

# Madbury Musings

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

## SELECT NOTES

### Tax Bills

The latest state-mandated periodic town-wide reassessment has taken effect. Your November tax bill reflects an updated assessment and an updated tax rate. Assessed values in Madbury are down about 3.5% on average (individual properties vary), which causes the tax rate for the Town to go up proportionately. Your tax bill = town tax rate x your assessed value. Remember: the budget approved at Town Meeting determines how much the Town spends, the tax rate results from apportioning that expense to land owners according to property values.

Also, pay attention to where the money goes: your property tax includes taxes for the School District, County, State and Town. The new total tax rate is \$27.60 per \$1000 (re)assessed value.

Of that \$27.60, just \$3.99 goes to the Town. (The School District gets the largest share at \$18.52.) Last year's Town tax was \$3.82. If we hadn't reassessed, it would have been \$3.85 this year. With the new lower assessed values, the town's rate becomes \$3.99.

Madbury's share of the School District costs went up this year due to an increase in the number of students from town. Costs are apportioned between the three

towns in the district based on number of students and total assessed property values for each town. Madbury's share is now higher than in recent history. I do not have long-term data but I suspect this is a long term high too. Apparently, parents are finding Madbury a good place to raise a family. (Best to keep this a secret lest our tax bills go up more!)

### Cable Savings

Your cable bill will be going down a few cents! How often does that happen?

The Comcast license agreement

with the Town came up for renewal this year. The Selectmen briefly got excited about raising the "franchise fee" that can be charged to the cable TV company for their license. "Free money for the Town!" we thought. Then we learned that Comcast simply passes the fee on to you their customer. If you have ever scrutinized your cable TV bill, you might have noticed a "franchise related cost" item for about \$0.51 (on my bill). This was paying for the "franchise fee" from the last

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## TOWN OFFICE NEWS

**TAX BILLS** - The tax rate has been set and the due date for tax bills is December 2, 2015. There is a requirement to assess late fees.

**DOVER RECYCLING CENTER**, located at 265 Mast Road, is available to Madbury residents. Be prepared to show documentation that you are a town resident. As hours of operation are periodically adjusted, call 516-6450 or visit their website at [dover.nh.gov](http://dover.nh.gov) for changes.

**MADBURY TRANSFER STATION** will close for the season after the session on Saturday, November 21, 2015.

**WINTER PARKING ORDINANCE** will be in effect on November 1 and will remain in place until April 1. It prohibits parking on streets and roads during snow plowing and removal operations. Any vehicle parked will be towed at the owner's expense. Placing of snow in the town road right of way during personal snow removal is prohibited as well. Your cooperation will help keep the roadways open and safe for all travelers.

**OFFICE CLOSINGS:** Open Veteran's Day, November 11, but closed on November 12; November 16, no evening hours; Thanksgiving Day ~ November 26; Christmas Day ~ December 25; New Year's Day ~ January 1, Martin Luther King Jr. Day ~ January 18; Washington's Birthday ~ February 15.

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agreement. It amounts to a stealth town tax on cable service. We thought it a bit devious to raise money that way so we dropped the franchise fee. The change should appear in your Jan. bill (I think). Note: This only pertains to cable TV service, not internet or phone via cable.

### Tree Trouble

Last year it was invasive Knotweed. Now look at those trees. The ones with the roots that buckle the pavement and branches that try to grab your car radio antenna (who has a visible antenna anymore?).

They are sneaky, those trees. Patiently they inch their way into the right of way; with each passing year they grab more of the precious sunlight that dries our winter roads. The insignificant sapling on the shoulder stealthily becomes a massive trunk ready to crumple your car (and you) should you wander too close!

Seductive they are. Standing there all leafy and dignified, they practically sing a John Denver tune about country roads.

Fool me they don't! I know a weed when I see one, even if it is 50 feet tall. They mess up our roads and fall on our wires; they drop seeds and slippery leaves all over the place. It has been going on for nearly four centuries now, ever since European immigrants started clearing roads.

Trees don't vote but they do enjoy a strong constituency here in Madbury. Cutting trees and limbs in order to preserve our roads brings the bitter wrath of Madbury's tree-huggers down upon the Selectmen. It is easy to allow these picturesque plants to compromise the safety of our roads

and to hasten the need for rebuilding roadbeds, a major expense.

