

Beacon Bits

We came very close to not having a February issue of the *Beacon*. My wife, Sharon, had back surgery on January 11. Before she was out of the hospital, I had to leave for Massachusetts to be with my sister, who passed away on the 15th. Back to New Hampshire to rescue Sharon...back to Massachusetts with Sharon for services...back home to Cilleyville...a trip to the emergency room to deal with a stomach bug Sharon picked up...publish a newspaper.

I bring this up, not because it's that big a deal in the grand scheme of things, but because it has reinforced in my mind the importance of getting more people involved in producing the *Beacon* every month. More writers, editors, and proofreaders are always welcome, but this month's near miss reminds me how badly we need more people helping with production issues - page layout, ad design, photo prep, and managing long lists of articles and photos.

Andover deserves an issue of the *Beacon* every month, and I'm committed to making that happen, month after month after month. But as long as critical parts of the process depend on just one person, we're putting the *Beacon* at risk. I hope you can help me remove that element of risk very soon.

Get A Round Tuit, Today!

The *Beacon* faces another mission-critical challenge - raising the funds we need to publish the paper every month. We mail to over 1,100 Andover addresses every month at no charge, but so far, fewer than 150 of those households have made a donation to our annual fundraising drive. If you've sent yours...thank you! Please urge your friends and neighbors to do the same. If you haven't, please do so today!

Charlie

Next Month's Beacon...

...should be in mailboxes on Friday, March 2. Please get all ads, articles, etc. to us by **Thurs., Feb. 15** at the latest. And **earlier is always better!**

Letters

The family of Willis Nowell would like to thank the Andover Rescue Squad, the Andover Police Department, the Masons, the Andover Service Club, Pastor John Wagner of the Andover Congregational Church, my neighbors, and my friends for all their help and support, cards, and kind words since Willis passed away.

Bernice Nowell

As you know, the Andover School Board has proposed an addition to the Andover Elementary/Middle School.

CORRECTIONS

Donor Town?

In last month's article *Understanding The School Budget* we unintentionally over-simplified the issue of whether Andover is a "donor town" or not. The issue is extremely complex, with law suits and counter-suits leading to ongoing changes.

But according to Mark Stetson, our Town Administrator, it's fair to say that the whole "donor town" concept is outmoded at this point. Currently, all of the money raised by the State Education Property Tax (labelled "State Ed." on our tax bills) stays in the town in which it was raised.

For more information on this extremely complex issue, a good place to start is www.Ed.State.NH.US/Education/News/equitable_aid07-08.htm.

Reducing Taxes

Another correction to *Understanding The School Budget* concerns how unspent school revenue reduces next year's tax bills. Despite what the article said, the school does not give its unspent money to the Town. Instead, it uses it as revenue in the following year's school budget, thereby reducing the school tax rate on next year's tax bills.

The impact on taxes is the same as described in the article, but we were wrong about the exact mechanism.

See Corrections on page 7

The Board had a public meeting with the Andover Budget Committee on January 10. The School Board has proposed a 10-year bond for \$3.6 million. This bond will increase your taxes considerably for the next ten years if passed.

Voting for this bond will only take place March 5 at the School District Meeting at 7 PM. If you want any voice in this matter, please be there to vote. It is a financial issue that needs close attention. Again, it will affect your property taxes for the next 10 years.

In previous years, only about 1/8 of the registered voters attended annual School District Meetings. These voters are setting the tax rate. Please consider your attendance.

If you are in favor of the bond or against it, you must be available to cast your vote during this meeting on March 5. Voting on this bond will be considered in Article One and will take place after the final person has spoken and the moderator declares that the Article is ready for a paper ballot vote. The vote will be open for one hour after declared open.

Peter Zak

Budget from page 1

The School Board proposes to increase this budget for next year by \$90,000 (or 2.5%) to \$3.66 million. The major increases in this proposed budget are contracted cost increases:

Merrimack Valley High School tuition increase: \$25,000

Staff benefits increase: \$16,000

Negotiated teacher salary increases: \$74,000

Furthermore, the New Hampshire Department of Education has determined that the State Education Grant to be provided to Andover for next year will be \$579,187, down \$102,210 from the \$681,397 received for the present year. (There is the possibility that the legislature or the courts may revise the amount of state aid to be provided before the tax rate is finalized in October).

The above proposed operating budget increases, combined with the reduced expected revenues, leads to an increased amount to be raised by taxes of \$192,000, 7.6% greater than last year. This would increase the School tax rate by \$0.72 over last year's rate of \$9.74.

The second component of the proposed School Budget is the funding for a proposed building construction and ren-

See Budget on page 3

BEACON MEMBERS WIN!

Each month the *Beacon* holds a random drawing among its members to give away valuable prizes provided by area businesses. **Become a member** for a year, support the *Beacon*, and join the fun! This month's winners are:

Andover Pizza Chef	Large 2-Topping Pizza	James & Dorothy Keniston
Andover Service Club	Cookbook	Judy Perreault
Blackwater Junct. Rest.	Gift Certificate	Mark & Suzy Stetson
East Andover Marketplace	Gift Certificate	Chris & Jeanne Barrett
Forest Cone & Evergreen	Yankee Candle	Bill & Laurie Zimmerman
Jake's Market and Deli	Gift Certificate	Bryant & Adrienne Adams
Judy Evans	Handknit Scarf	Connie Powers
Kearsarge Magazine	1-Year Subscription	Paul & Lynette Currier
MacKenna's Restaurant	Gift Certificate	Mary Anne Broshek
Mary Kay - Laura Condon	Gift Certificate	Kathryn Bennett
Mesa International	Pottery Platter	Brian & Judy DeRoy
New Horizons Hairstylists	Hair Care Products	Robert Guardia

Winners - contact the Beacon at 735-5331 to collect your prize.

Prizes not redeemable for cash.

BECOME A BEACON MEMBER!

Seasonal	Gift	Local or Out of Town	Here's my member donation of \$ _____ for (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal (\$25 min) <input type="checkbox"/> Out of Town (\$25 min) <input type="checkbox"/> Gift Subscr. (\$25 min)
			Your Name _____ Address _____ City, State, Zip _____ Phone or E-mail _____
			Other Name _____ Other Address _____ City, State, Zip _____ Phone or E-mail _____
Seasonal: which months are you at the "other" address? _____			

Andover Beacon • PO Box 149 • Andover NH 03216 • Thank you!

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