

## WINDOWS ON WAKEFIELD GOVERNMENT

Henry David Thoreau writes in his classic book WALDEN “*Things do not change, we change.*” Such is the case with how the public interacts with Town Government. The building permits, pit passes, birth certificates, assessment and taxation issues are the same as they have always been (expect more expensive). How the citizenry avails itself of these government services or obtains information has changed. Cognizant of these changes, the Board of Selectmen has adopted new policies to better service the Citizens of Wakefield and the world beyond.

### 1) THE EVOLUTION TOWARD E-GOVERNMENT

As recently as six years ago less than half of the municipalities in Massachusetts had an official web site. Today, over ninety percent support websites as valuable resources for constituents to obtain information. Aware that the internet has become deeply woven in the lives of most Wakefieldians, the Selectmen established a web site enhancement committee to assist me in improving the town’s electronic presence. This dedicated group of individuals will help reshape the e-face of Wakefield. We are certainly open to your suggestions. Please email me your suggestions at [smaio@wakefield.ma.us](mailto:smaio@wakefield.ma.us) or better yet post it on our current website at [www.wakefield.ma.us](http://www.wakefield.ma.us). This committee will continue to meet and hopes to roll out the new website by year’s end.

### 2) “*The times they are a- changing*” Bob Dylan

The Board of Selectmen has agreed to alter the hours that town hall will be open from traditional 9-5 Monday to Friday to the following:

M,T,W	8:00 AM to 4:30 PM
Thursday	8:00 AM to 7:00 PM
Friday	8:00 AM to 12:30 PM

Not only will these hours better accommodate the changing lifestyles of today’s two income families but it will also save money in energy costs. Again, we look forward to your comments regarding these new hours and promise that the same great service will be delivered to all who visit us. New hours to begin on September 8, 2008.

### MAKE SURE YOU STRIKE THE RIGHT CORD

Over the next few months many of you will be purchasing firewood for use in your homes to combat the high cost of fuel. Whether you have used your fireplace and/or

wood burning stove consistently or whether this is the first time in many years, please make sure that it is serviced by a professional prior to its use.

In the purchase of your wood make sure that you receive a delivery ticket or sales invoice which included the following:

- 1) Name and address of the seller
- 2) Your name and address
- 3) The quantity delivered in cubic feet or meters
- 4) The date of delivery
- 5) The price.

Beware of those who would try to sell you a “cord” or truckload of wood as these terms are misleading and contrary to Massachusetts General Laws. If you have any questions or feel that you have been misled please call us at 781-246-6390 or email [smaio@wakefield.ma.us](mailto:smaio@wakefield.ma.us). We will contact our Sealer of Weights and Measures and have the situation investigated.

### CHANGE IN THE WEATHER

Over the past few months we have witnessed many erratic and violent examples of the power of nature. These instances have led to a number of meetings with many of the department heads as to how do we handle an emergency? How do we ensure continuity of Government? How do we care for any displaced citizens?

I wish to ensure the citizens of Wakefield that we do have emergency plans and will continue to hone their effectiveness. Frequently, the police and fire participate in mock emergencies.

Closer to home, the primary shelter is the Memorial High School as it has large open areas, back up power, kitchen facilities and a store of cots and personal hygiene kits. A group of citizens including town employees have been trained by the Red Cross and are ready to assist in the staffing of the shelters. Other shelters include the Galvin Middle school, the Northeast regional Vocational School, the Americal Civic Center, the Dolbeare and Woodville Schools. You are never “ready” for these catastrophes but we are prepared.

Enjoy the last few days of summer and best of luck to all the students returning to classes.

Stephen P. Maio

Town Administrator

PS: For all of the High School English class students, who had to read Walden as part of their summer assignment, feel free to use my article as an example of the timelessness of Thoreau.