we will do so and hold a second public hearing a week later. The final version of the proposed, amended Ordinance will be posted 7 days before Election Day.

Jim Torbert, Chair, Whitefield Planning Board

Photos by Tony Marple and others

Country Corners: Fast approaching 90 years old

By Dan Joslyn

By 1931 Maurice York had established a country store in Coopers Mills. It was tucked in behind the Narrow Gauge Train station on the west end of the village. This spot has been of significance since the train track was laid before 1895. The store would have a very long life and, situated on Rt. 17 today, is still serving customers.

Maurice was the first owner, but there have been others. The Kings have owned Country Corners since 1987. Twenty-seven years later, Erin, Barry and Debbie King's oldest child, manages the busy spot that still cuts its own steaks and grinds the hamburger on site. Customer satisfaction is important.

Like previous owners, they have prided themselves in maintaining a strong bond with the "local folks." In fact Erin worries if some of her most regular customers don't show up on schedule during their lunch breaks. First names flow around the store as though it is just one large family home. Practical jokes and friendly teasing are typically part of the banter.

All three children - Erin, Chris and Kelly - worked during high school, helping where they could to earn school money and learning along the way the nuances of running a store. The King family added the ice cream



The King Family—Contributed photo

stand where local kids cut their "working teeth" for many summers until that portion closed in 2008. Chris and Kelly became teachers like their parents and Erin commented, "I really liked using the pricing machine as a kid and enjoyed talking with everyone, like my dad did."

Barry grew up in the center of the village. He walked and biked to the store often as a child. In time he would

be employed by Maurice Coombs, his second cousin and the sixth owner of Country Corners. Even as a Whitefield School teacher, Barry worked at the store on weekends and during vacations. Becoming ill in 1998 while still teaching he would not live to retire, but events would unfold that allowed Country Corners to stay in the family.

Their Family History

One day around 1972 a new girl in town pulled up to the gas pumps. She was greeted by a tall, slender young man who said, "Hi, I'm Barry King." The young woman, Debbie Beers, thought, "And so what does that mean?" Soon after, Barry asked her out for a date. He did what country boys might do. He took her on a hay ride. Debbie said, "He spent most **Continued Pg. 2**



**WHITEFIELD
CELEBRATION**

Country Corners from Pg. 1 of the time talking with everyone else and not so much with me.”

Debbie had graduated college and been hired in Augusta to teach elementary students. Just down from Bangor she had decided to share an apartment with two others, but a weekly salary of \$125.00 made things difficult. Eventually the three teachers drove out to Coopers Mills looking for a cheaper place to live. They found a new home for rent. Debbie said, “We all worried that we’d have no social lives being so far out in the willy-wags.” All three would eventually meet their husbands in or around the village.

For Debbie and Barry, married life brought three children and the purchase of the store as part of a retirement plan.

Earlier owners

Prior to the Kings, the Coombs family owned the store for approximately four years, starting in 1980. Maurice and Marilyn had lived in Colorado but had wanted to return to Maine. They had children back west and finally returned there. Maurice Coombs was a cousin to Barry King’s father Le-laud.

The Willoughbys (Frank and Sylvia) ran the store from approximately 1974 to 1979.

The Ballantynes (Gordon and wife Doris), both born in Massachusetts, operated the store from 1949 to 1965. It is possible that the name “Country Corners” existed during their ownership in the 50s and 60s.

Lawrence Sargent operated the store before the Ballantynes for a brief period. No records have been found to date covering this period.

A man named Earl Gaslin owned or operated the store for a few years as well. He apparently took over ownership from founder Maurice York. No additional information to date has been found about this period.

Maurice York, the patriarch of the store in the late 1920s, lived in Windsor as a child. A fire had destroyed either his parents’ home or business in Washington Village and Cassius, his dad, moved the family to a large house that operated as a tavern in what

was called Windsorville, on the corner of Rt. 105 and Weeks Mills Road. The strategic location of this tavern, the distance from Belfast that a horse could walk in one day, allowed coastal people with business to

conduct in the capitol a place to lodge overnight. It is now known as the Whit-taker home.

Maurice would benefit from his father’s business skills as his dad later ran a store diagonally across from the tavern, next to the Narrow Gauge tracks. A house now stands in that location.

Elwin Hussey stated, “This store was prosperous. For example, if it had three thousand dollars in stock the other stores in town would have five hundred. Dry good and even guns were retailed there.”

Eventually Maurice built the Coopers Mills store in a similarly strategic location: just behind the Wiscasset, Waterville and Farmington RR station and on the edge of the village. During the early years it was convenient for train passengers to visit.

The little store quickly became prosperous. Beverly Brann Russell, of Augus-



Aldon Pierce—Contributed Photo



Maurice York at his home in Coopers Mills—Contributed photo

ta, commented, “Maurice was a real businessman.” Carroll York, Maurice’s nephew, recalled visiting his uncle’s store to get grain for their cows, and dry goods such as cookies that arrived in crates and were measured out. “Molasses,” he said, “ran well out of the old barrel during warm weather but not so good in cold”. A large metal pole advertising the favored gasoline sat on the north edge of the store with a circular drive around it. That pole still stands and is used today to weigh the large bucks hunters bring in every November.

