



# MUD SEASON 2020

Sixth Edition, Published March 26, 2020

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Standing: Peter Dunn, Treasurer

Seated L to R: Roberta Manter, Leg. Liaison; Betsy Bowen, Founder; Sandy Allen, President



## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

**Sandy Allen**

Welcome Members --Past and Present,

Here, again, is "Mud Season", our newsletter greeting to you and Spring, the season of birth and renewal. May we all be safe, swept forward by Mother Nature into summer, in good health, connected to each other and to our international neighbors.

This edition features Survey Results, a year-end summary of MARA activities and finances, current legislative highlights, great photos, and articles on speed control and non-owner participation in statutory road associations.

Much has happened at MARA this past year. We have become a non-profit Corporation with a volunteer Board of Directors; the MARA website has been upgraded and made safer for Members' personal data; with the new software, the Discussion Forum is easier to search and find your topic of interest. On our Resources Page, check out the new "Collections Worksheet" with Date and Simple Interest Calculators.

We are readying a new MARA brochure and making plans for our Road Workshop in the fall, and, of course, using the results of the Member Survey. Thank you for all your replies!

We welcome submission of articles and bits of information of interest to our members for our newsletter. Please send to Betsy or me at [info@maineroads.org](mailto:info@maineroads.org). I have enjoyed email exchanges with members; several have turned into Discussion Forum posts. Please continue to keep in touch.

How can we help you? It is a pleasure to serve the Road Associations of Maine.

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## **WHY MARA?**

**Betsy Bowen, Founder**

In Maine's early days, building a road meant little more than cutting down trees and leveling rough spots. Town and county governments built town and county roads; private citizens built private road to access those larger roads. Evolving over two centuries, Maine Road law largely left the matter of private roads to whatever informal agreements existed (or did not exist) among the road's abutters. However, in the last few decades, it became clear that change was needed. Many private roads were camp roads that lead to lakes, where poor maintenance often led to water quality degradation. Already burdened with the growing costs of road maintenance, towns resisted using public funds to address this environmental issue. In 2007, the Maine legislature undertook a major revision of the road association statutes. They addressed the formation and administration of Private Road Associations and strengthened the power of Road Associations to collect unpaid assessments.

Why MARA?? The Maine Alliance for Road Associations was formed to assist those undertaking the creation and administration of road associations, and to aid in implementing a flexible structure for determining and collecting each landowner's fair share of the costs. Created in 2007, by 2010 its membership had grown to 66 and it had a website. As of 2020, MARA members current and past total 470. On the MARA message board, the contributions of many past and present members have built an invaluable trove of knowledge on road maintenance and the creation and administration of road associations. Searching "plowing" today, for example, yields 64 results.

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## TREASURER'S REPORT

**Peter Dunn**

When the current structure of MARA as a Nonprofit Corporation was established in July 2019, the bank account of its predecessor was transferred to a new checking account at the Norway Savings Bank (NSB). That NSB account is currently managed by MARA'S President and Vice-President/Treasurer.

MARA exists as a "helping hand" for all current road associations, in particular for those road associations that are being developed. MARA can provide real assistance in providing an explanation of the various State laws and regulations that are now in place and those that may be presented in the future.

The "small" Board of Directors group is working for you and will do its best to assist if possible. All revenues needed to keep MARA operating as a volunteer organization come from current and hopefully new members. Your assistance will be appreciated. A brief interim report follows.

Income and Expenses from July 10, 2019 to February 28, 2020:

Income:	
Balance from Original MARA Account	\$469
MARA Member Dues (7.10.19 to 2.28.20)	<u>\$420</u>
Total Income	\$889
Expenses:	
Administrative: New Checks, Secretary of State, Board Conference Calls	\$176
Website Software and related expenses	<u>\$325</u>
Total Expenses	\$501
Ending Balance	<u>\$388</u>

Respectfully submitted,

Peter E. Dunn, Treasurer

## CONFERENCE PLANNING SURVEY TABULATION

**Roberta Manter**

Here are the results of the Conference Planning Survey. We had a really good response - over 25% of our current members responded! Regarding survey participation, a 10% response is considered quite acceptable. Thank you!

For VENUE SITE, Augusta was the clear winner, with one more vote than the other two options combined.

The DATE preference was almost evenly split between 12 votes for September and 11 for October, plus 2 for early November. Looks like we should aim for early October, assuming the COVID-19 crisis is over by then.

The most popular single DAY was Saturday, at 11 votes.

THREE GENERAL CATEGORIES for up to 5 speakers- We will try to obtain speakers for the top two ranking topics in the Administrative category and in the Road Maintenance category, and a speaker on the one top-ranked Other category. The runner-up choices will be considered for next year, subject to a survey to be filled out by attendees at this year's conference.

1. Administrative: Documentation was the first choice, with Notice of Claim a close second. (Insurance was the third choice.)

2. Road Maintenance: Damage Repair was the first choice, with Gravel Road Maintenance second. (Safety was the third choice.)

3. Other: Encouraging Member Participation was the first choice. (Dispute Resolution was second, and Law Enforcement Relations was third.)

Again, thank you to all of you who helped shape our Conference to MARA member needs by giving us your valuable input.

