
The Hermon Connection

Vol. 23 Issue 1 • January 2017

Penobscot County Big Tree Contest



Several months ago I entered my Sugar Maple tree in the 1st Annual Penobscot County Big Tree Contest sponsored by the Penobscot County Soil & Water Conservation District and the Maine Forest Service.

My Sugar Maple on the Fuller Road won for that species of tree. There might have been a bigger tree in the County, but fortunately for me it was not entered. My tree was 132 inches in circumference, 76 feet tall and with a crown of 65 feet for a total of 273 points.

Out of the 66 different types of trees in this County only 16 different tree species were entered. I was the only entry from Hermon that won. I received a t-shirt, framed certificate and a very nice book on FOREST TREES OF MAINE plus was invited to their annual banquet.

Go to www.facebook.com and search for Penobscot County Soil and Water for more information about the other trees entered.

Terry White
791 Fuller Road

Town of Hermon
Howard Kroll
Town Manager
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Hermon, ME 04402
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krollh@hermon.net
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The Hermon Connection
If you have a news story or
article for publication
in the next edition of
The Hermon Connection,
please send it to:
scottwl@hermon.net
Deadline for submissions:
February 23, 2017

Reminder

As set by the
Town Council,
all tax payments
will be due
in full by
April 1, 2017.

From the Town Manager

HAPPY HOLIDAYS! I want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a prosperous new year! On that same note I want to thank both our staff and our private partners who provide great services to the town.

WELCOME ABOARD! The Town has recently hired Brooke Deschaine of Hermon as one of our Deputy Town Clerks. Brooke is a hard working, motivated and dedicated employee who is committed to great customer service and serving her community. Also hired is Deputy Kenneth York of Newport. Kenneth was selected from a very competitive pool of candidates who applied for a vacancy in our Police Department. Kenneth is a US Air Force veteran and is currently a member of the Maine Air National Guard. He comes to Hermon via the Town of Dexter. I want to wish both Brooke and Kenneth a long, rewarding and successful career with the Town of Hermon.

WINTER IS HERE TO STAY (UNTIL APRIL)! In case you were wondering, Gardner Construction of Hermon was selected to maintain, in the winter, 50 miles of Town roads. Thus far his staff has done an excellent job in this service.

If you have any questions about winter road maintenance I encourage you to call Scott Perkins, Public Works Director, @ 848-1010 ext. 6513.

COLDBROOK AND NEWBURGH ROAD - In the coming months the Town is going to request invitations to bid on paving projects for the Coldbrook and Newburgh Roads. These roads are in need of rehabilitation and repair. In a partnership with the Maine Department of Transportation the Town is responsible for 50% of the cost. MDOT is responsible for the remaining 50%.

RECYCLING COMMITTEE - The Town Council has made forming a recycling committee a goal for FY 2016-17. The Committee is tasked with looking at recycling options for the Town and to make recommendations to the Town Council to consider implementing. Currently we have 5 containers behind the Public Safety Building that residents can drop off eligible recycling material.

If you are interested in serving on the Recycling Committee please contact Scott Perkins, Public Works Director, @ 848-1010 ext. 6513.

2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION RESULTS - Aside from electing our next President Hermon voters were given the opportunity to cast their vote regarding local issues. Two of those questions were to approve funding to make improvements at Hermon Elementary School for (1) recreational purposes and (2) educational and support purposes. I am happy to report both questions passed and we will begin the process of preparing bid documents for a design/build concept for both projects. We anticipate a great deal of interest from local firms and companies who are qualified to perform the work. Once the process starts to organize, status will be reported in future Hermon Connections.

