

The Official Town of Dunn Newsletter

Fall 1991

Board Proposes 5% Levy Increase

The proposed 1992 budget for the town of Dunn asks for a 5 percent increase to the tax levy. If residents adopt the levy, which will be voted on November 26 at 7:30 p.m. in the town hall, homeowners will be paying \$1.49 per \$1000 assessed value of their home to the town. In 1990, before the revaluation of the town when assessment ratios were at 88 percent, residents paid \$1.92 per \$1000. This year, with the reassessment completed, homes in Dunn are at 106 percent of the state's equalized value, well within the 10 percent range of 100 percent allowed by the state.

As a whole, spending is proposed to be up by about \$84,000 (11 percent) over this year. Areas seeing significant spending increases are: \$14,000 for improved public safety and fire protection, \$11,500 in public works for contaminated soil clean-up near the town garage and salaries, \$16,000 for increased debt, \$34,000 for roads and \$66,000 towards a new town dump truck.

Income from intergovernmental sources is expected to be down a little while the other sources -- regulation and compliance fees,

continued on page 7

Budget meeting to adopt levy is set for November 26

A special meeting of the town of Dunn will be held Tuesday, Nov. 26, 1991 at 7:30 p.m. at the Dunn Town Hall, 4156 CTH B, McFarland. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- I. approve the 1991 tax levy,
- II. authorize expenditures of more than \$10,000 for highways,
- III. consider amount to reserve for a building fund for a new town garage and for future development of Dunn Heritage Park.

All voters in the town of Dunn are encouraged to attend this meeting and vote on the issues. This is your opportunity to ask questions about where your tax money is going, and to have a say in spending and setting the levy.

By state law, town residents vote on the town tax levy, and grant permission for the board to make any highway expenditures in excess of \$10,000.

Agendas and announcements for all special town meetings are posted at the following locations: in the window at the town hall; at Christy's Landing, 2952 Waubesa Ave.; and at the Gwik Stop, 1888 Barber Dr.



The Lake Waubesa Conservation Association presented a check for \$20,000 to the town of Dunn in September to help pay attorneys' fees in the fight against the Libby Landfill. Shown are (left to right): Scott Zimmermann, president, and Jan Zimmermann, executive director of the LWCA, and Ed Minihan, town chairperson.

Don't Fall for Property Tax Shell Game

by Edmond P. Minihan, Town Chairperson

Property values across Dane County have been escalating. If you are trying to sell your house, this is good news. If you wish to remain in your home, it should still be good news.

Unfortunately this situation provides the opportunity for many units of government and school districts to enter into an old shell game: "Lo and behold, the tax rate will hold steady or even go down." The fact that property owners will be paying more in taxes is never mentioned.

It is a cynical stance for public officials to take. Do they really think that the public is dumb enough to believe that they are getting a tax break when they see the dollar amount on their tax bill go up? Maybe they are more gullible in other places, but not in the town of Dunn. We have a long tradition of active participation by the residents of our town. Every year you vote to determine the local tax levy when you meet

in assembly at the budget meeting.

The budget is the responsibility of the Dunn Town Board, along with the clerk and treasurer. The levy — the amount of tax money collected — is your responsibility. You determine how much tax money is going to be used for town operations; you have direct control over this part of your tax bill. Unfortunately, it is less than five percent of the bill. But you can participate in determining much of the remainder of that tax bill.

Our system of government, throughout its levels, is accountable to the citizens it represents. Accountability depends on an informed electorate. Beyond attending the annual town budget meeting, the following are some suggestions for making sure you are fully informed about what is going on in terms of your property tax:

1. Subscribe to your local

paper — the paper responsible for covering the events in your school district's community. In Dunn, this is the McFarland, Oregon, and Stoughton papers. It is the best way to be informed about the school district's operations and proposals. Their coverage on these issues is far better than any other source. Remember that the local school district is close to 80 percent of your property tax.

continued on back page

TOWN of DUNN
4156 Hwy. B
McFarland, WI 53558

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Oregon, WI 53575
Permit No. 78

Air Quality Rules Limit Open Burning

Backyard burning of household wastes is restricted to only "dry combustible rubbish" such as leaves, twigs, untreated and unpainted wood, cardboard and paper, according to the DNR. Regulations specifically make it illegal to burn:

- ✓ garbage,
- ✓ plastic or rubber products, including plastic-covered food containers
- ✓ oily substances (including greasy rags),
- ✓ asphalt,
- ✓ pesticide or paint containers,
- ✓ wet rubbish.

