

Berkshire Community Association  
PO Box 113  
Berkshire, NY 13736  
www.BerkshireNY.net

August 2016

# BERKSHIRE TOWN NEWSLETTER

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### **POSSIBLE WALKING TRAIL AND PLAYGROUND FOR BERKSHIRE**

We have lived in this peaceful community for 43 years and would like to continue to do so as long as we are healthy enough. One of the things we enjoy doing is taking a simple walk—good for the mind and soul as well as the body. But as we age, and the truck traffic has picked up, we no longer feel safe walking along the highway.

We do walk on the sidewalks that Berkshire has, but they are limited. Some are in need of repair, and many are covered by low hanging tree branches that a walker must stoop to get under. These are not insurmountable problems, but we thought how beneficial it would be for the community to have a walking trail and a playground for the Berkshire children. Richford has Rawley Park, Newark Valley has Alexander Pond and the Trout Ponds, but unfortunately, Berkshire does not have the equivalent. We do have the ball park, but no playground, picnic area, or restrooms.

While trying to gather information on the subject, I learned that years ago the Berkshire Town Board had purchased a 4-5 acre piece of land behind the Town Hall with the eventual intent to turn this area into a town park/picnic area for Berkshire. The discussion included the possibility of a walking trail on the IDA right of way which is the railroad track between Owego and Harford Mills. We understand that this area does on occasion flood due to its proximity to the Owego Creek, but several other local parks do as well, and factoring that into any possible planning could mitigate this problem.

It was suggested to us that the development of this area could likely be done with funding grants from outside foundations such as the Mildred Faulkner Truman or the Community Foundation for South Central NY, as well as some others so as to avoid putting a burden on taxpayers.

We feel that these additions to our town would not only be compatible with the Town's Comprehensive Plan, but also be a great benefit to our community in many ways. They would provide a safe, local place for our citizens to

Exercise, socialize, provide a safe place for kids to play, provide a recreational place for families and individuals, and be a positive asset for people considering Berkshire for a place to raise a family.

This idea was presented to the Town Board at their June 20<sup>th</sup> meeting, and the Board agreed to discuss the proposal. We would like to know if there are others living in the Berkshire area that would like to see this idea pursued. If you would be interested, please contact Nancy and George Lohmann at 657-8037 or [gnlohmann@gmail.com](mailto:gnlohmann@gmail.com)

*Nancy and George Lohmann*

# COMMUNITY

( see Berkshire in Community Graphic)

Mother Teresa once said “I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples.” The Blueberry and Books Festival was the epitome of the ripples referenced in her quote.

It doesn't matter if you're young or old, white or black, prefer to work in front of the camera or behind the scenes. Each of us has the power within us to do great things, or even small thing with great love, as evidenced by the many different vendors and visitors alike at the festival sharing their passions. There were musicians, bakers, history buffs, authors, woodcarvers, bibliophiles, artists, firefighters, and so many more people eager to share with and enjoy our community. Anyone walking around the festival saw countless examples of talent. Those nifty little booklets available detailing out the event schedule took computer talent. The many pieces of emotion-provoking artwork hanging on the wall of the Community Hall, made by hand for sale on the vendor tables, or between the covers of the books for sale by authors, were created from nothing by very talented people in or around our community.

When people find out I am a volunteer firefighter one of two things usually follows. They either reply with a sentiment of “That's neat.” or I am told that it's something they would love to do but they just don't have the time. What is important to understand is that volunteers don't necessarily have the time, but we make the time. The discussion usually continues and somewhere along the lines they say that they couldn't fight fires or run on our squad. I tell them that's OK. We have fire police and an auxiliary also, and ask them what they're good at or what they enjoy doing. *Everyone can do something.*

The many library, and other, volunteers worked countless hours putting the Blueberry and Books Festival together, striving to make it bigger and better than last year. Many local businesses and residents donated gift cards and many other items for raffle baskets that appealed to all ages and interests. As a volunteer with the Berkshire Fire Department I can also tell you there were many hours invested by the firefighters and other members of our department to bring you the best chicken BBQ possible and to make sure our station was a welcoming place for our community. I know I can speak for all the volunteers when say it was a lot of work but the payoff at the end of the day was a sense of pride and joy that words just cannot express! There is no greater feeling than walking around the festival and seeing people smiling, talking animatedly about their life's work, and being told what a wonderful experience they're having.

