



Town of North Andover Quarterly Newsletter

JULY 2008 Issue 8

News from the Town Manager's Office

Town Receives Bond Rating Increase

In June of 2008, Standard and Poor's, a financial analysis company, upgraded their bond rating for the Town of North Andover from 'A+' to 'AA', based on the town's "extremely strong economic characteristics, good management practices and low debt burden". The rating a town receives is based on the assessment by the rating agency of the probability that the municipal government will be able to pay back money that it borrows. The definitions used by Standard and Poor's to describe an 'A' and 'AA' rating are indicative of this analysis:

A: An obligation rated 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is still strong.

AA: An obligation rated 'AA' differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is very strong.

Generally speaking, the higher the bond rating a municipality has, the lower the interest rate it has to pay when borrowing funds. In North Andover's case, there have been seven bond rating upgrades since 2000 as shown on the graph to the right:

Factors that rating agencies look when determining bond ratings include:

- The overall economic strength of the community in terms of property values and personnel income: With this factor, North Andover has always done well.

- The total outstanding debt currently in place: Relative to other communities of similar characteristics, North Andover's debt levels are judged to be reasonable and appropriate.
- The financial management of the community including qualifications of the management team, prudent budget development, and the development of written financial policies: North Andover has made significant progress in this area in recent years.
- The amount of funds the community keeps in reserves to address unanticipated emergencies or budget short falls. In this category, while North Andover has made some headway, we still do not have the necessary reserve levels to move up to the highest bond ratings.

Standard & Poor		Moody's	
Rating	Year Achieved	Rating	Year Achieved
AAA		Aaa	
AA+		Aa3	
AA	2008	Aa2	
AA-		Aa1	
A+	2004	A1	2004
A	2002	A2	2002
A-	2000	A3	2000
BBB		Baa1	

News from the School Superintendent's Office

With the close of the school year, I am pleased to report 326 students graduated from North Andover High School in a wonderful ceremony that took place on June 6. High school graduation is a milestone that marks the time when young people move toward independence and begin to make important decisions that will shape their future. Our students have demonstrated that they are successful, goal oriented, and able to achieve at a high level. Information from this class shows that more than 90% of our graduates are headed off to college. Some will further their education by enrolling in career education programs or prep schools, and some will join the work force or military. Congratulations to the Class of 2008.

John McAleer, Principal of the Thomson School, is retiring at the end of June. Over the past ten years, John has been asked to serve as principal of four elementary schools in North Andover. In each of his assignments, he brought administra-

tive skills, clear focus, outstanding leadership, and a sense of joy for his work. We thank him for all he has done and wish him the very best in retirement.

High School Assistant Principal, Gregg Gilligan, has agreed to serve as Interim Principal of the Thomson School for next year. We are very excited that Gregg has accepted this position. He has the skills, the values, the energy, and the personal qualities needed to be an outstanding principal. We look forward to his leadership at the Thomson School.

With the vote of Town Meeting, the School Committee's budget was funded. Principals are already busy planning for next year. Programs are being put in place, student schedules are being developed, and staffing decisions are being made. So, while we are looking forward to a slower pace in the summer, we are also getting ready and looking forward to a new school year.

News from the Board of Selectmen

The Board of Selectmen would like to extend its sincere congratulations to the Class of 2008 upon their graduation from the North Andover High School. This is the first class to have attended all four years at our beautiful new High School. We are especially impressed by the plans of the graduating seniors to go on to colleges, join the military or go directly into the workforce. Some of the colleges that our students will be attending

include Boston College, Yale University, University of Massachusetts, Brown University, Penn State University, Cornell University, Syracuse University, Boston University, Providence College and the University of San Francisco. Best of luck to all in the Class of 2008 as you embark upon this next stage in your life's journey.

News from the Health Department

Lyme disease

Lyme disease can be a devastating, permanently debilitating and even fatal disease, if not detected early or not treated properly. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that approximately 200,000 people acquire this disease each year. In North Andover, there are many cases reported annually.

Lyme disease is caused by a bacteria spread by the bite from tiny, infected deer ticks, and may occur during any time of the year. People and animals can have Lyme disease. Approximately 50% of ticks are infected with the pathogen that causes Lyme disease. The tick usually must be attached to a person for at least 24 hours before it can spread the germ.

Early stage (days to week):

- The most common early system is a rash where the tick was attached. The rash spreads outward, clears up in the center and then looks like a donut. Flu-like symptoms, such as fever, headache, stiff neck, sore and aching muscles and joints, fatigue and swollen glands, may occur.

Symptoms of Lyme disease usually begin to appear from 3-30 days after being bitten by an infected tick.

Late stages (weeks to years):

- If untreated, people with Lyme disease can develop late-stage symptoms even if they never had the rash. The joints, nervous system and heart are most commonly affected.

