

AN ARROWSIC NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Number 1

October, 1986

Arrowsic, Maine 04530

Dear Reader,

Since June 26 of this year (town meeting) folks have been coming to me asking, "What's happening?" Few seem to know, but many seem to care.

This, our first issue of "An Arrowsic Newsletter" is an attempt to provide a forum for those who are interested. This issue will be largely devoted to publishing information that was originally destined to go out many months ago. Time goes by quickly, despite our diligent efforts to slow it down.

At the end of the Newsletter is a questionnaire. Please take the time to look at it, and if you have opinions to state them. They can be dropped off in the mail slot at the Town Hall. If there is enough interest, we'll keep publishing. If not, we'll find another means of communication that works.

Long Overdue ...

Many thanks to all who participated in the 1986 Census, and the Arrowsic Opinion survey. Although the numbers and percentages are a bit dry, they are the most straightforward way to represent the compiled results. The summary that follows is a snapshot of Arrowsic, and a composite of our opinions on town issues. Where appropriate, we've made comments on action that is being taken to answer questions, or implement suggestions.

1986 Census

There are currently (6/17/86) 190 year round dwellings (131 in 1980) and 24 seasonal dwellings (22 in 1980). This shows an average annual growth rate of 9%. 135 families were polled totalling 357 people. This averages 2.64 persons/household. Multiply that by 190 year round dwellings, and we come up with an estimated total of 500 year round residents.

Of those polled, there are 31 children in Arrowsic between the ages of one day and four years. 12 will be going to Bath schools, eight to Georgetown schools,

and 11 have not yet decided. There are 55 young people between the ages of five and nineteen. 16 attend Fisher-Mitchell School, 5 attend Dike-Newall School; thirteen attend Bath Junior High; 7 attend Morse, 1 attends Hughes, 1 attends Waynelete, 2 attend Georgetown, and 9 attend schools in Bath that weren't specified.

The age group breakdown of the Arrowsic population (based on census data) is as follows:

ages 0-19 yrs:	86 people,	or 24% of total
20-34	89 "	25%
35-44	84 "	24%
45-64	66 "	18%
65&over	32 "	9%

Upgrading would include fundraising to purchase a NEW 2-3 ton four wheel drive truck, then a tank truck, and expand the station. Support equipment would be replaced or added to the current inventory using Fire Protection Funds generated from taxes. There were many suggestions to team up with Georgetown in buying equipment, and in firefighting efforts. There were over 200 offers of cash donations, auction items, or construction labor. Of the 47 people who were interested in joining the Volunteers, 18 stated a willingness to be regular firemen, and 29 opted for occasional backup.

Town Hall Improvement

Although 70% of those polled supported improving the Town Hall, many suggestions were made to modify the proposed plan to a simpler version. The most popular suggestion was to simply add a bathroom. Note: the town hall as it stands now would not be a good candidate for running water. Protection of the plumbing from freezing would necessitate either exorbitant heating bills or better insulation. Other suggested modifications include a separate outbuilding for fireproof storage; redesigning the town hall to be more energy efficient; and solar or wood heat.

Opinion Survey Results

Volunteer Fire Department

20% of those polled wanted to close the Arrowsic Fire Department and contract with a neighboring town, while 80% were for upgrading the department to be first response, and continue to use Bath as a primary backup for housefires.

We are currently looking into the feasibility of solar hot air collectors as an auxiliary heating source. Another possibility is building an insulated floor over the existing one.

The largest concerns voiced in improving the town hall were A) that the Fire Department should come first; B) that the present lot would not support the building expansion AND parking C) that the taxes would go up; and D) that we really don't need the extra space.

Contributions offered toward the cause included 55 cash donations; 75 volunteer labor; 40 auction items; and 1 offer of materials.

Public access to tidewater

The poll showed 82 in favor of continuing the search for town owned water access, and 81 opposed.

