

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

February 2015

BERKSHIRE TOWN NEWSLETTER

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Basketball Goal on the South End

Basketball Goal on North End

New Indoor Basketball Court in the Berkshire Community Hall

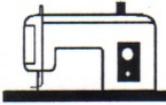
SUPERVISORS NOTES

Welcome back - the holidays being over and a New Year already started let me bring you up to date on what's happening in YOUR town. Last quarter I informed you that letters had been written and a visit from Senator Libous's office had taken place concerning the highway "Route 38" through town. Since then, I received a letter from John R. Williams, P.E. and Regional Director of the NYS Department of Transportation Region Nine. His letter states the commitment of the State to address these concerns as soon as possible. He stated that the bridge in Berkshire on Route 38 is scheduled for work in the fall of 2016 and when that is completed in 2017 Route 38 will be milled out and new pavement put down. Your Town leaders will not let this issue drop. Tony Signorelli, P.E., and Regional Traffic Engineer has also addressed the speed limit through town in a letter dated December 30, 2014, stating: "the Department considers the current speed limit of 40 MPH appropriate for this section of highway and it is not warranted to lower the speed limit." "The Department will install reduced speed limit ahead signs for this 40 MPH zone to further alert motorists of the reduced speed limit in the Town of Berkshire." Town finances are in excellent shape considering the state of the economy in the Southern Tier of New York. We were able to stay within the 2014 budget and for 2015 have a zero percent increase in your town taxes. Now I realize that your taxes have gone up, but not by the town! Your tax bill reflected an increase in County, Recycle and Fire taxes. Because of no increase in Town tax Berkshire residents are again eligible for a small State tax rebate check in the fall. Your Town Board and I strive to keep taxes down and still provide the necessary services. This is becoming harder and harder with each year, but you deserve us to try as long as possible. Having addressed the issue of the highway, we continue to work on the results of the survey. We scheduled a joint workshop on February 10th at 5:30PM, with the Town Board and the Planning Board to look at other items and suggestions contained in your opinions. With a mind on our finances, and the issues ahead, we will continue to work toward meaningful changes. Again, we thank everyone for taking time to complete the survey; and we do not intend to let the concerns expressed sit with no action. As always, we appreciate additional input by attending our meetings and offering suggestions for positive changes. Until next time, please attend Your Town Board Meetings, check out the new sign, and help us help you make beneficial changes in our community. Please visit our Web Site for current information at <http://www.berkshirenny.com> Your Supervisor *Ron McEwen*

BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT

The Berkshire Fire District's organizational meeting was held on January 14th, 2015. The following is the District Board of Commissioners. Bob Wait – Chairman, Don Liddington, Butch Ceurter, Rodney Russell and Bill Morris. Melinda Case - Treasurer/Secretary I invite you to come to the meetings on the 4th Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM. THE PUBLIC IS WELCOME. *Bob Wait*

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FIRE COMPANY ORGANIZATION

- Bret Welch - Chief
- Ken Bean - Assistant Chief
- Jim Brown - 3rd Assistant Chief
- Clair Rupert - Captain
- Butch Ceurter – Lieutenant

FIRE POLICE ORGANIZATION

- Roger Howland – Captain

We are looking into buying another ambulance in the near future. The public will be informed when we find the right one for their vote and approval.



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BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY

Hours: Tues. 12-5, Wed. 1:30-7, Thurs. 1-5, Fri. 1:30-7, Sat. 9-2

email – bfl@htva.net Story Time: Berkshire – Wednesdays 10-11 at the Library. Richford – Fridays 10-11 at the Congregational Church. Our Holiday Open House and Raffle went very well this year. Many little ones were able to spend time with Santa. Thanks Santa for stopping by, your bells were a big hit. Thanks to the Board members their family and the staff for making this year's event lots of fun. Thanks also to Maryanne Settle, April & George Swaney, Mary Ellen Odom, Sue Bierl & Lena Sherwood for the Raffle items. Winners of the Holiday Raffle were: June Rapsher – Back Pack, April Swaney-Centerpiece, Barb Trask-Tioga Trails Gift Certificate, Glenda Clark-Vera Bradley handbag, Bob Zebracki-Ripple Afghan, Liz Cassin-Afghan, Emilie Stuhlmiller-Teddy Bear w/crayons, Anne Stoughton-Teddy Bear, Lori Bricks-Cider Set, Maryanne Settle-"Gift box" pin, KaelynMckenzie-"Candy Cane" pin. Congratulations to all. The items that are still available from the Hat, Mitten & Scarf Sale can be purchased during the Rummage Sale. Thanks to Evelyn Martin, the Berkshire Reading Club & the BlacksheepHandspinners Guild for those items. We had snowflakes around the library during the month of December for the children to find. When they found them all they won a Christmas pencil. Keep a look-out kiddies around Easter, you just might see rabbits or eggs around the library. It has also been suggested that we have another guessing game and jelly beans were mentioned. You will have to come in and find out. During Story Time this year we are running a program of "Every Child Ready to Read" This helps the children learn the skills they need to start reading when they start school. These skills can also be used for the student who might be having problems with reading in school. We work with both the children and the adults. Please help us reach more children and show them the worlds that will open for them when they read. We are applying for more grant money this year to keep the story time running and to start some computer & tablet classes. Many have asked for these classes and with more people getting tablets, new smaller laptops and ereaders for the holidays, they need to know how to use them. Please let us know if you would be interested in taking the class so we can get a rough count of how many might be coming.

2nd Annual Trash & Treasures Rummage Sale February 6 & 7 from 9-4

HOME BAKED TREATS, COFFEE & HOT COCOA - Eat here or take home. At the Berkshire Community Hall, Jewett Hill Rd. (behind the Library) - Plus a **ROMANCE BOOKSALE**. You can drop donated items off at the Library before the 6th. Please come and support Your Library. February 25th is Advocacy Day for Libraries. Anyone interested in riding a bus to Albany with me to talk to our State Representatives about the importance of the Library to our community, call the library during normal business hours during the week for more information. If you would like to write a letter, postcard or send an email call us for the information and addresses. We have address labels for both Senator Libous and Assemblyman Friend. *LuAnn Whirl, Director*

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BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY

2014 has come to close. Looking back at 2014 it was about average for us. We were dispatched to 190 calls total in 2014. Most of them are EMS calls for our ambulance squad. The 2014 fire calls break down as follows: House Fires 1, Trash and Grass Fires 4, Vehicle Fires 1, Business Fires 1, Barn Fires 2, Motor Vehicle Accidents 3, Community Service Calls 10, Mutual Aid Calls 15. All of these along with most of the EMS calls were answered by our volunteers. As you can see we do stay very busy. We appreciate the support we get from you it ensures our ability to continue to help you when you are in need. We held our annual elections at our December meeting and the 2015 officers are: Chief- Bret Welch, 1st Asst.- Ken Bean, 2nd Asst.- Jeff Brown, President- Butch Ceurter We have several events coming up in 2015, keep an eye on our sign for event information. You can also find out about events, recalls, and fire company news on our Facebook page so be sure to like us at www.facebook.com/NewBerkshireFireStation. 2015 has already started out bad. We have had two motor vehicle accidents and January hasn't ended yet. Please slow down and be careful on the NY winter roads and be sure to wear your seat belts. We are a strictly volunteer department and as always we need more volunteers to keep this organization going. Consider joining our family of neighbors helping neighbors. Everyone can do something in fire service. Stop by at one of our meetings on the first Tuesday of every month at 7 PM. We will provide all the training you need at no cost. We have both in house training as well as several state classes that are offered throughout the county. As always, you can reach me on my cell, (607) 427-0964, with any questions you may have. *Chief Bret Welch*

