

May 2014

# TOWN NEWSLETTER

Published by the:  
Berkshire Communities Association

BCA  
PO Box 113  
Berkshire, NY 13736  
Phone: 607-657-2742  
www.BerkshireNY.net

Vol: 2014 Issue: #2

## SUPERVISORS NOTES

Wow, spring is finally here, I think for real. The arrival of spring brings many good things; flowers, green grass and of course the shade from the trees. We will soon be bringing the signs that welcome folks to Berkshire on the north and south ends of town back to a renewed life. We truly miss our gardeners and all the work they put into those areas. However, that arrival also has brought some not so pleasant things – pot holes and even worse damage to the roads. Our road crew is working on fixing those items as well as trying to maintain and rebuild the roads that were already planned for maintenance. You can also help keep our community an appealing place to live by reporting anyone that may be illegally dumping tires or garbage near your home. DO NOT put yourself at risk, but if you can safely get license plate or other information to help law enforcement apprehend those responsible, it would be great. On another note, I mentioned a town survey to help us “the town board” understand what the residents would like to see happening in your community. Thanks to the folks working on that project, (Sarah Albrecht (Chair), Jerry Acton, Carol Kania, Bill Leonard, and Tara McKenzie), that survey has been finished and now is in the process of printing and distributing to all households with a Berkshire mailing address. We are aware that not everyone with a Berkshire mailing address actually resides in the actual town limits, we would prefer to err on

the side of not missing any home. This survey is a positive outreach to try to understand the needs and desires of our residents. Please try to keep your response positive as well as honest. We, the board, want to see positive progress for our town, while making sure the residents’ needs are represented in that effort. Take just a few minutes to answer the survey. You will be able to drop off the completed survey at the Library or the Town Clerk. We are also attempting to place the survey on our website, [www.berkshireny.net](http://www.berkshireny.net) for printing or electronic submission. When this survey does arrive at your household we again only ask one thing – keep your thoughts positive in nature so that the results will also be positive for “your” community. Neither I nor the Board claims to have all the answers. The tentative tax assessment rolls will be available May 1<sup>st</sup>, the final numbers will be used to determine your 2015 property taxes. If you disagree with your assessment Tax Grievance day will be held on May 29<sup>th</sup> from 4-8pm in the town hall. Prior to that you may discuss your assessment with the town assessor on these dates and times: 5/13 1-4pm, 5/14 4-8pm, 5/17 8-10am, 5/29 1-4pm Rabies Clinic information may be obtained from the Town Clerk at 657-8131 As always follow the town activity on our Web site [www.BerkshireNY.net](http://www.BerkshireNY.net). Until next time, I hope you get a chance to come see us at the Board meetings on the 3rd Monday of each month at 7:00PM in the Town Hall.

Your Supervisor  
*Ron McEwen*

## YOUTH ACTIVITY NEWS

Tioga County, NY 4-H Club Program

A progressive learning program for youth 5 to 19 years old. The **4-H Program** is an expansive network reaching every corner of the country; 4-H is the nation’s largest youth development organization. More than 6 million 4-H youth in urban neighborhoods, suburban schoolyards and rural farming communities stand out among their peers: building revolutionary opportunities and implementing communitywide change at an early age. As the youth development program of the nation’s 109 land-grant universities and the Cooperative Extension System, 4-H fosters an innovative, “learn by doing” approach with proven results. Jody [jdt22@cornell.edu](mailto:jdt22@cornell.edu) 56 Main St., Owego, NY 13827 607-687-4020 607-687-3619 (fax) <http://tiogacounty4-h.pbworks.com/>

  
girl scouts  
of nypenn pathways

Sara Snitchler  
[ssnitchler@gsnypenn.org](mailto:ssnitchler@gsnypenn.org)  
Volunteer Services  
Manager/Johnson City  
Team Leader  
Girl Scouts of NYPENN  
Pathways, Inc.  
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2427 F 607.724.6575  
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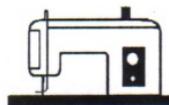
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Division of: Brown's Sharpening