LEGALIZATION OF MARIJUANA - State of Maine voters approved the legalization of marijuana that includes allowing the possession and use of marijuana by a person 21 years of age or older. It provides for the licensure of retail marijuana facilities including retail

marijuana cultivation facilities, retail marijuana products manufacturing facilities, retail marijuana testing facilities and retail marijuana stores. It also provides for the licensure of retail marijuana social clubs where retail marijuana products may be sold to consumers for consumption on the licensed premises. It provides for regulation and control of the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of marijuana by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. It allows the department to establish limitations on retail marijuana cultivation. It allows a municipality to regulate the number of retail marijuana stores and the location and operation of retail marijuana establishments and to prohibit the operation of retail marijuana establishments in the municipality. It also allows a municipality to require separate local licensing of retail marijuana establishments.

The Hermon Town Council has approved a 180 day moratorium on the approval of any retail facilities being licensed. During the moratorium an ad-hoc committee has been established to review and make recommendations to the Town Council for future ordinance regarding this subject. If you have questions I urge you to forward them to me or members of the Town Council. My email address is krollh@hermon.net.

The bill also allows a person 21 years of age or older to use, possess or transport marijuana accessories and up to 2 1/2 ounces of prepared marijuana; transfer or furnish, without remuneration, up to 2 1/2 ounces of marijuana and up to 6 immature plants or seedlings to a person who is 21 years of age or older; possess, grow, cultivate, process or transport up to 6 flowering marijuana plants, 12 immature marijuana plants and unlimited seedlings, and possess all the marijuana produced by the marijuana plants at that person's residence; purchase up to 2 1/2 ounces of marijuana and marijuana accessories from a retail marijuana store; and purchase up to 12 marijuana seedlings or immature marijuana plants from a retail marijuana cultivator. It allows the home cultivation of marijuana for personal use of up to 6 flowering marijuana plants by a person 21 years of age or older.

The bill further allows a person to consume marijuana in a nonpublic place including a private residence. It provides that the prohibitions and limitations on smoking tobacco products in specified areas as provided by law apply to smoking marijuana and that a person who smokes marijuana in a public place other than as governed by law commits a civil violation for which a fine of not more than \$100 may be adjudged.

COMMUNITY PLAYGROUND - The playground next to Hermon Elementary School got a small but extremely important facelift recently. After a recreation/playground inspector did a recent evaluation he recommended that we remove the crushed rock and replace it with engineered wood chips. We solicited bids for that service and local contractor Gardner Construction was the only firm that submitted a bid.

Their work was phenomenal and has really given the facility a great facelift. Speaking of the playground I have asked Recreation Director Michelle Thayer to look at options to improve the playground and make it appropriate for the children who use it.

If you have ideas please share them with Michelle @ thayerm@hermon.net.

By the way Gardner's bid was for \$0.00! Thank you Gardner Construction for your commitment to our youth and Recreation Program.

Howard Kroll,
Town Manager

From the Council Chair...

I hope this issue of the Hermon Connection finds you well and looking forward to several exciting community events that will take place in 2017. The Council wants to ensure your safe travel which is why there has been such a priority on paving our roads the past few years, including Route 2 in front of the High School, Coldbrook Road, and Newburgh Road, as well as extending the sidewalk to the High School.

The Council identified important goals to accomplish in 2016-2017 including safety improvements at the intersection of Route 2 and the Annis Road. You may have noticed some of this preliminary work on Miller Hill. As the Town continues to grow, we are seeing a troubling rise in the number of accidents on Miller Hill for two reasons. The first cause of accidents is due to commuters running the stop sign at the end of Annis Road resulting in several high speed T-bone accidents. Route 2 is a State road and any changes to the surface and signage require approval from the Maine Department of Transportation. The Town Council worked with Scott Perkins, Public Works Director, to petition the MDOT for a short-term solution and received approval for larger stop signs on both sides of the Miller Hill intersection, warning signs before the stop signs, and a blinking red light on the Annis Road stop sign in 2016.