Protecting human health and the environment is the primary concern behind DNR regulations, according to Linda Wiese, DNR air management supervisor.

Burning garbage in your backyard can release toxic heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, chromium, mercury and arsenic into the air. Heavy metals are used in plastics as stabilizers and ultraviolet inhibitors. Some of them cause neurological disorders and some cause cancer.

Even burning leaves, grass and branches produces smoke laden with molds, fungi and other irritants that can make breathing difficult for people with allergies or asthma. A better solution for these materials is to compost them and add them to your yard or garden as fertilizer.

Discarded food scraps, coffee grounds and other wet rubbish can be added to the compost pile, while plastics, metals, glass, and newspaper can be recycled at the town's transfer site. These two solutions can greatly reduce the amount of waste generated by your household.

If you must burn some of your rubbish, be certain it's clean and dry — burning wet rubbish, including wet grass clippings or leaves, is illegal and can create a visibility hazard on nearby roads. The DNR recommends that you burn in the early evening. And be sure your burning site is located downwind of your neighbors.

Burn barrel complaints have increased since the cost of landfilling garbage went up. The town police chief will respond to calls on possible violations of the DNR regulations. If increased enforcement does not abate the problem, the town board will consider a local ordinance with stricter provisions and penalties. Please do what you can to help solve the burn barrel problems. The above information on DNR regulations, along with courtesy and respect for your neighbors, should be all that is necessary.

Parks Chair Wes Licht Retires

Wes Licht, Parks Commission chair and former town board member, retired this past July from the Parks Commission after serving 11 years.

Light along with Cal DeWitt, the only other previous parks chairman in Dunn's history, and a number of others in the late 1970s were drafters of the Dunn Open Space Plan, which has been the basis for Dunn's parks and historical preservation initiatives.

He is one of Dunn's original parks commission members, starting in 1979 when the commission was formed. During his tenure, the parks commission developed a comprehensive parks plan that listed Dunn's parks needs. Says Licht of his beginnings with public service, "I found the open space plan very interesting and exciting. Dunn has several very interesting woods, Indian mounds, wetlands, prairie remnants and I was concerned about maintaining those kinds of things in the town." Those things, he says, along with a desire to aid in the development of neighborhood parks and a community park have kept him on the commission.

Wes credits the active role the park commission has taken to ideas provided by Cal DeWitt, who he says "gave direction to me and the other members" of the first parks commission. "We have been fortunate to have many strong members on our parks commission. And it has always been extremely pleasurable for me to go to the meetings because the other people are interested in



the same goals."

During Wes's tenure the parks commission wrote a bike tour booklet, began a recycling program before recycling came into vogue, held annual Arbor Day family gatherings, conducted

roadside clean-ups and generally emphasized the importance of parks and Dunn's heritage.

"Many of our goals have been to help educate people that the most valuable part of Dunn is its natural resources and that there is a great value in open space, wetlands and roadsides," Wes said.

One of Wes's personal goals has been to see that Dunn develops a community park. He said he told himself that he was going to retire a few years ago, but continued on to see the completion of the purchase of the Dunn Heritage Park.

"I feel at ease giving up my position. I really felt it was time for someone else to lead and bring in new ideas." He adds, "I really feel the commission is in good hands with Elaine's leadership."

Wes teaches the 5th grade at Glendale Elementary School in Madison. He and his wife, Jane, raise horses on their small farm near McFarland.

Thank you, Wes, for providing outstanding leadership in the parks commission and helping us understand our rich natural heritage.

Change Requires Caution

by Steve Greb, Plan Commission Chairperson

During my youth, I spent the summers working on my uncle's farm in west-central Illinois. My uncle, like most farmers, is fiercely independent and is known to be temperamental (to put it mildly) at times. One day, we were repairing a piece of farm machinery; a plastic part had broken. As we were replacing the part, my uncle disgustedly informed me that "on earlier models, this piece was made of metal and would never have broken!" He continued with, "They charged me four dollars for this piece of junk and it probably cost them a nickel to make it." Just as we were about to complete the repair, my uncle's wrench slipped off the nut he was tightening, banging his knuckle.