I have lived up and down the east coast, and visited many other areas of the Unites States. There is nowhere else that holds such a genuine sense of community than our small, rural town. In a world where our differences are pulling us apart let's change the tide by realizing strength lies in our differences, not in our similarities. You, just as you are, are capable of greatly and positively impacting someone else's life, here are a few local volunteer organizations that would love to have you: (see page 2)

*Jamie O'Conner*



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12500 Route 38  
Berkshire, NY  
607.657.8088



Berkshire Free Library  
<http://berkshirefreelibrary.org/>  
 12519 State Route 38  
 P.O. Box 151  
 Berkshire, NY 13736  
 (607) 657-4418 (voice and FAX)

Berkshire Fire Department  
<https://www.facebook.com/BerkshireFire/>  
 12515 Route 38  
 Berkshire, NY 13736  
 Station: (607) 657-2727  
 Chief Welch: (607) 427-0964

Helping Hands Food Pantry  
[jdstoughton@juno.com](mailto:jdstoughton@juno.com)  
 11 Jewett Hill Road  
 Berkshire, NY 13736  
 Joan Stoughton, 607-657-2501  
 Emily Sheldon, 607-657-8158

Northern Tioga Neighbors Network  
<http://www.ntnnonline.org/>  
 Hubbard Resource Center  
 P. O. Box 93  
 Richford, NY 13835  
 607-657-2823

### SUPERVISOR'S NOTES

As the town moves forward with efforts to save tax dollars, we hosted a joint meeting with Town of Owego, Village of Newark Valley, Town of Newark Valley, Town of Richford, Town of Caroline and Berkshire. This meeting was with Johnson Controls to explore options for installing LED Streetlights which would save hundreds of dollars in utility cost each year. We are still in the exploration phase but we will keep you informed of the process on this project.

We have also joined with Richford in a study of the complete water tables in both communities and where each well is. Clean water is a very important issue

to all residents wherever you may live. This study will provide maps of the water tables which will eventually be available to current and new homes. This study is provided through a grant and there are no local costs for the project.

The Planning Board is moving along with the comprehensive plan and has completed the draft of natural resources section.

Thanks to everyone who helped or just attended the Blueberry and Books festival it was a great success.

Until next time, please attend Your Town Board Meetings, held on the third Monday of each month at the Town Hall 18 Railroad Avenue. Help us help you make beneficial changes in our community.

Please visit our Web Site for current information at <http://www.berkshirenyc.com> and you will now find us on Facebook "Town of Berkshire New York", please like us and follow current posts. **Ron**

**McEwen**

### ASSESSOR NEWS

School tax bills will be going out in early September, they will be using the new assessments that were established/finalize on July 1, 2016. New property owners wishing to sign up for the Star program will now have to contact the State to sign up, they can go online to [www.tax.ny.gov](http://www.tax.ny.gov) or call 518-457-2036. If you have purchased a property after 3/1/2016 and that property owner had a Star exemption you will receive that exemption on the upcoming school tax bill, BUT you have to sign up for your own 2017 Star or you will not receive it (this only pertains to new property owners). Please call me or email me at 315-391-8323,

[maxappraisal@hotmail.com](mailto:maxappraisal@hotmail.com)

with any questions. Will have office hours starting in October, all exemption renewals will be mailed out after 11/1/2016, these are for the 2017/2018 roll year.

**Mike Maxwell**

### BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY

Thank you to all for the help and support with The Blueberry and Book Festival and the Summer Reading Program. The ladies at the East Berkshire Methodist church added so much to the Summer Program with their lunches and art work! Thank you to the Richford Community Children's Group for allowing us to be a part of your program.

To everyone that helped with the Blueberry and Book Festival, we couldn't have done it without you. It was so nice to see people enjoying themselves and working together.

#### Upcoming Events

- **Homemade Pie and Ice Cream Social – August 18, Berkshire Fire Station**  
Our traditional Pie and Ice Cream Social will be held from 6pm -8pm. Come visit with your friends and neighbors. Free will donation to benefit the library. If you would like to volunteer to make your favorite pie, please call 657-4418 or email, [bfl@htva.net](mailto:bfl@htva.net).
- In September, we will have two **books sales**, our first will be at the Berkshire Community Hall on Sept. 3 from 9:00 - 4:00 PM and Tuesday, Sept. 6-10 from 9:00 - 4:00 PM. The second sale will be at the Potato Festival in Richford. Both sales will include fiction, non-fiction, and a large selection of children's books. Many new and used books are included.
- Save your Thursday morning in the Fall for our **Children's Story Hour**. We will be starting on Thursday, October 13 at 10 AM at the Berkshire Free Library. It will be an hour packed with fun, games, crafts and reading. Pre-school and home school children are welcome.

**What's New At The Library** What is all that Hoopla about! Using your library card, you can now instantly borrow 4 free digital movies, music and each month. Just go to [hoopladigital.com](http://hoopladigital.com). Please call 657-4418 if you need more information. Another addition is our new library website. Have a look at [berkshirefreelibrary.org](http://berkshirefreelibrary.org). The site has upcoming events and library information.