Big trees can become big problems. Do you know someone who has had to remove a big old pine tree before its rotting trunk snapped and dropped on their house? This is expensive work. We can't afford to do a lot of this work quickly but leaving the trees to get bigger doesn't make it any cheaper. We need to start to fight back.

By the way, we made progress on the knotweed invasion last year. The war continues but the first battle was a success. As you drive around the state you will see other places where the war is being lost. This is nasty stuff. We will try to stay ahead of it.

Bob Sterndale

UNCLE  
MADBURY  
WANTS  
YOU!



Perhaps you have noticed that you live in a small town.

We often speak of the local government as a vague third party. "They" need to get my road plowed earlier. "They" need to fix that pothole. "They" do a nice job on the ball fields. "They" keep raising my taxes.

Who are "THEY"?

Here in Madbury it's not hard to find out who "they" are. It's us.

No formless authority. No distant bureaucrats. Your town functions because your neighbors fill about 65 town offices as volunteers. Check the annual report to see the list (and that doesn't even include the Fire Department!).

"We" number about 1800 people counting the kids. We have around 330 kids in school and a bunch more preschoolers leaving roughly 1400 folks to do the work.

A little math:  $1400/65 = 21.5$ . So, we need one volunteer for about every 21.5 adults in town.

### WHY ME?

The other 20.5 people think they are too busy, not smart enough, can't speak in public, don't know anything about it, don't have the right dress or tie, or tragically, don't care.

You are the one.

- You have enough time. Some positions have no regular scheduled time commitments. Many require participation in just one monthly meeting or on annual occasions.
- You are smart enough. We have plenty of capable people in town including you. You don't need PhD to contribute (but you would be welcome even if you do have one).
- You will learn to work in a public setting. The other 65 volunteers did. It is a valuable skill. We expect new members of Boards and committees to take considerable time to "learn the ropes". You will learn from other volunteers, training texts, and perhaps a conference or two. As you gain knowledge, you will gain confidence and be able to contribute more.
- Your clothes are fine and forget the tie. Madbury government is conducted without pomp. Show up on time, contribute what you can, treat others civilly and you will be respected.
- You are the one who cares enough to contribute the effort required to sustain Madbury as

the place where you choose to live today and every day.

Opportunities for appointed and elected office exist in many areas including conservation, recreation, land use (planning and zoning), financial management, elections, school-related, agriculture and more. Other civic groups can use your help too. Lean in. Contact Eric Fiegenbaum at the Town Hall to inquire. 603 742-5131

## Conservation Commission

While the Conservation Commission is not yet directly involved, we wanted to make residents aware of a project by the Society to Protect New Hampshire Forests to purchase/ease about 230 acres in Madbury, Lee and Durham. The parcels are owned by the Goss family and locally known as the Powder Major's farm. They lie between Cherry Lane and Rt. 155.

The Society's intention is to purchase 195 acres to be set aside as a Reserve, which allows public access and includes historic uses. Some 35 acres of fields will be eased to allow for farming, but not development. They are currently visiting governing bodies and commissions, and holding information sessions for other entities and stakeholders. A general public informational campaign will follow. They will ask for town participation in terms of funding, support for grants, and easement holding, all of which will include public hearings. More information about the project can be found at: [forestsociety.org](http://forestsociety.org).

## Recreation Commission

We have been a busy bunch this past year. The trail at Tibbetts was completed in August and has been getting considerable use! We hope you have had a chance to take a walk this fall. It is approximately one mile, if you loop around and come back to the start. Our hopes are to have several fitness stations installed sometime in the summer of 2016. The commission purchased 3 recycled plastic park benches, which were installed along the trail for resting or just to sit and enjoy the soccer



games. With the help from a donation received by ORPP (Oyster River Parents of Preschoolers) two maple trees were planted in the front of the park. On October 4, one of the benches was dedicated to past Recreation Commission chair, Dick Houghton. It was a beautiful day and many friends and family were there to show Dick how much we appreciated his commitment to the town and its recreation facilities.

On October 9, volunteers from Newmarket International, Inc. joined staff from the City of Portsmouth in the removal of over 20 bags of trash and debris including old tires, metal scrap, bottles, cans and litter from the Route 9 access area, the island, and areas along the shoreline of the Bellamy Reservoir. The cleanup of trash and debris is routinely conducted to reduce potential impacts to water quality and to maintain the natural beauty of the area.