A small amount of blood appeared on his greasy fist. I watched as the veins in his neck and forehead bulged out. I braced myself as his anger was about to boil over. He slowly turned to me, gritting his teeth, and said "Steve, I've seen a lot of changes in my life and I haven't liked a single God damn one of them!" For some reason, those harsh words stuck with me, even now,

more than twenty years later. I'm not implying that either my or the plan commission's outlook on change or growth is quite as extreme. I do believe that when we are faced with issues related to land use in our town we need to ask ourselves how these changes will directly and indirectly impact the human and natural resources of the township.

Many times, it's difficult to clearly measure what impacts a single land division will have on the town as a whole. Incremental increases in traffic, road wear, and noise and light pollution are hard to quantify. I call this *gradualism* — our inability to perceive small changes around us. The danger in this gradualism is that it's hard for anyone to get excited about the building of one house. It's not a big issue that galvanizes public concern, but collectively a number of these new buildings will quite clearly impact our town.

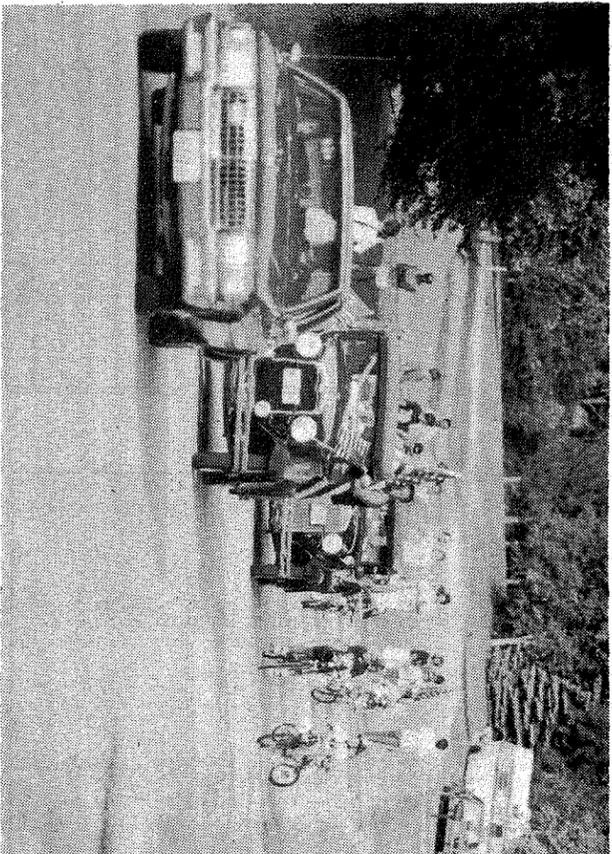
Fortunately, we have a strong land use plan to guide us in making decisions regarding rezoning and land division issues. The plan commission members take each

proposed change in land use quite seriously and try to determine the impacts of the change on the surrounding area and the township as a whole. I know many people perceive planning and land use policies as somewhat "dry" or abstract, but its important for all of us to understand how these policies actually influence our day-to-day lives.

Though many of us may not like the growth coming to our township, the plan commission will strive to minimize the impacts of this growth and work to protect our agricultural and environmental resources. I invite each of you to attend our monthly meeting of the plan commission. We meet the second Monday of each month and the agenda is posted at the town hall.

The Town of Dunn Newsletter
published twice yearly

Editors:
Paul Makt & Pammi Kasper



The Fourth of July was celebrated in style by the Simpson/Waubesa Heights neighborhood, including a children's parade to the park led by Police Chief Bob Berry with lights and siren.

Libby Landfill: Is It Over?

The 10-year battle to stop the siting of a landfill on Libby Road near Lake Waubesa is over — at least for the present.

On November 7, the Waste Facility Siting Board accepted Madison Landfill's arbitration package, but said MLI will have

to obtain local zoning approvals in order to build the landfill. This decision still leaves the door open for a landfill to be built on the site, but not until zoning for a landfill is approved. For that to happen, both the town of Blooming Grove and Dane County would have to approve a zoning change from Agricultural-1 to Agricultural-2, plus issue a conditional use permit.