We also have hundreds of new books that have been added in the last few months. The new Harry Potter book, Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows, is one of our newest additions. Thanks to the patrons that have "Sponsored Books". These folks have been the first ones to read the new and exciting best sellers before anyone else! Come in or call for more info about this program. Happy Reading!

**Fran Miller**

**BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD**

The Planning Board continues work on the Comprehensive Plan. The multi-year plan incorporates desires of the community (using survey results) and other visions of current and future needs. We have settled on an outline and plan to release one section at a time to the Town Board. So far we have drafted an introductory and natural resource section. We strongly encourage input and open discussion so please feel free to attend our meetings on the 1st Tuesday of the month at 6:30 in the Town Hall. We are also looking for residents who would like to volunteer and join the board and work on this plan and other relevant issues such as local laws. Please consider joining our team by attending a meeting or contacting our Chair, Ken Ceurter at 657-2831 or by email at

[kc\\_cute@frontiernet.net](mailto:kc_cute@frontiernet.net).

**Ken Ceurter**

**BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT AMBULANCE**

The Berkshire Fire District Ambulance continues to answer calls in our district. We had one member complete the EMT class and become certified! We were able to purchase a vital signs monitor just like the ones you see in doctor offices. This piece of equipment will take blood pressures automatically. This was made possible through fund raisers and donations.

Just a reminder that we're volunteers and we all work, so unfortunately, there may be times during the day, evening, and night that EMT's are not available. Another squad would be dispatched to come into our district to take care of your emergency. We're always looking for new volunteers to help out. If interested the squad meets the first Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. Please stop by and ask us what you could do to help out. Stay Safe!

**Melinda Russell**

*"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart."*

~Elizabeth Andrew

**CODE ENFORCEMENT:**

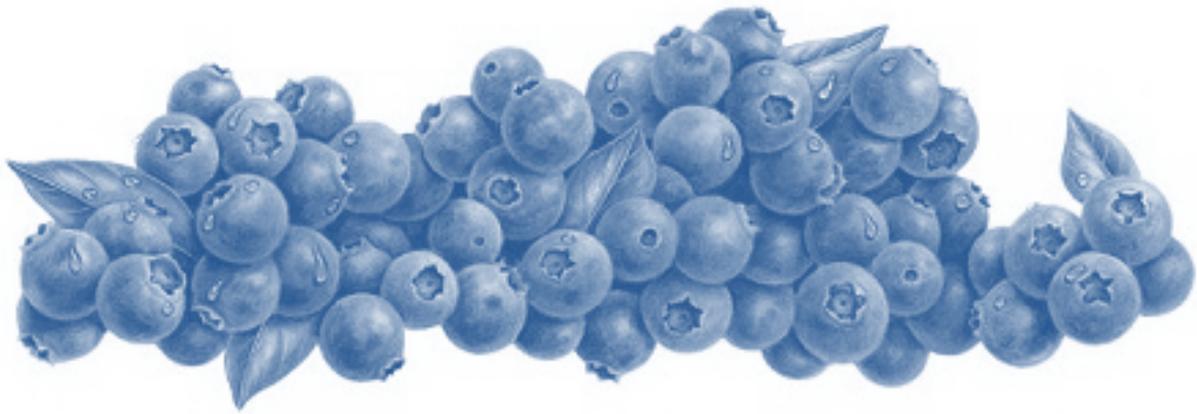
Hope everyone is enjoying their summer! Spring and summer projects have begun— many without permits. Please contact me prior to beginning any projects, to see if permits are needed. You may have seen some of the progress in cleaning up Berkshire. There have been a few places on Route 38 that have been working diligently to clean up their lots. One big issue in Berkshire is junk cars. Currently the Town Ordinance states: **Not more than one Unregistered Vehicle in Open Storage is permitted on any parcel of land in the Town of Berkshire.** As you may know – many residents are in violation. I have been pursuing a few cases where multiple vehicles are involved. The next step will be a court order to have the vehicles removed. This will be done by a local towing/repo company. They will remove the vehicles and store them at their location and work directly with the vehicle owners. There will be no cost incurred to the Town. There will be more court cases in the coming months. I will be moving forward with court action on the old Howland Furniture site on Mill St. To date there have been 11 building permits obtained in 2016. Four of these permits were for new houses. This requires many inspections throughout the process. The homeowners and contractors have been great working with me through the process. In June there were a total of 9 inspections (not for the new houses) and 5 complaints. There were two court cases in June as well.