The Bellamy Reservoir is the source of over half of the water delivered by the City of Portsmouth's regional water system. Protecting the quality of this reservoir is critical to the sustainability of the water supply. Ongoing efforts to protect this source include shoreline surveys and dam surveillance, monitoring of potential contaminant sources, land acquisition and management, and routine shoreline cleanup.

The Reservoir is also a beautiful location for non-motorized recreation such as fishing and paddling. Responsible use and awareness of the value of this resource is necessary for its overall protection and continued benefit to the communities it serves.



## Madbury Public Library

### Discovering New England Stone Walls,

Thursday, November 19, 6:30pm

The Library has received an NH Humanities Council grant to host Kevin Gardner and his program, "Discovering New England Stone Walls," on Thursday, November 19, 6:30pm, at the Madbury Town Hall. This presentation will coincide with the monthly meeting of the Madbury Community Club, whose members will provide refreshments.

Kevin's informal talk covers a few of the main topics of his book about New England stone walls, *The Granite Kiss*, including history, stylistic development, and technique. He will explain how and why New England came to acquire its thousands of miles of stone walls, the ways in which they and other dry stone structures were built, how their styles emerged and changed over time, and their significance to the famous New England landscape.

While he talks, Kevin will build a miniature wall or walls on a tabletop, using tiny stones from a five-gallon bucket. Copies of *The Granite Kiss* (Countryman Press) will be available for sale. This presentation is free and open to the public.

### Other Exciting Events @MPL

#### *Story Times with Kayla!*

In October we happily welcomed our new Children's Librarian, Kayla Morin. Kayla will be hosting story times Monday and Thursday mornings at 10:30am. Here's a peek at what she's planning in November:

November 2 & November 5 ~ It's

November and the theme is... November! Possible stories include *In November* and *November!*

November 9 & November 12 ~ "Who" is coming to our Owl story time? Join us and listen to *Owl Moon* and *Little Owl's Night* November 16 & November 19 ~ It's almost Thanksgiving and you know what that means: Pie! We're reading *Ugly Pie* and *All for Pie, Pie for All!*

November 23 ~ 'Twas the week before Thanksgiving and all through the library, not a creature was stirring, not even a turkey. Come and listen to *Turkey Trouble* and 'Twas the Night before Thanksgiving, and create your own turkey. *No story time on Thursday, November 26, when the library will be closed for Thanksgiving.*

#### **Read to Rosa**

Monday, November 2 & Monday, December 7, 3-5pm. – Read to Rosa the Dog. Beginning and experienced readers are invited to spend time with Rosa the Dog, either reading or being read to. Children can sign up for 20-minute sessions. Call, e-mail, or stop in to get the time slot you want.

#### **Regular Programs for Adults**

**Friends of the Madbury Library** ~ meets the second Thursday of every month at 7 p.m. The Friends support the library through book sales, a basket raffle, and an annual appeal. In the past, they have donated funds that supported summer reading programs, purchased the Children's Room rug, our wireless printer, and provided the start-up funds for our new website. Our next two meetings are Thursday,

November 12, and Thursday, December 10. Also, the Friends of the Library now have their own Facebook page! Visit us at [www.facebook.com/friendsofthemadburylibrary](http://www.facebook.com/friendsofthemadburylibrary).

**Daytime Book Discussion Group** ~ meets the fourth Monday of the month at 3pm. We will discuss *The Circle* by Dave Eggers on November 23 and *The Rosie Project* by Graeme Simsion on December 28.

**Evening Book Discussion Group** ~ During November and December this group will meet on the second Monday at 7:00pm. Our next book, *Dead Wake* by Erik Larson, will be discussed on November 9. The group will then read and discuss Jenny Offill's *Dept. of Speculation* on December 7.

**Writing Group** ~ meets the second Monday of the month at 5:15 pm. Writers are invited to share their works and receive constructive input from other members.

**Quilting Group** ~ generally meets Mondays from 1-3pm. Come in and see examples of their beautiful work throughout the library.

#### **New Library Building Project**

The Madbury Public Library Steering Committee has been hard at work during 2015 and recently chose Manypenny Murphy Architects of Portsmouth to be the principal design architects. Please visit our website [madburylibrary.org](http://madburylibrary.org) and go to the "The New Library Building Project" tab on the opening page. Here you will find a history of this project, details of the process we've followed, and regular updates.