Dane County has been firmly opposed to private landfill ownership in the county and has stated it will not approve zoning for a private landfill on that site, so it is unlikely the Libby Landfill will be built.

Nevertheless Robert Glebs, president of MLI, says he intends to seek the county's approval for the zoning change. At this time, that approval seems improbable. So far we have won the battle, but as long as zoning is the only string holding back construction of a landfill at that site, Libby remains a sleeping monster that may someday once again haunt the town.

Cooperation Beat the Libby Landfill

by Ed Minihan, Local Negotiating Committee Member

Despite all the attention the media paid to our victory over the Libby Landfill, they missed the real story. The real story is *who* won the battle. Over the past decade, nine town budget meetings have authorized the legal costs of this battle. Nearly \$100,000 of our town tax dollars have been expended on this fight (not the \$200,000 reported in the news). We were able to enlist the aid of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation to pick up nearly half of the legal costs. To their credit, the residents of the Waubesa Beach area have put up their own money, some of it from the savings of retirees. Their \$20,000+ contribution and nearly \$35,000 from the late Julia Boghoffs brings the expenditure of our side to nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

To put the town costs in perspective, the landfill effort cost as much as it does to resurface one and one-half miles of road. It is an excellent investment in the future we are creating for the following generations.

The real story of the landfill effort has yet to be told. In an era where cynicism on the part of government toward citizens and on the part of citizens toward government is the dominant quality of the relationship, our experience demonstrates the great potential of cooperative effort. This has been an instance where serious work and sacrifice on the part of the area residents, a neighboring town, a village, the county, state representatives, and the citizens of the Town of Dunn accomplished what could not have been done by any of us alone. When the citizenry participates, our system of government can work wonders.

EPA to Hold Meeting on Superfund Site Dec. 4

Chuck Wilk of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will be at the town hall Dec. 4 at 7 p.m. to update residents on test results and explain the next steps the EPA will be taking with the clean-up of the City Disposal Superfund Site.

Located about ¾ mile south of Schneider Drive on the west side of Sand Hill Road, the City Disposal site was a dumping ground for industrial wastes, much of it in liquid form. The dump was closed in the mid 1970s and is currently owned by Waste Management of Wisconsin.

Last year, at a similar informational meeting, the EPA said more testing was needed to understand the groundwater flow in the area because test wells indicated high concentrations of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which are generally harmful. The testing was completed this past summer and a draft Remedial Investigation Report has been written that describes the conditions at the site. This report is expected to be approved and finalized by the EPA in early December and may be available for the informational meeting.

Commenting on the report, Wilk said an Endangerment Assessment has been completed and the EPA has found that "people are not presently in danger". He added, though, that without doing some action at the site, neighboring private wells might become contaminated. Wilk also said the test results from this summer have changed the way the EPA thinks the clean-up should be approached.

Following EPA approval of the Remedial Investigation Report, Wilk said a feasibility study outlining the EPA's clean-up options will be prepared. He expects this to be completed during the winter. From this, the EPA will write their proposed clean-up plan, which indicates the preferred method the agency wishes to use.

Once this proposed plan is issued, he said, another public meeting will be held and residents will have 30 days to comment on the plan.

Wilk was unable to provide firm dates for the completion of these steps or a time for the clean-up to begin.

Elaine Andrews to Head Parks Commission

Elaine Andrews has been appointed the new chairperson of the parks commission. Elaine has served on the commission since 1982, when she was appointed to complete another member's term. She was reappointed for a full term in 1986. Elaine brings an



educational background and natural resources management skills to the parks commission. She has worked as a high school science teacher in Chicago, Detroit and Milwaukee; written environmental education materials for the Sea Grant Institute; and worked as a naturalist for parks in Michigan and Wisconsin.

Since 1979, she has been employed by the University of

Wisconsin Cooperative Extension System as an environmental education specialist. She provides educational opportunities and materials on environmental issues for adult audiences around the state. As an Extension professional, she also participates in several task forces and advisory committees. She has served the Department of Public Instruction as a member of their Environmental Education Committee, the School Hazardous Waste Task Force, and as a Title I grants reviewer. She is also a member of Senator Kohl's Environmental Advisory Committee.

Elaine works on the national level as a director for the North American Association of Environmental Education and she is a member of the United States Department of Agriculture's Cooperative Extension Environmental Education Committee.