NYS has many laws regarding Swimming Pools. A permit is needed for a swimming pool, along with other state mandates, such as pool alarms and barriers. I will be doing a pool census in order to move forward with ensuring pools are up to state & local codes. Since many residents are unaware of these codes; I will briefly list them below. The term "Swimming Pool" means any structure, basin, chamber or tank which is intended for swimming, diving, recreational bathing or wading and which contains, is designed to contain, or is capable of containing **water more than 24 inches** (610 mm) deep at any point. This includes in-ground, above-ground and on-ground pools; indoor pools; hot tubs; spas; and fixed-in-place wading pools. Every swimming pool that is installed, constructed or substantially modified after December 14, 2006, **must be equipped with an approved pool alarm** (not an alarm device which is located on a person), which is capable of detecting a person entering the water at any point on the surface of the pool and giving an audible alarm poolside and at another location on the premises. It may be necessary to install more than one pool alarm. Alarm systems must comply with ASTM F2208. Pool alarms are not required in: a hot tub or spa equipped with a safety cover or a swimming pool equipped with an automatic power safety cover. **The barrier must completely surround the swimming pool and must obstruct access to the swimming pool.** The barrier must be at least 4 feet (48 inches) high; In the case of an above-ground pool, the barrier may be at ground level or mounted on top of the pool structure; however, if the barrier is mounted on top of the pool structure, the space between the top of the pool structure and the bottom of the barrier cannot exceed 4 inches; A building wall can form part of the required barrier. However, where a wall of a dwelling serves as part of the barrier, at least one of the following requirements must be satisfied; the pool must be equipped with a powered safety cover; all doors with direct access to the pool through that wall must be equipped with an alarm or other means of protection, such as self-closing doors with self-latching devices, which are approved by the governing body; In the case of an above-ground pool, the pool structure itself can serve as a part of the required barrier, provided that the pool structure is sufficiently rigid to obstruct access to the pool.

Feel free to contact me at any time with any complaints, questions, concerns, etc. My cell phone number is 607-744-9383. Please leave a message if I am not available. I am also available by text at this number. You can also reach me by e-mail at

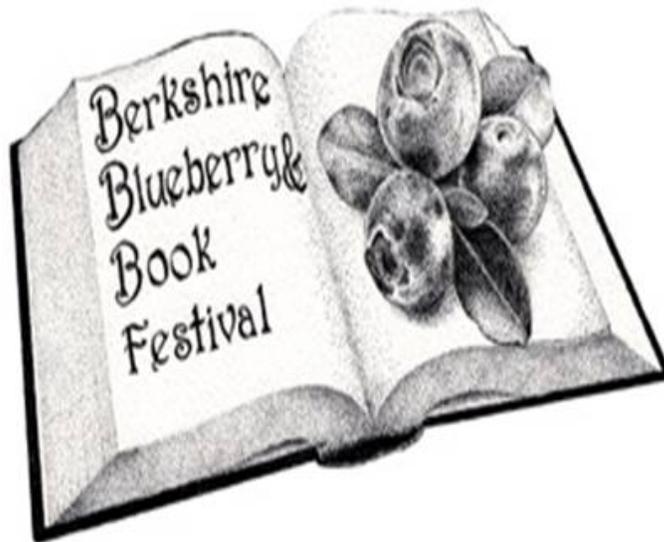
[racheljacobsceo@gmail.com](mailto:racheljacobsceo@gmail.com).

I am more than willing to work with residents as long as they are making an effort to rectify the situation. As a reminder, this is a part time position so unfortunately it is impossible for me to catch every code violation on my own. If you are aware of a situation, please contact me. Have a great rest of your Summer! My office hours are Thursday evenings 5:30-7pm. I can be reached by cell phone at (607) 744-9383 (call or text) and also by e-mail at [racheljacobsceo@gmail.com](mailto:racheljacobsceo@gmail.com). Have a great Spring and Summer! Thanks - **Rachel Jacobs**



**BERKSHIRE  
BLUEBERRY  
FESTIVAL:**

It takes a full community effort to organize an event like the Blueberry & Book Festival. Library trustees, staff and community-wide volunteers pulled together ideas and put plans into action over the past year. We began laying out our strategy last fall by visiting both Berkshire and Richford town board meetings to outline our goals and look for community volunteers and support for this year's event. The town of Berkshire board agreed to sponsor the festival with the library board continuing to lead the organizational effort.



Hi Folks, The 2nd annual Blueberry and Book Festival at the Berkshire Library, Fire Station and Community Hall on Saturday July 23rd was a great success. From the weather to the vendors, performers, food and entertainment available, all was a roaring good day. People enjoyed a day filled with music, sunny skies, and the hospitality of the Berkshire and Richford community members who so graciously volunteered their time for this special event. Onward and upward for next year! *Sandy Negus*

Attendance at the monthly planning meetings continued to grow during the spring with community members from Richford and Berkshire. Our last meeting included 19 volunteers and friends of the library who had various roles during the event. Along with mother nature, a large part of the festival success this year was due to a core committee who met regularly to advance each event topic. This committee included Sandy Negus, Kathy Hartman, Carol Kania, Fran Miller, George Lohmann, Kathy Platz, Cheryl Brown, Denny Dyer, Gloria Overbey, Bette Johnson and me. Bret Welch and Bob Wait also joined the meetings as we neared the event date to confirm our collaborative efforts. We had a great working team full of ideas and varied talents!