If the town were to acquire and develop such a site, most people only wanted to see a launch ramp, parking area, and trash cans. 43 people would approve the town to purchase a site; 25 to purchase an easement; 18 for a licensed use grant; 13 to use Eminent Domain; and a couple of suggestions were to trade existing town properties for water access.

Opinion was 44 to 104 against accepting a tax increase to finance acquisition, and 44 to 92 against the town taking over maintenance of a subdivision road as part of an access effort.

Suggestions for a good location included Doubling Point, and Bald Head Road. There is much concern for the liabilities of such a site; policing, cleaning up trash, and general maintenance. A possibility mentioned at Town Meeting was acquiring Doubling Point, and having someone live there in exchange for maintaining and policing the site. Alternatives were offered suggesting we use Bath's facilities either New Meadows or Front Street, or going to Wiscasset.

Minimum lot size

The tally was 139 to 23 in favor of a revision to the Town Subdivision Ordinance that would make permanent the current minimum of 2 acres for individual lots, and 5 acres for any subdivision lots. 83 were in favor of, and 77 opposed to making all new lots

(individual and subdivision) a minimum of five acres. Many of those in favor commented on preserving the rural atmosphere of Arrowsic, being able to retain larger tracts of undisturbed wilderness, and not becoming another Falmouth Foreside. Those opposed held that it was unconstitutional, that people should be able to buy only what they can afford, and not be forced into purchasing additional acreage.

Some alternatives included limiting the number of subdivisions directly (rather than limiting the number of lots); limiting the number of building permits; or perhaps raising the minimum from two acres to three acres.

Subdivision roads

Two thirds of those stating an opinion felt that a major subdivision road should be accepted by the town NOT ONLY with the approval of the Road Commissioner and the Planning Board, but also by approval at Town Meeting. Only one quarter of those answering felt that all major and minor subdivision roads be required to be paved and accepted by the town.

Town Administration

Comments about winter sanding and plowing were numerous. Although the overall opinion was largely divided between "good" and "fair", many felt that the plowing should happen more often BEFORE the newly fallen snow has been driven on, rather than letting it get packed down. There were also many comments regarding too little or no sanding, causing icy roadways particularly on the side or back roads.

General Road Maintenance was felt to be good. Old Stage Road was mentioned often as being in need of attention.

Most people felt that the town Codes Enforcement was good. Those that commented said the enforcement was too lenient, or inconsistent.

The only comments made about Animal Control were in reference to dogs running loose.

Much was said about the Town Official's hours. The poll showed 72 good, 30 fair, and 17 poor. Many feel that the Town Officials are not

accessible enough, and that there needs to be more evening hours.

75% felt that the town does NOT need an ordinance to control noisy pets.

Annual Town Meeting

The opinion was 73-54 to keep Town Meeting on the last Thursday in June, rather than switching to the last Saturday in June. One suggestion was made to alternate days in alternate years so that everyone could make Town Meeting at least every other year.

Most people felt that the elections should be held the day before Town Meeting to speed things up. Many showed interest in serving as an official, or on an advisory board.

Over 70 people have offered to help with the annual Spring Roadside Cleanup. Efforts will be made to get the fliers out earlier next year so that folks will have time to plan ahead.

Several people took the time to sit down and write additional comments in a letter. Their concerns were these:

- that the low and fixed income residents are having a hard time keeping up with town spending.
- that the cost of many of the improvements in the survey was not mentioned.
- that the survey should have allowed for anonymous replies.
- that there be agendas for selectmen's meetings and posted as such.
- that there be specific town meetings throughout the year on subjects such as roads, town hall improvements, water access, etc. This would allow folks to voice their opinions and concerns on issues before action has taken place, rather than after.
- one letter was written suggesting possible "Town awareness tours".

These comments are invaluable to the Board of Selectmen and the Planning Board in facing the increasingly complex decisions that must be made in conducting town business. The Selectmen meet the first and third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 in the Town Hall. These are public meetings. Please feel free to share your ideas, concerns, complaints, etc. with us at the meetings, individually, or by dropping a note at the town hall. Communication is essential.

