

A Dry Summer

By John Petrin, Town Manager

Too bad we cannot work with Mother Nature to space out the rain during the year. After having a spring with too much water we now have a summer with almost no water. We went from major flooding problems in the region to near drought conditions. Hopefully the rain will again start soon.

Until that time, we must live with water restrictions. The Town currently has only one source of water being the wells at the Hopkinton Reservoir. The water drawn from those wells are treated at the water treatment plant on Howe Street. The plant is operated by Woodard and Curran, an outside contractor who has the resources and capacity to operate a plant of this level. Five-sixths of the water drawn through this plant goes to Ashland residents. The other one-sixth belongs to Hopkinton and they use the water as part of their total supply as they have other wells in Town. This treatment center was developed as a regional approach between the two towns. Hopkinton pays one-sixth of the cost to operate.

We are currently in the process of trying to develop a new water supply from the Waushakum area off of Shore Road. This will hopefully add 50% to our current supply of water. Our current level of use is fast approaching the 100% level of the current water system. The other problem in having only one water supply is what happens when something goes wrong. Right now, we would have to rely on emergency connections with the Towns of Southborough and Framingham to purchase water from the MWRA system. This is a costly proposition. This new well will certainly improve our future. The issue is that siting a water supply is a major undertaking in this region of the Country as water is a commodity that is severely strained in areas. The State looks at the big picture and determines who can access the water in various basin areas around the State.

Until we can activate a new well, we will continue to work with the Departments of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Conservation/Recreation (DCR) as to our water usage at the Hopkinton Reservoir. The aquifer that supplies our water is under the Hopkinton Reservoir and certainly the water above ground affects the aquifer. Our water restrictions are tied to the level of water in the Reservoir. When the water level decreases to certain points, then we must go into forced conservation mode with these restrictions. If it gets really bad, then we will be forced to supplement our water with purchased water from MWRA as we had to do three years ago.

I continue to be awed by the level of volunteerism in Town. I wish to once again thank a lady who has put in innumerable hours volunteering with our GIS system. Lynne Fielding was awarded a Civic Pride Award by the Selectmen last year. She has continued to increase the capacity of our system. Staff cannot thank Lynne enough for what she has done to improve our day-to-day lives in operations.

Summer would not be same without the Ashland Day Concerts. We are now down to one concert left. The eight concerts to date have been phenomenal. We wish to thank the Ashland Day Committee for continuing to put these concerts together. I see folks like Bill Gath, Donna Magnani and Gina Gemma week after week at the field. A special thanks goes to Michael Duca for being a volunteer extraordinaire. He puts a lot of time in coordinating the bands and making sure that the gazebo is ready for them. The award winning Ashland Lions are always there to meet your food and drink needs. You can also satisfy your cravings for a good chance at winning a lottery. The Friends of the Council on Aging are at their booth weekly selling raffle tickets. They provide so much to keeping our elders needs in mind. We are fortunate to have all these folks giving to the Town. Thanks to all those who financially support the series.

Please remember the Food Pantry for donations of food and household goods. Donations can be made by dropping off items at public buildings such as the Post Office. Your consideration is appreciated. Please also consider a financial donation to **The Ashland Emergency Fund**, at P.O. Box 112, Ashland, MA 01721. The Fund supports residents in need and the Food Pantry. The Board of Selectmen continues to coordinate food drives with the cooperation of Market Basket and Shaw's. They had one scheduled for Father's Day on June 20. Happy Father's Day.

To follow what is happening in your community, follow the events and happenings in the MetroWest Daily News and WACA-TV as they provide superb coverage. Our website at www.AshlandMass.com has been recently revamped. There is much information on the site for you to peruse. We are the recent recipient of the Common Cause Massachusetts 2010 e-Government Award with Distinction for our website. We are proud recipients of their highest award.