George Lohmann gets the top volunteer award for his many eclectic contributions in the planning and execution of the 2016 festival! As a talented artist he began by providing us with our event logo. Taking the lead in the entertainment section, George secured live music and dance in two venues all day, including his own participation in Valley Harmony's enjoyable show. Another event highlight, with his signature, was the first festival art show in the upper floor of the Community Hall. This representation of local talent in music, dance and art exemplifies why the arts are integral to our society.

An area of increased attention this year involved local author participation. This effort led by Carol Kania, brought together over a dozen area authors for a unique meet-and-greet experience for all ages. Weekly press releases about authors attending the event brought even further interest from additional authors who requested to become involved in the festival. A successful new activity this year was the Blueberry Bake-Off, sponsored by the First Congregational Church of Berkshire, with proceeds going to the Helping Hands Food Pantry. Jen Willard's face painting table was always busy and the library had a scavenger hunt for the young ones.

Again this year, Richford volunteers were exceptional friends of the library through their running of the library bake sale, book sale and helping with the 100's of pancakes served. The Richford quilters group donated beautiful handmade items, including blueberry table runners and sundresses.

*Continued on BBinsert page 2*

*BERKSHIRE BLUEBERRY FESTIVAL continued from BBinsert page 1*

A number of area businesses showed their support for the festival through event sponsorship, program advertising, supply donations, gift baskets and certificates. More than 45 businesses in Tioga, Tompkins, Cortland, and Broome Counties participated with some kind of support toward the day. If you noticed some of that support at the festival, I hope you can give back to them with your business.

In the end, this event would not have been possible without the volunteers from the Fire Department, Fire Police, and Berkshire Community Association for providing facilities and services to host a large event. The new Fire Station and renovated Community Hall are other examples of outstanding volunteer community efforts that will continue to provide opportunities, experiences, safety and medical services for this area for generations to come. Thank you to all our community volunteers.

I look forward to working with the community in planning our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual festival!

*Karen McNally*



## Arts and Entertainment

In the arts and entertainment department there was something for everyone at the Second Annual Blueberry and Book Festival on Saturday, July 23, 2016.

Two music venues simultaneously offered an eclectic variety of music, in the Berkshire Community Hall and Berkshire Fire Station.

Sister Moon kicked off the music in the Community Hall in the morning. This female trio sings beautiful harmony and accompanies themselves on guitar. They even offered a couple of flute duets. They were followed by Valley Harmony, the all male a cappella quartet that sings all sorts of genre. Soprano Christina Salasny joined them on many of their songs. By noon Ain't Misbehavin', an eight piece ensemble playing Big Band music, was set up on the stage. The Steve Holcomb Band stepped onto the stage in mid-afternoon, playing a variety of rock, folk and country music, and the afternoon was wrapped up with dancing performed by Full of Grace Dance Studio.

The music in the Fire Station began with the Red Brick Worship Camp Ensemble, a group of young musicians playing praise music. Two beautiful young solo voices, coming from Farrah Fiacco and Brianna Beebe, took over at noon with several popular songs. Later Katie Schultheis played a variety of music on keyboard. Puppet Show, a new young band from Newark Valley, then stepped up to the microphones to entertain festival goers with their take on Sixties Rock. After that singer and songwriter Andrew G. Fagan entertained with his original songs.

While listening to the music in the Community Hall festival participants enjoyed viewing over fifty works of art by thirteen different local artists from Berkshire, Richford and Newark Valley. Patrons were invited to choose the favorite piece and that turned out to be a watercolor done by Berkshire artist Lorraine Slate.



Everyone was sure to find music to suit their tastes at the Berkshire Blueberry and Book Festival, and it's free!