Fred's Footnotes

by Fred Karhl

I am very pleased that our new member to the Board of Selectmen, Patty Olds, has offered to initiate this newsletter. It is too soon to guess at its frequency or life expectancy, but if we succeed in carrying it on, it will fill a growing communication void between your elected officials and the Town's taxpaying community.

For this first issue, I will try to briefly bring you up to date on some current issues, and in the next issue will review in detail progress on the warrant items of the last annual Town Meeting.

Taxes

We expect to get the tax bills out after the first of the year. If you wish to take advantage of the income tax advantages of paying your property tax before the end of 1986, please feel free to send in the same amount that you paid last year to the Tax Collector prior to Dec.31. If there is any rebate due you, it will be refunded when the tax bills are sent out in 1987.

Why so late? Everyone is asking. The last revaluation of the Town took place in 1976, and it is now time for an update. Field work begun last Spring has not been computed for several reasons, not the least of which has been the recent election of a new assessor, Ted Bertocci's tractor accident this fall, and my working at the shipyard six days a week since August.

However, it is customary for taxes to come out in the Town's financial year, which changed to July-June several years ago. We have tried to stay with the old tax billing schedule (early fall), but have found it unrealistic. The number of annual property transfers remains very high, and the volatile real estate market requires that the assessors be more thorough. Thus, I expect that tax bills will continue to appear in January, at least as long as we continue to maintain the tax rolls manually, pending an upgrade to a modest computerized system similar to those used by other neighboring small towns.

Roads

Old Stage Road-

Cold patching of potholes will probably be complete by the time you

receive this newsletter. The steep hill near the town hall will have the dip at the crest filled in this fall and the culvert bump at the bottom smoothed out. Fill materials are being stockpiled for the eventual flattening of the hill's entire slope, probably in the next construction season. Likewise, the trees have been removed in preparation for blowing some of the ledge there to reduce the curve. This dynamite work may also carry over to next year.

East of the Crosby road the ditchline has been cleared off in preparation for deepening the ditch to improve drainage. Also, the curve just before the Parshley Road has been cleared off for better visibility.

We appreciate the cooperation provided by the Spencer family, and by John McCarty whose properties abut these work areas.

Next year I will be asking for bids to resurface the entire Old Stage Road, and will bring these bids to the Annual Town Meeting for discussion.

Steen Road

The tail end of the Steen Road has been stumped and rough ditched for the winter. Final ditching and surface completion awaits right-of-way agreements being completed between the Town and the abutters. We appreciate the positive input from those abutters who attended the recent meeting to discuss road work.

The paved section of the road will be hot-topped in the next few weeks; the shoulder across from Ralph Steen's driveway has been improved in preparation for this paving.

Also, some ditch improvement will be done this fall on the west side of the road just beyond the big ledge near Ralph Steen's. I expect the fall grading of the gravel section to be done any day now.

Sirois Road

We are still waiting for the abutters to sign their quit-claim deeds before we proceed with agreed-upon work to improve the surface and to address several drainage concerns. This may have to wait until spring if the paperwork isn't completed soon.

Sewall Pond "Pollution"

Many residents were alarmed recently to see large patches of blue-green material along the roadside at Sewall Pond. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection was called

and, much to their surprise as well as ours, found the material to be a common form of algae.

A biologist from the Lakes Division of the DEP has been monitoring the water quality at the pond for several years and is perplexed by this algae "bloom". We will keep you informed of her findings as the investigation continues.

This just scratches the surface, and encourages me to look forward to our next edition to share more news with you.

Waste to Energy

The last public hearing on the Waste to Energy plan was held Monday, October 6. Signal Corp. brought plans for the plant they are hoping to build in the Augusta area. Their plan is to construct a facility that will process (burn) 500 tons per day of area garbage, importing from other sources if the contracting municipalities can't supply enough. The price we will be paying (tipping fee) is \$44.80 per ton. This does NOT include transportation costs.