Prevention:

- Wear long, light colored pants tucked into your socks or boots, and a long-sleeved shirt.
- Use a repellent such as DEET or Permethrin, according to the instructions given on the product label.
- Stay on cleared trails when walking or hiking.
- Talk to your veterinarian about tick control options (tick collars, repellants) for your pets.
- Check yourself, and your children and pets for ticks after spending time outside.
- Remove the tick(s) with fine-point tweezers.

News from the Town Clerk's Office

While we enjoy the vacation time of summer, the Clerk's Office is actively preparing for a busy fall election time. There will be a State Primary Election on Tuesday September 16, 2008. The polls will be open from 7:00AM until 8:00PM with all voting taking place at the North Andover High School. This is a partisan election and you need to choose a party ballot. Offices on this ballot include State Representative, State Senator, U.S. Congress, U.S. Senator, Governor's Council, and Register of Probate. The last day to register to vote to be eligible to vote in this election is Wednesday August 27, 2008. The Town Clerk's Office will be open until 8:00PM.

We anticipate a record number of absentee ballot applications for the Presidential Election on Tuesday November 4, 2008. You need to be registered to vote by October 15, 2008 to vote in this election. My office will be open until 8:00PM. If you changed your address, may not have answered the census, or have not voted recently, please contact our office to verify your voter status. This can be done at any time and will eliminate complications on Election Day.

The Presidential Election may be the first election for students who have turned 18. Please remember to register to vote. Students and voters who are unable to get to the polls or who will be away from Town can request an absentee ballot. Please do this early to allow us to prepare for the anticipated volume. Family members can apply for absentee ballots.

All voters vote at the North Andover High School 430 Osgood Street. The polls will be open from 6:00AM until 8:00PM for the Presidential Election on November 4, 2008. All schools will be closed. We are only a phone call (978)688-9501, e-mail (jbradshaw@townofnorthandover.com), or fax (978)688-9557 away. Look for updates on the Town's website at www.townofnorthandover.com for up to date information. We appreciate all your assistance and cooperation.

Remember that the Clerk's Office is a Passport Acceptance Facility. We do passports 9:00AM until 4:00 PM Monday through Friday. Forms are available at www.travel.state.gov. Please give us a call with any questions.

News from the Police Department

North Andover Police Department staff members have conducted several community meetings over the last few months. The purpose is to offer our residents a Neighborhood Crime Watch Program which has proven to be quite successful throughout the country. This program is a cooperative effort between citizens and police to identify problems or potential problems.

Neighborhood Crime Watch gets citizens directly involved in their own neighborhood issues.

An active, properly run Neighborhood Watch Program, can enhance the feeling of safety in the neighborhood. This can simply be piece of mind knowing that when you go away on vacation, or even out for an evening; a neighbor or neighbors are watching your house for you. It may be knowing that neighbors are watching out for strange cars or persons in the area, possibly while your children are out playing in the area.

Being aware of the goings on in the neighborhood, coupled with education from your Police Department, you will greatly decrease the likelihood of becoming a victim of a crime.

If residents would like to arrange a community meeting in their neighborhood email us at crimewatch@napd.us to make arrangements. Our officers recently conducted Community Meetings in two neighborhoods, and the feedback was quite positive. Typically, a resident would volunteer to host the meeting and together with neighbors would notify others of the meeting and gauge interest. If the number of potential attendees exceeds what the host feels is acceptable, the police department will arrange for another facility to host the meeting, such as one of the schools.

Also, per town By-law Chapter 158, persons soliciting door-to-door within the town of North Andover must first register with the police department and have proper identification. Residents who do not wish to have solicitors at their residence may pick up a card at the police department which clearly states; **"No Solicitors or Canvassers Invited."** This card displayed at the main entrance to the residence is proper notice that solicitation is not permitted. Those properly registered with the police department are advised of this and must abide by the request or be subject to permit revocation. Always contact the police department if a solicitor is seen in your neighborhood, so that they can be checked out.

Another Town Bylaw that can assist in maintaining a good neighborhood is Chapter 88 governing the control of dogs. Under this bylaw, all dogs when away from their property must be restrained by a leash and if a dog is creating a nuisance by excessive barking or bothering pedestrian, the owners of those animals can be fined. In addition, homeowners and landlords should be aware that many property insurance companies do not provide coverage when certain types of dogs deemed to be inherently dangerous are kept on the property. You should check with your insurance company regarding this possible financial exposure should your dog harm a person or another dog.

The early reports on Neighborhood Crime Watch have been quite positive. We look forward to maintaining this partnership as we move forward to build a stronger and safer community. You can contact us with any concerns, comments or information at crimewatch@napd.us or call the police department at (978)683-3168.