Elaine is married, with two children. Her husband, Chris Honeyman, is a mediator with the Wisconsin Employment Relations Commission. She enjoys gardening, hiking, and travel as hobbies. Congratulations on this new appointment, Elaine.

Read Your Tax Bill To Be Sure You Get Your Lottery Credit

by Dorothy Berkan, Town Treasurer

"Can I afford to live in my home?"
 "If taxes keep going up, I'll have to sell."
 "When are you going to send out my 'Christmas Greeting'?"
 "How much are property taxes going up? My assessment really jumped."

This is the time of year these questions are heard everywhere, and from everyone. And I don't have any answers!

All I can do, as your treasurer, is to tell you to look at your tax statement very carefully when you receive it — whether you own real estate or personal property. **Really read it!**

The first thing everyone looks for is the bottom line — what will I have to pay? Several things contribute to that bottom line. Each taxing jurisdiction — state, county, municipality, school district, vocational and technical school district — add their levies to make the total gross property tax due. Each is telling you that, according to the budget they have adopted, they need a definite amount from you in order to function for the next year.

The next item to notice is a credit that will reduce your tax. The state school credit is applied against your total property tax, and reduces the total you owe. Last year's bill included both school and general tax credits — this year, the general tax credit, which was 72 cents per thousand last year, has been removed.

And now the new feature — **LOTTERY TAX CREDIT!** This will apply to residential and agricultural property with improvements.

But wait! The lottery tax credit will only apply if:

1. You own the property.
2. It is your primary residence or principle dwelling.
3. You sign the statement verifying that no. 1 and 2 above are true.

Your mortgage company has probably received information regarding the lottery credit already. They will send you a form to sign so that they can pay the correct amount. Be sure that no. 1 and 2 above apply before you sign and return the form.

Now, financial news that everybody knows: interest rates are going down. Interest rates earned on any funds not presently being used will also be dropping, for the town as well as for you personally.

Community Mill Rate Comparisons

	1990 Actual	1991 Proposed	Percent Assessment Ratio
Town of Oregon	2.77	3.04	95.6
Village of Oregon	5.62	6.13	92.7
Blooming Grove	1.09	2.32	91
Dunkirk	1.99	1.68	87.7
Rutland	3.82	3.82	84.28
Pleasant Springs	1.34	1.91	97
McFarland	6.95	6.95	93
Stoughton	6.39	6.84	89.6
Fitchburg	4.50	4.72	87
Town of Cottage Grove	2.40	NA	NA
Windsor	1.98	2.22	85
Dunn	1.92	1.49	106

Understanding Revaluation and Your Tax Rate

by Roz Gausman, Town Clerk

The revaluation and 1991 Board of Review were completed this fall somewhat behind schedule. The assessment ratio prior to the revaluation was 88 percent. The final assessment ratio as equalized by the Department of Revenue ended up at 106 percent. The assessor's figures were about 6% high (well within the 10 percent state requirement). While the town as a whole was at 88 percent before the revaluation, different classes of property making up that figure varied greatly due to property sales within each classification. For example, lake property classification was assessed at a much lower percentage, in comparison to fair market value, and agricultural property was assessed too high due to recent drops in the value of farmland.

The last revaluation of the town was in 1985. In 1986, a change in state legislation required municipalities to assess property within 10 percent of full market value (100 percent) at least once in a four-year period. It was that legislation and the growing variation between classes of property that resulted in our 1991 revaluation. The town valuation increased by \$51,714,100 or 35.6 percent.

Notices of property values, including the dates of the Open Book Sessions and the Board of Review were mailed to every property owner. The assessors met with approximately 200 property owners during their three-day Open Book Session. Out of a total of 2,689 parcels (1,939 with improvements) in the town of Dunn, there were 65 appeals (3 percent) before the Board of Review. The assessor said this is fewer than the average for a revaluation.

During this process a frequent question asked is, "How

will the revaluation affect my taxes?" The answer to that question depends on many factors. If your property is in a classification where the market has been "hot", like lake property, your assessment increased more than average because value is based on what the public is willing to pay for lake property. Also, if you are in a school district or other taxing district having a substantial budget increase (such as a new school), that will impact your tax rate just as in any other year.