The second leading cause of accidents at the Route 2/Annis Road intersection is commuters turning left onto Route 2 from the Annis Road and colliding with vehicles in the travel lane. How does this happen? When Route 2 travelers use the breakdown lane to turn right onto the Annis Road, they create a blind spot for commuters waiting to turn left at the Annis Road/Route 2 intersection and some assume it is safe to pull out, often missing a second vehicle in the travel lane. This mistake leads to multiple injuries and thousands of dollars in damage each year. In order to address this problem, the Council has placed a programmable message board halfway up Miller Hill directing travelers to merge left before the top of the hill. White guidelines have been painted before the summit of Miller Hill and the Sherriff's Department has increased enforcement through this intersection.

The long term plan for the Route 2 intersection is to redesign this part of the road and fund the work through a Federal and State safety grant. The MDOT Safety Division approached the Town of Hermon with a draft design of the intersection which we approved. Preliminary engineering will begin in 2017 to fine tune the suggested improvements. As the construction plan advances, we ask Hermon residents and visitors to please be careful at this intersection and obey traffic rules:

Please comply with posted stop signs;

Please merge left before you crest Miller Hill;

Please do not pull out on Route 2 from the Annis Road if you are not able to see the travel lane.

The Hermon Council takes your safety seriously. We hope you have a happy and safe new year. If you have any questions or concerns, I would encourage you to please contact one of our Council members. My email address is thomas70ss@yahoo.com.

Thank you,
Steve Thomas, Council Chair

Dog Licenses



2017 dog tags are available. Please license your dog before January 31. The State of Maine demands a \$25.00 late fee for any dog licensed after 1/31/17. If

your dog was licensed in 2016 you can go to hermon.net and follow the link to process the 2017 license on-line. If you no longer have the dog you licensed in 2016 please let us know here at the Town Office.

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<http://www.facebook.com/newagetanningandspa/>

Winter Driving Tips in Maine

Article By Sgt. Bobbie Pelletier

If you find yourself hitting the road during adverse conditions, consider these tips to stay safe on your journey.

1. **Inspect your vehicle.** Make sure you have adequate tires on the front and rear of your vehicle with good winter tread. Check your tire's air pressure.
2. **Make sure your vehicle and windows are clear of snow and ice.** Maintain good visibility of the road and of others. Check your windshield wipers and replace if needed.
3. **Drive slowly.** A good rule of thumb is to reduce speed by 50 percent in snowy conditions. Make sure you plan your trip accordingly and give yourself some extra time to reach your destination safely.
4. **Pack a winter travel safety kit.** Include a cell phone, ice scraper and brush, a tow rope, a blanket, a flashlight with good batteries, lock de-icer, matches, and even some snacks.
5. **Keep a light touch on the controls.** Smooth operation is the key to keeping control in slippery situations. Nervousness can lead to a hard clench of the steering wheel, which can result in loss of control. Consciously loosen your grasp or stretch out your fingers from time to time to help prevent that white-knuckled grip.
6. **Know how to recover from skids.** When braking on a slippery road, it's all too easy to "lock up" your wheels by stepping on the brakes a little too hard. If you start to skid, steer the vehicle gently in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go and don't touch your brakes. This used to be called "turning into the skid," but tests have shown that drivers often misinterpret these words in real-life situations.
7. **If you get stuck, stay in your vehicle.** Stay warm and wait for assistance. Make sure that your exhaust pipe is clear of any obstructions, including snow and ice; if you don't, carbon monoxide gas can build up inside the vehicle.
8. **Most of all DRIVE SAFE!!**

The Senator's Corner

We are off to a new legislative session in Augusta - new faces, new enthusiasm, new ideas! Many familiar issues are with us as well. We are always concerned about the budget, how to get taxpayers more for their money, how to run a caring but frugal ship of state. We need resources for education, roads and bridges, combatting the drug epidemic, but we cannot tax businesses too heavily, the engines of our economy. Government is a balancing act.

Over the next 2 months you will hear a lot about the referenda that passed November 8. They are *extremely* important. The citizens of Maine have spoken; this is as direct as democracy gets. The referenda create laws, but like all laws they can be changed by the legislature. With the usual legislative process new laws go through a long and torturous process of evaluation, committee hearings, more thought, debate in the House and Senate, and finally a review by the Governor. It is important to get laws right before they actually go into effect.