### George Lohmann

#### Comments from author Dave Clutz

Thanks to George Lohmann and the Blueberry Planning Committee for getting me involved and allowing me to participate in a fun event. I love these events in the smaller towns of Tioga and Tompkins County that were home to so many men of the 137th NY, and where descendants still reside. I met some of them Saturday, some I've known from prior events at Newark Valley and Richford, but some whom I'd not had the pleasure of meeting before. And of course my 137th Reenactor (and fellow stage actor) friends the Armstrongs are Berkshire folk who I was delighted to find decorating a mannequin in the library attic as a 137th soldier. I owe Mary Jordan (author/playwright who had me act in her Speedsville-set play Dear Amelia) for inviting me to set up under her canopy - a Godsend in the hot sun of July. And I actually sold a handful of books. I am delighted to have placed a copy of *Fields of Fame & Glory - Col. David Ireland and the 137th NY* now in the collection of the Berkshire Free Library, in one of the regiment's home towns. I hope the Festival was successful in raising lots of money for the Library! Again, my thanks for the opportunity to participate. **Dave Clutz**





**Blueberry Bake-Off**

The debut of the Blueberry Bake-Off at this year’s festival was a sweet success. Eleven contestants provided thirteen entries in this event sponsored by the Berkshire Congregational Church; two in the pie category, five in the muffin/coffee cake/scone category, five in the baked dessert category and one jam. Kathy Platz, Tara McKenzie and Darlene Wait of First Congregational coordinated the event. Ann Supa, an employee of Cornell Cooperative Extension, judged the entries. We are pleased to announce that we raised just over \$100 for the Helping Hands Food

Pantry of Berkshire! Watch for announcements next spring and sign up for the Second Annual Blueberry Bake-off

*Kathy Platz*

2016 Berkshire Blueberry Bake-Off Winners		
<b>Muffins/Coffee Cakes</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Kaila McNally</i>	<i>Blueberry Scones</i> <b>** Awarded Best of Show **</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Marty Schneider	Blueberry Cream Muffins with Lavender
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Lena Sherwood	Melt in Your Mouth Blueberry Coffee Cake
<b>Pies</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Linda Adams</i>	<i>Blueberry Pie</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Judy Jackson	Lattice topped Blueberry Pie
<b>Baked Dessert</b>		
1 <sup>st</sup>	<i>Emily Sheldon</i>	<i>Chocolate Blueberry Cupcakes</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Janice Merrill	Blueberry Pudding Cake
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Emily Sheldon	Blueberry Almond Squares
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Janice Merrill	Blueberry Crumb Bars

**Accolades from the Town Supervisor**

It takes many volunteers and dedicated people to make this kind of event a success – Berkshire and surrounding communities have just that. The weather was beautiful and this event was a big success. As Town Supervisor I would like to thank all of those who gave their time for their community. Best of luck in coming years making this event better and better with each year. **Ron McEwen**



*As neighbors we wouldn't have it any other way!*

*...As dedicated professionals, we know what you expect from us...  
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Dave and Carol Cooley  
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Newark Valley \* 607.642.5535



**HIGHWAY NEWS**

In many ways the extremely dry weather has been good for us. Roadside ditch work is a lot easier when the ditches are dry. Road repairs are ahead of schedule too since we have not had rainout days. However we have had to apply more calcium brine to the remaining dirt roads to help keep the dust down. We have a good stockpile of stones for paving and plan to begin soon. On a 2 mile stretch of North Ketchumville Road, we will use the "train" where a series of connected

equipment grinds and recycles the existing road covering, mixes that with some new material and applies a new coating. I also plan to topcoat Turkey Hill Road. Anything else will depend upon available money in our budget. Good news is that the asphalt prices are the lowest in years.

The winter sand stockpile needs topping off, but it will take only about a quarter of what we normally haul, thanks to last year's mild winter. We still heat the highway garage with economical used motor oil. If you have any, drop it off at the barn or call us if you have a large quantity.

*Karl Spoonhower*

**WORKSHOP TO PREVENT FALLS:**

Signup now for "Stepping On," a 7 week program, that helps participants become aware of fall hazards, learn how to reduce their fall risk and stay in their own home by remaining active and independent. The workshop will be held Sept 8 – Oct 20 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Berkshire Town Hall,, Railroad Ave. Topics include information about balance, strength training, hazards in the home, Vitamin D and nutrition. Light refreshments will be served.

The 7-week class costs only \$15 thanks to grants from Tioga Opportunities and Broome County Health Dept. Checks payable to Independence Awareness, 518 Hooper Road, PMB 274, Endwell,NY 13760. The fee MUST be received by August 18 to reserve a place. Each participant receives a workshop manual. Caregivers who provide transportation for a registered participant or for reinforcement of exercises/program materials may attend at no cost but will not receive a workshop manual. This program is facilitated by Donna Gavulas RN and Diane LeFever RN of *Independence Awareness in conjunction with other community experts. They can be contacted at 757-0750 or 765-4180 if there are any questions. Also check their website at [www.independenceawareness.com](http://www.independenceawareness.com) for additional information on classes and falls prevention.*

*Emilie Stuhmiller*

**Melinda Eaton**  
Owner/Operator

**Valley Hair Visions**

142 South Main Street  
Newark Valley, New York 13811

**(607) 642-9924**

<http://www.valleyhairvisions.com>



**Grandview Farms**  
18 hole *Golf Course*



**(607) 657-2619**

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10% OFF Tuesdays for Senior Citizens (on wine)

Everyone's Invited!