Keeping those factors in mind, the tax rate is arrived at in the following way. Every year, state legislators, county boards, school boards, special districts (such as sanitary districts), and the electors at the town budget meeting adopt a tax levy to pay for services provided by each of those units of government. The total of those tax levies (less any state tax credit applied) is apportioned across the total assessed value in each taxing district. A tax dollar amount (mill rate) per \$1,000 of assessed value is levied on each taxable property. This ensures that every property owner pays a fair share of the cost of government services.

The actual mill rate cannot be figured until all the tax levies are approved. That usually is accomplished by the first or second week of December.

Because every year is a new year, if you missed the 1991 Board of Review and disagree with the value placed on your property, you have the right to appeal in 1992. If you call the town hall and ask to be notified of the date the Board of Review will meet next year, you will be sent a note with the date of the Open Book Session and Board of Review meeting.

1992

1992 BUDGET ACCT. NO.	1992 BUDGET DESCRIPTION
300	REVENUES:
303	TAXES:
304	GENERAL PROPERTY TAX
305	MOBILE HOME - BAYVIEW
306	MOBILE HOME - OTHER
309	CONSERVATION LANDS
310	OMITTED PROPERTY TAX
	TOTAL TAX

1992 BUDGET ACCT. NO.	1992 BUDGET DESCRIPTION
315	INTERGOVERNMENTAL:
318	SHARED TAXES-STATE
319	RECYCLING GRANT
320	PARK GRANT
321	STATE - ROAD AID
322	COUNTY AID - ROAD/BRIDGE
326	FIRE DEPT. DUES
327	PAYMENT MUNICIPAL SERVICE
328	FEDERAL EMERGENCY GRANT
330	TOTAL INTERGOVERNMENT

1992 BUDGET ACCT. NO.	1992 BUDGET DESCRIPTION
335	REGULATION & COMPLIA
337	LIQUOR, MALT LICENSES
338	OPERATORS LICENSE
339	BUSINESS OR OCCUPATION
340	CIGARETTE LICENSE
342	COIN MACHINE - OTHER
344	MOBILE HOME PARK FEE
345	DOG LICENSES - TOWN SHAL
346	PERMITS - BUILDING
349	LAND DIVISION FEES
354	COURT PENALTIES & FINES
360	TOTAL REGULATION & COMPI

1992 BUDGET ACCT. NO.	1992 BUDGET DESCRIPTION
365	PUBLIC CHARGES:
368	STREET MAINTENANCE
377	LAND SALES
381	TOTAL PUBLIC CHARGES

1992 BUDGET ACCT. NO.	1992 BUDGET DESCRIPTION
383	OTHER REVENUE:
382	STREET ASSESSMENTS
385	DONATION - LIBBY ATTNY F
387	INTEREST - GENERAL FUND
389	INTEREST - SPECIAL ASSES
390	SALE USED EQUIPMENT
391	LANDFILL SALVAGE
392	LANDFILL STICKERS
393	LANDFILL COUPONS
394	LAND RENT OTHER
395	CABLE TV FRANCHISE FEES
396	PROCEEDS LONG TERM DEEB
397	MISCELLANEOUS
398	TOTAL OTHER REVENUE
399	GRAND TOTAL REVENUE

1992 BUDGET ACCT. NO.	1992 BUDGET DESCRIPTION
401	EXPENDITURES
451	GENERAL GOVERNMENT
456	TOWN BOARD - SALARIES
458	TOWN BOARD - EXPENSES
462	ELECTION WORKERS SALARI
463	ELECTION EXPENSES
465	PLAN COMMISSION - CLERI
466	PLAN COMMISSION EXPEN
469	ENGINEERING FEES
470	JUSTICE SALARY
471	JUSTICE EXPENSES
472	COURT CLERK - WAGES
474	CLERK SALARY
474	CLERK EXPENSES
479	OTHER CLERICAL SALARIE
480	ASSESSOR CONTRACT
482	ASSESSORS EXPENSES
484	TREASURER - SALARY
486	TREASURER EXPENSES
490	ATTORNEY FEES
491	EDUCATION & TRAINING
498	INDEPENDENT AUDIT
500	DATA PROCESSING
505	TOWN NEWSLETTER
506	OFFICE SUPPLIES & EXPEN
507	DUES & PUBLICATIONS
508	TOWN HALL MAINTENANC