BERKSHIRE CODE ENFORCEMENT

Happy New Year Everyone! As we all know, winter is here and as unpredictable as always. Please remember to inspect and clean your chimney if using wood, pellets, or coal. Make note that if you install or have a company install any new heating source such as a wood stove, pellet stove, coal stove, boiler furnace, gas furnace, or any type of fire place insert you need to get a permit for the installation of such heating sources and as well as the new unit needs to be inspected by Code Enforcement prior to its use. I have been on the job for just a few months now here in Berkshire. Things seem to be going well. I am focusing on cleaning up and closing up old open cases. Many of the residents have been very cooperative and I truly appreciate that! The first area I am concentrating on within Berkshire, is Property Maintenance issues. This includes: unregistered/unlicensed vehicles, scrap, garbage, rubbish, junk, weed, etc. Some of you may have noticed the abandoned car by the Railroad Tracks has been removed. This is just a start to the clean-up I hope to see over the next few months. My normal office hours in Berkshire are Thursday evenings 4:30-6PM but I can be available through phone at (607) 744-9383, as well as through e-mail at racheljacobsceo@gmail.com. I am more than willing to set up appointments to meet with residents to discuss any issues. *Rachel Jacobs*

BERKSHIRE ASSESSOR

I will be in my **Berkshire Town Hall** office Friday February 6th and February 27th from 8:30am-10am. **All exemptions have to be in by 3/1/2015.** They can be mailed to me at: Berkshire Town Hall, 18 Railroad Avenue, Berkshire, New York 13736 dropped off at my Berkshire office. *Mike Maxwell* Sole Assessor 315-391-8323.

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL

Recently some folks from the many groups using the Hall noticed the large packages on the stage and inquired as to their purpose. When informed that they contained new basketball backboards they were very pleased and anxious to begin playing after installation. That installation has just been completed. Formerly, the Community Hall had just one end with a basket. We now have baskets at both ends, permitting full court play. The stage backboard will retract, permitting full use and view of the stage. These are glass backboards, with edge padding and new wall padding. It really is splendid! Credit for this major improvement must go to Alan Westfall. Alan played basketball in the Community Hall while growing up in Berkshire and he wishes for today's youth of Northern Tioga County to have the same opportunities he had. Thank You Alan! *Dick Bierl*

Once again the Tioga County Council on the Arts will host a round/square dance at the Berkshire Community Hall. This year the dance will be held on Saturday evening, March 14. The event will feature a live band. Some food and drinks will be available. It is a fun filled night reminiscent of activities for which the Berkshire Community Hall was originally intended more than 80 years ago. Once details are finalized info will be sent out via town wide email (Berkshire happenings).

TOWN WIDE EMAIL LIST

We maintain a list of email addresses to disseminate information of significant happenings in and around Berkshire such as major projects, meetings, fundraisers, public hearings, new or proposed legislation, etc. We have 200 addresses on the list and have been using it to help keep you informed for more than 12 years. It has proven to be a very effective way to get near real time communications to those people in Town who have email capability and wish to keep up with what is happening around Berkshire and surrounding areas. The program also serves as an excellent way for us to receive feedback. As a protection against personal use and SPAM, messages are sent out as Blind Carbon Copies so the entire list will never be sent to any recipients. Comments on the information provided and the use of the list has been very positive. To be placed on the list or to change an email address, contact Skip Hartwig - 657 8418, email skhartwig@frontiernet.net.

Melinda Eaton

Owner/Operator

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2640 ROUTE 26, MAINE**WWW.FKSINSURANCE.COM****BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT**

The Ambulance Squad has been busy so far this year. We had our annual elections: Captain - Darlene Wait, Lieutenant - Bob Wait, Secretary, Kelly Sharp. We have been dispatched for 15 calls for January. Two of our members have recertified as Basic EMTs, Darlene Wait and Melinda Case. Ron Sharp is taking the refresher class. We also have some people in Basic EMT class, Jamie O'Connor, and Jason Hewett. We have two first responders Rebecca Miller (who is upgrading her certification to EMT) and Cindy Ceurter. Kaitlyn Alexander is taking first responder's class as well. It is great to see people stepping up to serve the community. We always welcome more volunteers, many hands make lighter work. The ambulance that we currently have needs to be replaced and there are discussions with the commissioners about that possibility in the near future. If you are interested in volunteering for the Ambulance Squad please call the station at 607-657- 2727 and leave a message. *Darlene Wait*