Everyone's Invited!



# Red Brick Community PICNIC

## **FREE OUTDOOR PICNIC:**

Grilled Hamburgers & Hot Dogs, Chips & Baked Beans  
Home-Made Desserts, Lemonade, Ice Tea, all provided

## **LIVE LOCAL MUSPIC:**

Local Band **Cross-Eyed Fish**  
others still being finalized

## **FUN FOR THE KIDS:**

**Bounce House** and **Face Painting**

## **OPPORTUNITY:**

To catch up with neighbors and friends!  
To keep building up our Berkshire area Community

**on the lawn in front of  
The Red Brick Church in Berkshire**

(First Congregational Church)  
corner of Glen Rd & Route 38

[www.redbrickchurch.org](http://www.redbrickchurch.org)

Why? Because we think God likes our  
community!

**Saturday, August 20  
1 – 5 pm**

## **The Red Brick Church**

"Neighbors loving Jesus and you!"

Berkshire First Congregational Church  
12445 State Route 38, Berkshire  
On the corner at Glen Road

Sunday School 9:30 AM

Worship 11:00 AM

Summer Worship 10:00 AM



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### *BERKSHIRE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH NEWS:*



Mike Kunik (back) with many of the youth  
who've been participating in our youth

Mike Kunik has been continuing to lead our youth band ministry through the summer. Monday evenings he works with several teens learning guitar, and Thursday, with a number of younger kids learning drums and vocals. Many of these teens helped lead worship for our church picnic on the Sunday after Fathers Day. Some also participate in our Sunday morning praise band.

By the time you're reading this, we'll be finishing up our week-long Vacation Bible School for the communities of Berkshire and Richford, at the Red Brick Church. We pour a lot of effort into this week, so that kids can not only have fun each evening, but also learn about Jesus, and what it means to trust Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

In July, Kathy Platz and several of our members helped coordinate the Blueberry Bake-Off for the Blueberry and Books Festival (see elsewhere in the newsletter!).



We also had alums from previous years of our "Red Brick Worship Camp" (RBWC) re-grouped as a worship band to play in one of the bays of the Fire Station, the morning of the festival. These teens come from churches throughout the region. The band sounded great, and we were glad to share their Christ-focused music with the wider community. This year, we didn't get enough registrations to hold a 2016 camp here in Berkshire, but we hope to have it again next summer.



RBWC Band playing at the Fire Station.  
Camp Director Joe Salzano (hidden) led

On **Saturday, August 20**, we invite everyone from the community to our free **Red Brick Community Picnic** on the church lawn! (See the ad) From 1 to 4 pm, we'll have free grilled hamburgers and hotdogs, beans, chips, cold drinks, and home made desserts. There'll be live music, and fun for all ages! We hope to have a bounce house and face painting for kids. Come enjoy! Catch up with

old friends, make new friends, build our community.

After Labor Day, our Sunday regular schedule takes up again, with Sunday School for ages 3-up at 9:30 am, and worship service at 11 am. All are invited! For information about any of our activities, contact Pastor Jerry Platz at 657-8058, or check us out on the web at [www.redbrickchurch.org](http://www.redbrickchurch.org), or look for redbrickchurch on Facebook.

**BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY**

With Labor Day only a month away we have to face the inevitable end to summer. BFD would like to remind everyone that the best time to have heating systems and chimneys checked is now before you need them. Let's all be prepared and have a safer winter. We had to respond to several chimney fires last winter and would like to see that number drastically decrease this winter.

It has been a busy summer as usual for your volunteers in the fire company. We sold food at 4 hare scramble races throughout Tioga County. Many of you attend these races and we appreciate the support you give us there. We also had a Chicken BBQ at the Blueberry and Books Festival and provided Fire Police to park cars and direct traffic. This was very successful, the chicken sold out in less than 90 minutes. On July 30 we held an open house and blood drive for the community. We had a lot of fun games and prizes for the kids and gave out free lunch to all who attended. At the open house we also had a dedication ceremony for our new memorial to honor all the members of the Fire Company, Auxiliary, and Squad who have passed. A big thank you to Dave and Carol Cooley for donating the monument. So along with attending meetings and trainings, and responding to calls, members have given up 6 of their summer weekends for these events. They are all volunteers so be sure to thank the members of BFD when you see them. Without the dedication of those volunteers we would not have the protection that we do.

This summer also had a tragic event. The Tioga County Fire Coordinator, John Scott, was killed in a work related accident. This was a big loss to the fire service community. John has always supported BFD as well as every fire department in the county. He also served on the Trade Show committee for NYS Fire Chief's Association. John will be truly missed by all in the fire service.