Referenda short circuit the usual legislative process. The voters see them on the ballot in a highly abbreviated snapshot (e.g. "shall marijuana be legal?"). They are accompanied by a legal blueprint but there are invariably inconsistencies, financial questions and sometimes even constitutional issues. The November 8th referenda have all these potential problems.

I have a number of questions about marijuana (#1) – its control, taxation and tests for driving under the influence. Referendum #2 imposes a 3% surtax on people earning over \$200K, with the money to go to education. I have heard from a number of people in Hermon that this is unfair to some of our most productive citizens. The minimum wage referendum (#4) passed by a large margin but the question of whether increasing the tax on tipped workers will help or hurt them is very alive.

I am delighted to be able to represent Hermon again in the State Senate. There will be many opportunities for Maine citizens to comment as the referenda go through the legislative process. Please contact me if you have any questions about these or any other issues. I like hearing from you.

Geoff Gratwick, 947-0637 (home); geoff.gratwick@legislature.maine.gov



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Article by: Scott Perkins

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HOMEOWNERS DO YOU QUALIFY FOR A PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION?



Homestead Exemption: Hermon residents already receiving the Homestead Property Tax Exemption in the amount of \$15,000 will see this amount increase in your 2017 tax bill to \$20,000.

36 M.R.S. §683; LD 1019, c. 267

New Hermon residential property owners: Do you qualify for a homestead exemption? Go to the website listed below to download an application or pick one up at the Town

Office; qualification requirements are listed on application.

<https://www1.maine.gov/revenue/forms/property/apps/homesteadapp.pdf>

All applications should be returned to the Assessing office by April 1, 2017

Veteran Exemption: Any residential property owner who is a veteran 62 years or older, or the widow of a veteran who would be 62 years or older; served during a recognized war time period and is not already receiving the exemption may pick up an application at the town office or download one at:

<https://www1.maine.gov/revenue/forms/property/apps/>

Applications should be returned to the Assessing Office by April 1, 2017 with a copy of a DD214 or other official form verifying dates of entry and separation.

RECOGNIZED PERIODS:

- **World War I - April 6, 1917 to November 11, 1918, inclusive.**
- **World War I - (service in Russia) - April 6, 1917 to March 31, 1920, inclusive.**
- **World War II - December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946, inclusive.**
- **Korean Campaign - June 27, 1950 to January 31, 1955, inclusive.**
- **Vietnam War – February 28, 1961 to May 7, 1975 (active duty after February 27, 1961 and before May 8, 1975, regardless of the number of days.)**
- **Persian Gulf War – August 2, 1990 to the date that the US Government recognizes as the end of that war period (active duty)**
- **Other Recognized Service Periods – From August 24, 1982 to July 31, 1984 and from December 20, 1989 to January 31, 1990.**

HERMON BUSINESS OWNERS

The Assessing office will mail out in February the annual Personal Property Declaration Forms, Letter of instruction and personal property itemized assessment file. The mailing requires by law under State of Maine Property Taxation Title 36 Sec. 706 taxpayers to furnish the Assessor a true and perfect list of what they possess on the first day of April. The 706 or Declaration Form requests business owners to complete the forms and return to the Assessing Staff by April 15th. The completed form provides the Assessor with your current information allowing to correct the assessment list of items you may have removed or purchased during the year, or if you have sold or relocated the business. The letter also instructs businesses who qualify for the **Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE)** are to send in a new application with any items they feel qualify.

For additional information, please visit the Assessing Departments webpage at www.hermon.net.

Daisy Girl Scout Troop 862

Article By Tiffany Howard

Photo By Michelle Thayer



Nine 1st graders from, **Daisy Girl Scout Troop 862**, have completed a Girl Scout journey, "5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for animals".

