



A MESSAGE FROM MMA

BY CHRISTOPHER LOCKWOOD / EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"You'll know when"...it's time

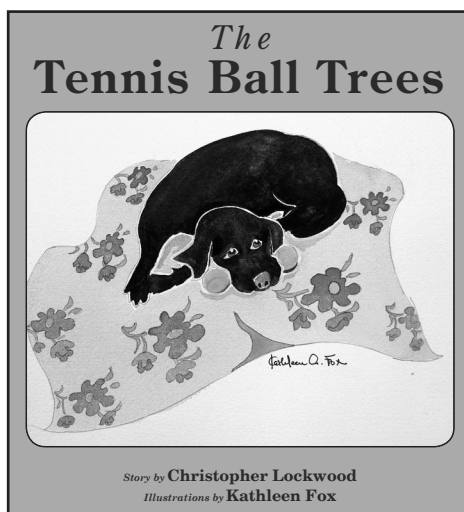
"You'll know when" – that's the expression I heard from a number of my colleagues over the past few years as they discussed their decisions to retire. Little did I know how "spot on" this observation would be for me in early March when I made my decision to retire as executive director of the Maine Municipal Association.

There was no event that precipitated this decision. Rather, it was extraordinarily organic. As I had given thought in recent years to retirement, my two main criteria professionally were to make the decision on my own terms and timetable, if at all possible, and most importantly, to leave at a time when I felt I was still reasonably effective and that the organization was in a strong position.

From a personal standpoint, I have been looking forward to spending more time with our grandchildren (more about that later) and to having more flexibility to take extended periods of time off. In particular, the fall has always been my favorite season of the year and the thought of some autumn getaways has been very appealing.

When I arrived home on a Friday evening in early March, I had no intention to make a major life decision, but I simply started to reflect on my 36 years as MMA executive director and to look ahead to the coming months, both from a professional and personal standpoint. As I continued this process of reflection over the weekend, I came to the realization that this was the "when" to which my colleagues had referred.

I started mapping out a timetable, taking into consideration an appropriate notice period to enable the MMA



Executive Committee to undertake an executive search process. This led to my decision to inform the Executive Committee at its March 19 meeting of my plan to retire as of Aug. 21.

Since my public announcement to our members, I have received many very kind and generous emails and notes. I truly value these sentiments and especially appreciate the esteem in which the Maine Municipal Association is held. We have worked tirelessly to provide high quality services to our members and to earn a reputation of trust and integrity.

Now what comes next? I do not have a master plan, but I certainly have been giving thought to exploring new avenues of interest. As some municipal officials may know, I published a light-hearted children's book, *The Tennis Ball Trees*, in 2013 through Maine Authors Publishing in Rockland. As time has allowed, I have enjoyed doing book readings in elementary schools and public libraries. This has whetted my appetite for pursuing this interest and perhaps writing some more books. Who knows – there might be an upcoming book about the many unexpected situations encountered by municipal officials. Any takers?

Now back to the grandchildren, five of whom live in Maine, three in Connecticut and two in Michigan. My grandkids call me Pappy, which is short for The Grandpapiator, which is my "official" grandfather name. If anyone has an interest, I'd be glad to tell you the back story. So as Pappy looks ahead to retirement in mid-August, spending time with his grandchildren is one of the things at the top of his list! ■

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