The Merrymeeting Greens were at the hearing, and brought to light some important questions: who will be responsible if something happens to the plant, disallowing them to process the garbage? How much will the transportation costs be? Will there be a "competition for garbage" as more plants open? Aren't communities interested in reaping the financial benefits of their own recycling/composting systems? The power being sold to CMP by the Signal Corporation will be Signal's profits, not ours.

There will be a public debate to help inform all those interested. We will announce the date as soon as we hear.

HAPPY HALLOWEEN!

The Annual Arrowsic Halloween Party will be held Friday, Oct.31 from 6 to 7 PM at the town hall. Everyone from preschoolers on up are welcome. Bring your carved pumpkin (for entry in the Jack-O-Lantern Contest) and treats to share. Hope to see you there!

Conversations from the Fire Hall, or Musings of a Fire Chief

Fire Chief, Ron Proctor 442-7770

Can 5 people make a Volunteer Fire Department work? Sure; maybe; there's a lot of charm in the old '49 pumper. And it worked the last time we tried the pumps. But who was it that knew how to get the pump running? Shouldn't we get them back to train the rest of us?

How soon before turning must you stand on the brakes in order to make the turn? And how slow around corners so she doesn't flip? Look out! The mirrors need to be folded in before she'll clear the door. Better paint that door before it falls into the road. And close it- it's getting cold. What? The furnace may not work? A leaky oil tank? We got it fixed? How long ago? He used to be able to get it working. I think he lives in Topsham now. It's kind of hard to pump a 200 gallon ice cube through a 2" line.

What about the tanker? Do the axles really want to go in different directions at the same time? It needs to be full of water so it sits low enough on the springs to clear the door. Even then the filler cap needs to come off. Suggestion: don't bother even taking it out.

What if there is a fire? People should call the Bath Fire Department. Their dispatcher will signal our pagers. Then, if a volunteer is near enough to hear, we assist. We might be able to deal with brush fires, supply water, direct traffic, or clean up.

Maybe it'll be different with the new truck(s). Easy to drive, Sure to work, simple to understand. Volunteers with burning desires to help will cram into the Fire House just to be able to be near the shiny new machinery. And the Fire House may even have legal parking so our cars aren't towed as we car pool to the fire.

The cost? Only 99 more lawn sales and car washes 'til we reach our goal. I think I can hold out for 2 years- maybe 3. I may never see another Celtic's game but my car and lawn will sure be clean. Can 5 people make a Volunteer Fire Department work? We'll see.

Arrowsic Co-op

The Arrowsic chapter of the Northeast Cooperative meets every 6-7 weeks. By becoming a member of the Coop, you will be able to buy quality products at bulk prices. Not only great food (Yes! Dog and Cat food, too!) but vitamins and health care items as well.

Being a member of a cooperative is also being part of the mechanism that makes it tick. We encourage new members not only because THE MORE THE MERRIER, but also because it enables us to have greater availability of choice in bulk buying. In joining, we'd like you to help out with some aspect of keeping the Coop alive- either helping to disperse the orders when they arrive, or actual administrative (phone calling, paperwork, etc.) things.

If you are interested, you can pick up the current product listing at the town hall. Next ordering is Dec. 2, to be delivered Dec. 15. We'd love to have you!

Acknowledgements:

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Meetings

The Planning Board meets on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Chairman is Lucy Stinson

The Board of Selectmen meet every first and third Tuesdays at 5:30 PM. Chairman is Fred Karhl

Zoning Board of Appeals meets by appointment. Chairman is Jozef Tara.

The Conservation Committee meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM

The Ladies Auxiliary of the Fire Department meets every first Thursday at 7:30 PM

THESE ARE ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS, AND HELD AT THE TOWN HALL

Town Hall Hours are:

Tuesday 4:00 PM-5:30 PM

Friday 8:30AM-10:00 AM

will be closed Nov. 27 & 28
and Dec. 25 & 26