Mario Ratzki Reports from Concord: January 2015

Introduces four-year term for governor again

Mario Ratzki, NH Representative

We had our first House session of 2015 on January 7. Concealed weapons were again allowed anywhere in the State House, reversing the previous House stand.

A new rule requiring the support of 20 members instead of 10 to ask for a roll call was tabled 343 to 36.

Representative Bill O'Brien's attempt to have the Speaker appoint the Republican caucus winner (O'Brien) as the majority leader in the House failed 260 to 120. The majority thought that the Speaker should continue the tradition of appointing his own majority leader. This exemplifies the rift that has occurred in the Republican party, leading some in the House to call it a three-party system.

I am once again a member of the Public Works and Highways committee, and David Karrick is again a member of Ways and Means. My chairman is former Speaker Gene Chandler.

Governor Maggie Hassan spoke at a joint convention of the House and the Senate on January 8. Highlights of her speech included a pitch for expanded rail to Nashua and one for establishing a higher minimum wage than the federal $7.25 an hour. Representative Cilley has introduced a bill to bring the minimum wage to $14.25 an hour over a three-year period.

Missing from the Governor's speech was any reference to a casino, although Senator D'Allessandro has introduced casino legislation.

Four-Year Term for Governor

Upon reflection, I have reintroduced my constitutional amendment to have a four-year term for Governor. I believe it is essential for our top executive to be able to fashion a long-term vision for the state. The Governor has one year to do this now, the second year being taken up by campaigning.

I also introduced HB 176, calling for the flood control payments to be made good for 2013. (We did get 2012 payments). We recouped $1.1 million from the state of Massachusetts last year. The Commonwealth is sending us an additional $654,000 for year 2013 and 2014, and I expect Salisbury to get its share.

PSNH has sued New Hampshire towns to have its property assessments and taxes reduced. The Board of Selectmen of Andover has asked me to support LSR 460 (the global resolution) and LSR 928 in an effort to resolve this issue through legislation rather than litigation. I intend to do so.

Proponents of broadband expansion in Danbury have introduced a warrant article to establish a committee of five to study the issue and are asking for a $500 contribution from the Town of Danbury to get it going.

Senator Forrester has introduced a bill at the behest of Ragged Mountain Resort to establish a village district on the mountain. At time of writing, the Town of Danbury has not taken an official position on this bill.

Fuel assistance is available in New Hampshire. To find out more, please call Celeste Lovett at 271-8317 or Robert Ditman at 271-2685. I am always available at 735-5440 or MarioRatzki@gmail.com.

THE 15TH !
Please have everything to the *Beacon* by the 15th of each month!

Letters

Skating Rink on Highland Lake Channel?

For many years I have wished that there could be an ice skating rink maintained on the channel of Highland Lake. I am wondering how to go about creating it.

Are there others who would support this and who would volunteer to help? Perhaps the fire department would be willing to flood it once a week or when necessary. We would need folks willing to keep it plowed, as well.

I would love to hear if other people are interested. I would love to hear from anyone who can help make this happen.

Donna Baker-Hartwell

With Gratitude

My name is Nicholas Drew, and I am writing as a thank-you to the kind people of Andover and Franklin for the help they gave me on Wednesday, December 10.

I was driving through Andover on Plains Road during the rain, snow, and sleet and lost control of my truck. Some very nice people who were driving by and lived nearby got me out of the truck and let me use their phone to call my parents and my girlfriend, while someone else called 911.

I would also like to thank the response team. There were many helpful firemen, EMT responders, and police who made sure I was okay. Thank you also to Beauchine Auto and Towing for your professional response and kindness.

Andover is a great town, and once again, thank you very much!

Nicholas Drew
Webster
MVHS '15

Andover Town Sign Closed Until Spring

The sign in front of the Town Hall was given to the Town by the Andover Lions Club for the purpose of notices concerning budget hearings, school notices, town meetings, voting, and other not-for-profit organizations' events.

The letters are printed on plastic squares

See Letters *on page 7*

School District Meeting and Town Meeting are coming up in March. **Please send a letter to the *Beacon*** expressing your thoughts on the budgets, the warrant articles, our local election, or other local matters. Our readers want and need to hear your voice!

The mission of *The Andover Beacon* is to serve and strengthen the Andover community. To that end, we welcome civil, reasoned letters addressing specifically local issues, events, and developments. Submissions must not be critical of another's religion; blasphemous; obscene; hateful; legally objectionable; or commercial in nature. The *Beacon* reserves the right to edit or not publish submissions it deems inappropriate for any reason.

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