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BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board is continuing work on a Road Use Local Law and Agreement. Though the State has recently announced that high volume hydro-fracturing for natural gas will not be going forward at this time, our current Road Preservation Local Law needed updating anyway and was not being updated solely in anticipation of that activity, so we will continue to complete that effort. We are happy to announce that Tim Pollard has been reappointed for another five-year term through 2019, and Bette Johnson has been reappointed for another one-year term as an alternate member through 2015. The full membership on the Planning Board is now: Ken Ceurter, Chair; Sarah Albrecht, Vice Chair and Secretary; Tim Pollard (also rep. to County Planning Board), Marty Mattrazzo, Frank Kunik, and Bette Johnson (alternate). Our bylaws allow for up to two alternate members, so we do still have a vacancy for another alternate; if you are interested in that position, please contact Ken Ceurter at 657-2831 or kc_cute@frontiernet.net Sarah Albrecht

BERKSHIRE POST OFFICE—NEW HOURS

Post Office Lobby Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Retail Window Monday - Friday 8:00 AM - 11:30 AM and 12:30 PM - 3:00 PM Saturday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Call Martin Kilmer, Post Master with any questions at phone number 607-642-3611



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HIGHWAY NEWS

Last year we rebuilt the south half of North Ketchumville Rd., repaved Ford Hill Rd. and leveled and coated the Town Hall parking lot. With the cost of paving material, especially the petroleum products, that was all that our budget would permit. This year I plan to pave the reworked portion of N. Ketchumville and build up and pave a large section of Rejmer Rd. I would also like to rework and pave the remainder of McMahan Rd. but that will be determined by funding availability. We have not decided how we will acquire road gravel this year. We no longer have the pit on Rt. 79 available to us. Current options are to have the stockpile behind the Town Hall crushed or purchase what we need when we need it. We will go with the most cost effective way once we get prices.

So far the winter has been a little less severe than last year, but we are still using a lot of sand. Will likely have to buy more this season. Had a couple of plow trucks break down but they are all back up and running now. We had to use our backup truck which normally carries the brine tank in the summer. We used all of our waste oil reserves last winter and although we should have enough for this season, we are finding it more difficult to get. If you are looking to get rid of any waste oil, please drop it off at the highway barn. If you have large quantities, contact us 657 2705, and we will pick it up. We have been having some difficulty with our furnace and the repairman believes some of the problems are caused by synthetic oils. If you do bring any synthetic oil please let someone know or indicate such on the container. *Karl Spoonhower*

NEWSLETTER DELIVERY

We want to make sure you get the Town Quarterly newsletter. Keeping the address list current is still one of the most difficult and time consuming things that we do. We really need your help. Please let us know if: you or someone you know is not receiving a newsletter or getting duplicates; have a change or correction of a name or address or email; you can receive the newsletter via email saving us printing and mailing costs; are receiving the newsletter but it is addressed to Current Resident or Boxholder. We would like to have your name on our address list. Contacts: Fraser Williams, 657 2742, fraserw@citlink.net or Skip Hartwig 657 8418, skhartwig@frontiernet.net



