

Spring Events

By John Petrin, Town Manager

Town Election is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17. All polling locations will be located at Ashland High School on East Union Street. Having the elections centralized in one location is a change from prior elections. This change to a central polling location will cost us less in the long run to operate and it hopefully will eliminate any confusion as to which school to go to during the election. The High School offers plenty of parking and the arrangement of the gym, being set aside from the rest of the school, offers less of a distraction for students and staff. The candidates will probably like it more as they do not have to split themselves between locations.

The ballot will include the various offices of the Town to be elected. There is only one contested race on the ballot, unless of course someone starts a sticker campaign. That race is for a single seat on the School Committee where two people have filed their papers. This compares to five contested races three years ago. The polls will open at 7:00 am and close at 8:00 pm on May 17. The polls will be run by your fellow residents who gladly make their precious time available so that our democratic process can run smoothly. We offer our sincerest thanks to these people. I hope that you offer your thanks as you pass through the polls that day. Please come out and vote at your local elections. Hopefully we do better than what we are seeing in local communities with less than 15%. It seems that we get more services on a day-to-day basis on a local level. It is too bad that the apathy level seems to be at the highest where the services seem to have more of an impact to your families. Please mark the date and consider voting in your local elections.

The Annual Town Meeting this year will take place on Wednesday, May 4 in the Auditorium at the High School and will include 19 articles. The Town budget of approximately \$56 Million will be presented. In addition to budget articles, voters will be asked to approve annual authorizations for items such as revolving accounts and actions that Selectmen may take without Town Meeting approval. The articles and a brief description are available elsewhere in this issue. Town Meeting is the Town's legislative body. The Finance Committee has been working on a forecast discussing the Town's financial future. The Town has had to eliminate and reduce for the last six years. This is in response to expenses increasing faster than resources. Hopefully, Ashland residents will turn out in numbers to vote this year. This is your opportunity to have a say in the direction of the Town government.

By the time this article is printed, the Boston Marathon will have occurred on Monday, April 18. We will once again have over 25,000 runners passing through Town with many spectators lining Route 135. This is a major undertaking in which our departments take a lot of time to prepare for. I wish all the runners the best and hope that they have a safe run. Thanks to our public safety and public works departments for all they do to allow us to shine on that day.

The following runners are not only enduring the emotional and physical toll of running 26.2 miles in the Boston Marathon, but have also agreed to raise \$2,500 each in the process to benefit local community programs. Thanks to Mary Beth Prozinski, Andrew Gillis, Dorcas Rushton, Hayley Marshall, Heather Jack, Howard Wood, Jacquie Ham, Jake Sullivan, Jay Crochiere, Jeff Rushton, Jennifer Mersino, John Santiago, Kelley Joseph, Kiki Hopkins, Meg Thompson, Pat Mangiacotti-Prucher, Paul Wilkinson, Sara Steele-Rogers and Tom Donovan for putting their bodies on the line and for raising funds to help needy causes in Ashland. A very special thanks to Dr. Leslie Marci for coordinating this entire operation. It took a lot of work to put this together.

Please remember that Memorial Day is fast approaching as well. Please remember to mark your calendars for Monday, May 30 for Ashland's Annual observance. Our veterans groups do a great job in organizing this event. It is one of those events that define the character of our community.

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.

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 recipient of the Common Cause Massachusetts 2010 e-Government Award with Distinction for our website. We are proud recipients of their highest award.