

CLERKS CORNER 2.2019 FEBRUARY

The month of February is the shortest month, but did you know that its length varied from year to year? It was in 45 B.C. that Julius Caesar decided that February would have 28 days and 1 extra day every four years to align the calendar with the seasons. February is also the hardest month for most people to learn to spell let alone pronounce correctly. Not only does February include the Massachusetts school vacation week and snowy cold weather, but there are many other special days in the shortest month; Groundhog Day, Chinese New Year, Valentine's Day and even Superbowl day. Many famous people were born in February: Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Gertrude Stein, Rosa Parks, Elizabeth Taylor, Thomas Edison, Galileo Galilei, Charles Darwin and Laura Ingalls Wilder to name a few.

I love February but not just because it's my birthday month but as Town Clerk in Wenham, I've found even more reasons to enjoy February. The hectic pace of dog registration and census processing is over. However, if anyone has missed the January deadline, residents can and should continue to register their dogs and complete the census. Both are important tasks for all responsible residents. Mid-February is also the much-anticipated announcement of the winner of the Cutest Dog in Wenham.

The preparations for the Annual Town Election intensify in February. Those who wish to be elected to a Town position are required to file nomination papers and return them to the Clerk's office with signatures from registered voters. The number of signatures varies by community and is based on the number of votes cast in the past Gubernatorial race. Wenham candidates are now required to obtain at least 21 signatures, whereas in the past it was just 20. At one time, we had as many as 20 elected positions. Currently we have only 10 boards of elected officials in Wenham; Board of Assessors, Board of Health, Board of Selectmen, Housing Authority, Library Trustee, Moderator, Planning Board, Regional School Committee, Town Clerk and Water Commission.

February is also the month that we tidy up all the records for the previous year. All the deaths, burials, marriages and births are reviewed and processed for posterity. Here in Wenham we index and encapsulate in archival sleeves all vital record certificates. We not only index as Wenham has done since 1642 which is by handwriting the data in the large books maintained in the vault, but we also now electronically index this data. These indexes, especially the electronic versions allow us to access more readily this information.

As much as I love the month of February, I have to say that each month in the Clerk's office has something exciting to accomplish. Looking forward to April, I would like to remind all Wenham voters that our Annual Town Meeting is scheduled for Saturday April 6th at 1pm at the Buker School. The Warrant Hearing is scheduled for Monday April 1st at 7pm at the Buker School. Both are open to the public. The Warrant Hearing is an opportunity to get a better understanding of all articles that will be voted on at Town Meeting. The Annual Town Election will be held on Thursday April 11th at Town Hall from 7am to 8pm. If you will not be able to vote on Election Day, please contact the Clerk (978-468-5520 x1, dbucco@wenhamma.gov) for information on absentee voting.

Dianne Kaplan Bucco was elected the Wenham Town Clerk April 11, 2014 and has achieved the designation of Certified Municipal Clerk in 2017. For more information on the clerk's office, please go to www.wenhamma.gov or follow the Wenham Town Clerk on Facebook.