The Berkshire Fire District will be getting a \$5,000.00 grant from NYS to purchase new radios and pagers. Senator Fred Akshar played a key role in securing this grant for us and we owe him a big thank you. This money will help replace old outdated and non-working portable radios to help improve our communication abilities and improve firefighter safety.

We have been told that some of our residents have had trouble changing batteries in their smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors. We are always here to help, if you need someone to come change them for you don't hesitate to call the Chief, or any member, and ask for help. The Chief, Bret Welch, can be reached at (607)427-0964 and will be sure to have someone come out and assist you. We always strive to make our community safer.

For anyone looking for a place to host your special event we do still rent the fire station. It has room for 96 people seated with tables and chairs, a nice big yard for outdoor activities, and the pavilion with picnic tables for summer events. Interested in renting the station contact Bill or Jackie Morris at 657-2536.

Our biggest need is still for volunteers. We can't continue to provide service to our friends and neighbors without volunteers. We need you to help keep this organization going. Not all members run into burning buildings - we need people for all tasks. Whether it is putting out a fire, stopping someone's bleeding, cooking or serving chicken, bringing drinks and food to fires, directing traffic, serving as secretary or treasurer, cleaning the station, washing fire trucks, collecting money at fund raisers, shopping for supplies, or any of the other tasks we have, everyone's help is needed. As you can see from this short list there is something everyone can do no matter how young or old. Anyone 16 years or older can join and we need you. When you volunteer time you get repaid tenfold in the good feeling you have in your heart for helping your friends and neighbors. Feel free to stop by the station the first Tuesday of any month at 7:00PM and check us out at one of our monthly meetings. Or call (607)427-0964 and talk to Chief Welch and he will be happy to get you an application and show you what the fire department is all about.

*C.M. Ochrymowycz, DVM  
J.M. O'Krepki, DVM*

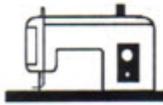


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### **BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW (GRIEVANCE BOARD)**

There is some confusion dealing with the Board of Assessment Review and its functions. Its primary duty is to ensure all tax payers are taxed fairly and also provide them with the ability to grieve what they feel are errors or oversights made by the Assessor. The following procedures are just a few of our guidelines:

1. The board does not in any way set the original assessments. This is the function of the Assessor. The law makes the assumption that the "Assessor has properly done his or her job and that the assessment is correct". It must be accepted unless proven by the tax payer to be either *Unequal, Excessive, Unlawful or Misclassified*. Each of the categories listed are explained on form RP-524 that must be filled out for submittal to the board on grievance day. The burden of proof is always on the complainant to present convincing evidence that the Assessor's judgement of their property value was incorrect.
2. Most of the complaints are dealing with *Excessive* assessment. Many of these can be resolved by a meeting with the Assessor and through negotiation produce a "Stipulation", i.e. an agreement between the Assessor and tax payer. There were 5 for 2016. The board does not approve or disapproved these documents. We simply record them.
3. If no agreement is reached, then evidence showing what is inaccurate is presented to the board. The board had mostly complaints this year due to the re-evaluation of the value of land. Any questions dealing with the formula's used by the Assessor must be directed to him. You may not feel your land is worth the increased amounts but this is what the board must work with and can adjust. We can reduce the assessment but have no fear since we cannot raise it.
4. Some reasons the complainants gave for reduction were: "the land is on a very steep hill", "is all swamp not good for anything", "the poor condition of buildings on the property" etc. The other side of the coin which we did not hear was that "the land is good farm land next to a road", "has harvestable timber", "has new buildings added" etc. This data we got from the Assessor. The board must take all these items into consideration so that each tax payer is taxed equally and pays their fair share. This year we reduced the assessment on 12 of 27 complaints. Only 5 were adjusted dealing with the actual value of the land.
5. Remember, that the real property tax is an "ad valorem tax", i.e. a tax levied on the basis of assessed value of the property, which, in turn, is based on the market value of the property. It has nothing to do with what you paid for the property. You could have bought it from a relative for \$10, or for \$100 an/acre 50 years ago or paid 3 times what it was worth. The board, by law, cannot take these values into consideration. We must work with current market value.

Hopefully, this will answer some of your questions. If you have any others, talk to the Assessor.

Please do not contact any of the board members. We will not discuss our reasoning for accepting or rejecting your complaint other than to say we did what we thought was fair and within the law. Our job ends after we file all the necessary paperwork, usually 1 to 2 weeks after the board meets and completes its evaluation of your complaint.

If you feel our judgement was wrong or that your proof should have been strong enough to convince us but did not, you can always take your documents to small claims court for judicial review. It has the power to overrule our decisions.



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