

Remembering Mike Mokrzycki



We are deeply saddened to share that former Open Space Committee chairman Mike Mokrzycki passed away suddenly at age 52 less than a week before Christmas 2014. Mike was a special person who contributed so much to our Committee. He was an able leader who brought great skill and energy to the job along with an affable manner and engaging humor. He provided invaluable support for our most recent Open Space town-wide survey since he was an expert in surveying and also put up our first website, securing our domain name and even hosting the website long after he left the Committee because of work and family commitments.

Mike believed passionately in the preservation of land and natural resources for the common good. Alone or with family, he spent many happy hours on West Newbury's trails - hiking, biking, and skiing. It particularly delighted him that he could hike up hills in winter and ski down on his back-country skis.

A former journalist and election polling specialist, Mike worked for the Associated Press (AP) for 24 years. He became the founding director of the AP's polling unit and was manager of election polling for NBC News. Five years ago, Mike started his own survey research business. He loved finding the story through the numbers. He leaves his wife Jill and two teenage sons, all of West Newbury.

In a recent story remembering him, the *Huffington Post* characterized Mike as "Enthusiastic, dedicated, sincere, and smart." And he certainly was. We are grateful for Mike's substantial contributions to our Committee and, by extension, West Newbury. We will miss his genial presence around town.