Little did Maurice realize that his small business would be in his family for so many years and be passed on to seven families.

(Author’s note: This report is largely anecdotal and lacks some specific dates. Information about the owners between the Kings and Yorks was more difficult to uncover. A history of Whitefield stores is being compiled and anyone with additional information, including years owned and other details, is asked to email it to sheepscotgeneral@gmail.com. A special thanks to my brother Ray for providing names of folks to call and much additional information that he has no right to remember given his age.)

Maine Conservation Corps welcomes home Sergei Thomas Pepper of Whitefield

The Maine Conservation Corps (MCC) recently welcomed back Sergei Thomas Pepper of Whitefield, Maine to serve as a Field Team Member and AmeriCorps national service member for a three-month, 450-hour term of national service. Pepper is the son of John Mourovic and Judith Pepper, also of Whitefield.



Sergei Thomas Pepper—photo provided by MCC

The MCC conducts conservation projects throughout the State of Maine, including extensive recreational trail construction and rehabilitation. Pepper was homeschooled, and is a 2012 graduate of Bath Regional Technical and Career Center. Pepper previously served as a Field Team Member with the MCC in 2013.

Governor Paul R. LePage welcomed Pepper’s decision to re-enter into national service in Maine. “On behalf of the State of Maine, I would like to congratulate you on your commitment to serving Maine as a member of the Maine Conservation Corps,” said Governor LePage. “The Maine Conservation Corps has done tremendous work making positive changes to our great State and Nation.”

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) Commissioner Walt Whitcomb also welcomed back Pepper, and highlighted the important work that the MCC does on behalf of Maine citizens. “As part of the DACF, the MCC’s four-fold mission is to: accomplish conservation projects, create conservation employment, provide conservation education, and engage conservation volunteers,” said Whitcomb. “Since 1983, MCC-supported projects have helped build the infrastructure that so many Maine citizens enjoy in our parks and public places.”

More information about the Maine Conservation Corps can be found at the www.maine.gov/dacf/mcc website.

Oct 2014 garden raffle

Knox-Lincoln Soil & Water Conservation District is holding a Great Garden Raffle from now through Nov. 5 to support its education programs.

First prize is a Valley Oaks Broad Fork donated by Fedco Seeds (\$215 value). Second prize is a Tub-Trug kit donated by Johnny’s Selected Seeds (\$100 value); and last, but not least, third prize is a \$25 certificate to the Knox-Lincoln Conservation Spring Plant Sale on May 2 & 3, 2015.

Tickets are only \$2 each or 3 for \$5! Stop by to see the prizes and get your lucky tickets at the District office, 893 West St., Rockport. Tickets are also available at Terra Optima Farm Market, 218 S Main St, Rockland and Spear Farm Stand, 1520 Atlantic Hwy, Waldoboro, by contacting Hildy at 596-2040 or hildy@knox-lincoln.org, or for purchase online at www.knox-lincoln.org/2014-affle/. Drawing will be held at the Knox-Lincoln Annual Awards Banquet on Nov. 5. Winners need not be present.

Just Yesterday

From the local correspondent for *The Lincoln County News*, **Oct. 7, 1920**: "A new Sons of Veterans camp was formed at Coopers Mills on Sept. 28."

"Potatoes are rotting quite badly in this section and the heavy wind and rain of last Thursday knocked many apples off. This is a serious damage to the already short crop. The rain was very heavy," the writer noted, with the Sheepscot River running "at freshet pitch."

* * * * *

From Emma Chase's diary (1892-1988):

Mon., **Oct. 10, 1921**: Harry harnessed the horses first time since last July. He went towards Head Tide to meet the trains and help them up the hills.

Thurs., **Oct. 12, 1922**: Game supper, I made 11 pies and 3 cakes today, carried 4 pies down to [Union Hall], good time, lovely supper.

Wed., **Oct. 14, 1936**: Ladies' Aid Supper had 22 chicken pies and we run out.

Tues., **Oct. 15, 1940**: [Daughter Barbara] went up to volunteer to register the men from 21 to 35 tomorrow.

Wed., **Oct. 4, 1944**: We drove to Manchester (NH) to see about the Honor Roll for Whitefield...

Sun., **Oct. 22, 1944**: Had Honor Roll meeting in PM.

Notice: Whitefield Historical Society, Annual Day of Remembrance, 2 p.m., Sun., Oct. 26, presentation by Pam Kenoyer on stoneware and red ware pottery. Refreshments.



Whitefield School off to great start

The opening of the 2014-15 school year at Whitefield School was a smooth transition for both students and staff from summer fun to focusing on the back-to-school routines.

We kicked off the first day with a grand ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating our new playground. Thanks to the hard work of the Whitefield School PTA, community volunteers, Principal Josh McNaughton, Susan Peaslee and our very own superhero, Louis Shorey, the playground was available for the students to enjoy on opening day.