YOUTH ACTIVITIES

BOY SCOUTS: Do you want to camp, learn about emergency skills and citizenship, and have the opportunity to learn about exciting hobbies and jobs? If you are older than 10, or have completed the fifth grade, join Boy Scouts! When Scouts first join a troop, they learn basic camping, first aid, and citizenship skills. As they get older, they learn leadership skills and take merit badges, where they have the opportunity to explore more than 100 topics that cover wide ranges of occupations, sports, hobbies, and skills. During this journey, young men learn to “Be Prepared,” and “Do a Good Turn Daily,” to become a more well-rounded, respected, and skilled asset to their family and community. Looking back, I didn’t realize how important what I was doing and learning would be to me in the future when I became a Boy Scout, I was more concerned about having fun, which is perhaps the greatest part of Scouting. Some of the best opportunities I have had for camping and travel have come through Scouting; from whitewater rafting, Gettysburg hiking and museum ship visits with my troop, to travelling to the 2013 National Jamboree in West Virginia with the local council contingent, I have seen and done much through Scouting, and opportunities like these are what excite other Scouts as well. In addition to valuable basic skills and fun Scouting can offer, Scouts looking for a challenge can work towards a number of awards ranging from athletic to environmental to religious. They can also work towards the rank of Eagle Scout, earning 21 merit badges in a variety of subjects, holding a leadership position in their troop, and leading a service project to benefit the community. I was very excited to have completed the long journey to Eagle last fall. Now that I have completed this journey, I can see the value in the experience more than just the fun, awards, or specific skills: Scouting helps to teach important values and lessons. Time management, balancing many demands, leadership and working in an organization, respect, presentation skills; all of these are invaluable no matter what your path in life, and I have gained these from my experience. I wholeheartedly recommend Scouting to anyone with an interest in learning more about citizenship, the outdoors, and themselves. Scouting can be a great experience for families also; involvement in a Troop allows moms and dads to meet other parents, become adult leaders, and attend scout functions. If you are interested in joining Scouting, come visit Troop 30 at a meeting Monday nights at 6:30 on the second floor of the Newark Valley Post office, when school is in session, to see if Scouting is right for you. Please visit <https://sites.google.com/site/nvtroop30/> to learn more about the Newark Valley troop, or www.bpcouncil.org to learn more about the Baden Powell Council. P.S. The Community Hall in Berkshire is a great place to hold an event! I held my Eagle Scout Court of Honor in the building, accommodating dozens of guests for a ceremony, then playing basketball afterwards. Look no further for a great multi-purpose space in our community.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

CHEERLEADING: The NTYL (Northern Tier Youth League) Cheer teams saw a successful season which began with the Lady Cardinals leading cheers at several football teams, appearing on floats, and ended with three competitions hosted by Owego, Susquehanna, PA and Windsor schools. Across all three teams there were many first, second, and third place scores. This season gave us 35 girls spread across 3 teams. Our youngest cheerleader was five and our oldest was fourteen. Our program runs in such a way that the older seasoned girls spend a great deal of time sharing their skills with the beginners and creates bonds between them that never would have a chance to form in other sporting structures. It is a win win for all ages as the older girls get to show their love for the sport and try their hands at mentoring while the younger girls now have a mentor to look up to and strive to be like. I talk about girls a lot however our teams are actually co-ed! We have yet to have boys join our group but would love to have them! Did you know the first cheerleaders were men in college? Think about that if your Son asks to join the cheer squad. Want to join for the fall 2015 seasons? Contact us!

Below is some information on other youth sports activities available through NTYL. For regular updates search on Facebook for NTYL Youth Sports and ask to join the group:

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Contacts</u>	<u>Season</u>
Baseball	Vickie Bigelow Vickielynn6@gmail.com	Spring
Softball	Tom Darpino 607-642-3623	Spring (practice starts 4/1)
Football	Jamie Hoffmier jlh77@cornell.edu	August – October
Cheerleading	Barbara Gehm Jordan Telessa Bean (607-972-4847) ntylcheer@gmail.com	August – October
Field Hockey	Jessica Doehring 607-372-6068 ntylfh@gmail.com	August – October Summer Camp in July
Wrestling	Ryan Benjamin (607-280-1542) newarkvalleywrestling@gmail.com	November – March
Tie-Kwon do	Kat Amato and JPM CCA kathys.kitchen@hotmail.com	All Year

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