The Troop learned to care for animals and ourselves while building confidence and having fun. The girls have been creative with telling their own stories about caring for animals and themselves. In using the knowledge they have gained they needed to think of a way to improve a habitat for an animal. We built bird feeders to hang in our backyards and painted this bird house to hang on the recreation trail for the community to enjoy. Part of this journey is to teach others about caring for animals.

We want to pass the message on to the community that animals are important for many reasons and are a small part of bringing balance to our ecosystem, which, we learned about during our visit as a troop to the Maine Wildlife Park.

Please take a peaceful walk to enjoy the Hermon Recreational Trail and notice the homes along the way for the wildlife including our brightly colored, hand painted bird house!

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THE HERMON HIGH SCHOOL JROTC BATTALION CANOES THE PENOBSCOT

Article and Photograph by Tayler Maglioizzi



The calm shores and low tide of the Penobscot River on the morning of October 5th meant one thing for the Hermon High School JROTC battalion; cadets were able to be lead on canoes by the Penobscot River Keepers down the length of the water. Students of the program traveled with volunteers from the non-profit organization to the Bangor and Brewer Sewage Water Treatment Plants. These locations were chosen to enrich the education of students in a hands-on manner in the heart of the community.

Docking at the sewage treatment plants, the cadets toured the facilities and were informed about the purpose behind each facility, the responsibilities of the employees, and the job of each machine. Cadets also learned about the Clean Water Act that helped put regulations in place to clean up the Penobscot River and bodies of water nationwide. Before the act, the Penobscot River was the fifth most polluted river in the country. Now, it is clean enough to see to the bottom of the riverbed from the viewpoint of the canoes. “At the Bangor Treatment Plant, our mission is to take in wastewater from

Bangor, Hampden, and Hermon, and we take that wastewater and treat it using methods called primary and secondary treatment. The water we treat that is discharged to the river is significantly cleaner than the water when it arrives and is cleaner than the river itself,” stated tour leader and instrument technician Keefe Cyr.

The Hermon High School JROTC Battalion will continue to participate in tours with the Penobscot River Keepers for years to come.

HERMON HAWK JROTC BATTALION MARCHES IN THE VETERAN’S DAY PARADE

*Article by Cadet 2LT Tayler Maglioizzi
Photograph by Todd Maglioizzi*



Standing in formation and taking the first steps of the Veteran’s Day parade, cadets of the Hermon Hawk JROTC Battalion created an essence of respect for service members that was widely recognized by spectators. Marching alongside veterans for the entirety of the parade, cadets of the battalion displayed unwavering appreciation for the men and women who have served.

Students in the JROTC program are taught leadership skills through military values and are given many opportunities to serve the community. As professional leaders throughout the entirety of the parade, cadets displayed the selfless service and duty they have been taught to uphold.

“It really makes us proud to see you (the battalion) doing something like that,” remarked Korean War Veteran Bill Dean who was a spectator at the parade.

“I am proud to see all of the support of the community for the parade and the cadets and all the veterans that served,” said fourth year cadet Michael Lana.

The Hermon Hawk Battalion will be marching in the Memorial Day parade in the spring.

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Time: 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.
Fee: \$3.00 per person

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Wednesday - January 18
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Fruit Cocktail
Cupcakes

Wednesday - February 15
Taco Bar with all the fixings!
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Spanish Rice
Dessert



Community Calendar

The Town of Hermon's website has a Community Calendar for events, meetings, etc. If you would like to list your community event, please contact the town office at 848-1010.

New Website

With the services of Sutherland-Weston, the staff of the town and school have been working very hard to build a new website for the Town. We expect to introduce it on January 25, 2017. We hope you take the time to browse through everything that is on it. Our main focus has been to make it as user friendly as possible while still as informative as the existing site. This new website will also be much more compatible with tablets, laptops and the ever popular cell phones! If you have a business in the town, please check out the business directory to make sure we have all of your information correct. We would appreciate any suggestions you might have, especially anything you would like us to add for your convenience.