The Sept. 10th open house was a huge success. The students were proud to show off their classrooms and the teachers were pleased to meet the parents and families of our many new Whitefield School students.

Our Wildcat middle school soccer team has been busy preparing for their first soccer game with Palermo School. Community support at our games would certainly be welcomed. (Secretary Doris MacMaster)

The dog ate my tax bill

By Tony Marple, selectman

By the time you read this article, you have received your long awaited tax bill. For most of you, taxes went down. Why? OK, it's complicated.

The amount we raise from local property taxes is determined by spending minus state revenue and other sources.

Spending:

| | <u>Amount</u> | <u>Date set</u> | <u>Local control?</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Municipal government including roads, fire protection, plowing, Town Office, etc. | \$944,626 | March Town Meeting | yes |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|
| Regional School Unit 12 | \$2,076,945 | May RSU budget vote | partial |
| County taxes | \$224,988 | May/June | very limited |
| Total spending | \$3,246,559 | | |

Revenue:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| State revenue sharing and road support | \$138,158 | Variable and unpredictable | no |
| Excise tax revenue | \$300,000 | Ongoing | |
| Prior year surplus | \$100,000 | Town meeting | yes |
| <i>Local property taxes required to cover expenses</i> | | | <u>\$2,708,401</u> |
| Total revenue | \$3,246,559 | | |

Once the Town determines what must be raised from taxes, it then must set a mil rate. The mil rate is determined by dividing the Town's required tax revenue by Town's total property valuation. One mil raises \$100 on property valued at \$100,000. The 2014 mil rate was 15.25, which raised \$1525 on a property worth \$100,000. This year, the Selectmen determined that a number of commercial properties, particularly the utilities, were undervalued. After increasing the commercial valuations, the Town's total valuation increased from \$178,939,099 to \$194,671,210. We also wanted to provide \$65,664 for potential abatements. Therefore, our new mil rate (determined by dividing \$2,708,401 in needed tax revenue plus \$65,664 in "overlay" for anticipated abatements by our property valuation of \$194,671,210), is down to 14.25.

But even though taxes are down for most of you, we understand that taxes can still be a burden for some. Make sure you take advantage of your homestead or veteran exemptions. You might also be interested in putting your land in "tree growth" or other programs that might lower your land valuation. We have made arrangements for a number of townspeople to get current over time on their back taxes and avoid the potential loss of their property. Monthly payments are one option. Poverty abatements are available but generally only for residents falling below the federal poverty guidelines who can demonstrate that they can't make their payments. The Select board will work with you.

In the coming year, the Town will be evaluating our approach to taxing equipment in town, as required by State law. Lakefront property values will also be considered.

If you are having difficulty paying your taxes or if you are even more confused after reading this article, please call the Town Office at 549-5175.



Photo by Tony Marple

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Estimates available for cleanup of basement, garage, house, yard or sheds.



OCTOBER 2014 COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR

- 1st Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6 am
ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 2nd-5th Timber Frame Construction workshop, HVNC
- 2nd Senior Men's Group Sheepscot General. 10 am
DANCE CLASSES: Sheepscot General 3:30-5:30 p.m.
- 3rd Whitefield Food Bank, St. Denis Hall, 1-3 pm
- 6th ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Coopers Mills Fire Dept. 7 pm
Kings Mills Fire Dept. 7pm
- 7th Women of Whitefield, Sheepscot General, 10 am
Select Board 6pm
- 8th Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6 am
ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Arlington Grange 6 pm Pot Luck Supper, 7 pm Meeting All are welcome.
- 9th Senior Men's Group Sheepscot General. 10 am
RSU School Board Meeting, Chelsea School, 6:30 pm to 9 pm
- 12th Whitefield Athletic Association (WAA) Whitefield School 6 pm
- 13th ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Whitefield Municipal Fire Dept. 7 pm
- 14th Select Board 6pm
Kings Mills Union Hall Board Mtg. 7 pm
- 15th Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6 am
ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Planning Board Fire Station, 7-9 pm
- 16th Senior Men's Group Sheepscot General. 10 am
- 17th Open-Mic Night, Sheepscot General, 7-9 pm
- 18th DRUMMING CIRCLE: Open to the public, all ages welcome.
Sheepscot General, 6:30 pm
- 20th ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 21st Women of Whitefield, Sheepscot General, 10 am
Select Board 6pm
- 22nd Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6 am
ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
Arlington Grange 6 pm Pot Luck Supper, 7 pm Meeting. All are welcome.
- 23rd Senior Men's Group Sheepscot General. 10 am
- 25th Kings Mills Union Hall Annual Chicken Pie Supper 5 to 7 p.m.
- 26th Whitefield Historical Society Day of Remembrance, 2pm
- 27th ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 28th Select Board 6pm
Special RSU Board Mtg., Chelsea Elem. 6:30 pm
- 29th Yoga, Sheepscot General, 6am
ZUMBA 3:10-4pm, Whitefield Elementary
- 30th Senior Men's Group, Sheepscot General. 10 am
- 31st Halloween



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

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Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 15th of the month. Email whitefieldtownnews@gmail.com