### **BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL**

The Berkshire Community Association (BAC) continues to grind out improvements in the renovation/restoration project. The Hall is a fantastic building and a unique, historical part of Berkshire's history, but it is very large and was constructed well before today's building and safety codes were created. BCA has to insure that compliance and safety standards are upgraded whenever we plan a project and that makes such efforts extremely expensive. We have been very fortunate in obtaining grant money, however increasing competition for those limited grant opportunities is seriously impacting our application success rate. The generosity of local individuals and businesses has been truly amazing. Donations have exceeded \$30,000. Thousands of volunteer hours made many projects possible and/or complemented those contracts funded from grants and donations. The most recent efforts resulted in the insulating, sheet rocking, interior construction, lighting and electrical upgrades of the first floor. The attractive results not only improve the appearance but will result in a huge energy savings. Interior painting will be done in the near future by volunteers. This \$15,000 renovation was made possible by a grant from the Mildred Truman Faulkner Foundation and matching funds by individual and local business donations. Berkshire and local area residents seem to appreciate the return of the Hall to the community. In addition to significant positive feedback as well as tremendous support for our fundraisers, the Hall was used more than 200 times last year and those numbers do not include the Helping Hands Food Pantry which operates full time from the first floor. We have many reservations for the remainder of 2014, and are now receiving requests that sometimes cannot be accommodated due to previous bookings. As of now we are not specifically charging noncommercial events, but we willingly accept donations, for we have no continuing source of funds. We do pass on to the users the cost of heating, when heat is required in the uninsulated second story hall. It is truly rewarding to be part of a project that is successfully bringing back to life a most memorable and historic part of the community. Please think about becoming part of an effort that truly benefits the whole Northern Tioga area. It does not take a lot of time. You do not have to become a planner or Board Member. We have unlimited use for workers, ideas, and just plain moral support. Stop in at one of our meetings, held at the Town Hall at 7:00PM on the first Monday of each month – no strings, or call me just to chat about BCA. 657 2742.

*Fraser Williams*

**HIGHWAY NEWS**

This winter has been long and expensive, but I can finally take the plow equipment off the trucks. Because of the extended severe cold we burned a lot of used oil in our waste oil furnace. I hate to think of the cost if we had to buy heating oil at \$4 a gallon. We need to replenish our supply for next season. You can drop oil off at the Highway garage or if you have large quantities (50 gal +) we can pick it up. Getting some roadwork done, especially ditching. Got a pretty good deal on gravel from Lopke's pit near the Broome Tioga County Line. Newark Valley and Richford are also taking advantage of this "bargain". Still plan to hire a crusher for all the gravel we took from flooded areas last fall. We will use a lot of the gravel on sections of North Ketchumville Road which we plan to rebuild this season. Trucks and equipment holding up quite well with the exception of the grader which is really on borrowed time.

*Karl Spoonhower*

**BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT AMBULANCE**

The Berkshire Fire District ambulance has been working diligently to serve the needs of our community. Last year we responded to over 80 calls for help. We have seven devoted people who are experienced and dedicated. We currently have three people in class to join in the effort. As of this date we have answered 22 calls and are prepared to continue providing help. If you would like to join in the effort to help the community, call Bret Welch at 657- 0964 or Darlene Wait at 657-2539. You can also call the Fire station at 657-2727 and leave a message.

*Darlene Wait*



**Cardinal Cafe**  
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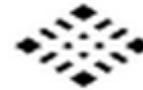
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**BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD**

The town-wide survey committee (Sarah Albrecht (Chair), Jerry Acton, Carol Kania, Bill Leonard, and Tara McKenzie) has completed drafting a survey to residents. The Planning Board forwarded their approval to the Town Board, and the Town Board is finalizing their review. All Berkshire addresses will receive a copy of the survey, and instructions for completing and submitting it will be included. It is expected to have a very small impact on your time (just minutes to complete), but a huge impact on the direction the Town Board chooses to take on your behalf. Keep watch for the survey in the next couple months and have your opinion heard! The Planning Board is actively working on a draft Road Use Local Law to protect Town roads from high frequency, high impact traffic, and utilizing a number of resources to make sure we have a very well written law. There are still openings on the Planning Board for two Alternate members. These are one-year, voluntary term appointments who are expected to attend and participate in our 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of the month meetings and have voting privileges when regular members are absent. If you are interested in more information, please contact Ken Ceurter, Planning Board Chair, at 657-2831.

*Sarah Albrecht*

**TOWN OFFICIALS & MEETINGS**

Town Board Meetings 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:00 pm

Supervisor: Ron McEwen 657-8678 h 657-2531

Town Board: John Stoughton, Fraser Williams,  
Lillian Hoffmier, Ron Sharp 657-8678

Planning Board Chair: Ken Ceurter 657-2831  
Meetings - 1st Tuesdays, 6:30 pm

Highway Superintendent: Karl Spoonhower 657-  
2705

Town Clerk: Connie Liddington 657-8131 12421 St.  
Rt. 38. M-Thur 6-8pm, Sat 10 am – 2 pm

Justice: Charles Brundza, 657-8286 Court 3rd  
Monday- 5:00pm

Assessor: Michael Maxwell 315-391-8323, 657-8635  
18 Railroad Ave.



Town Code Enforcement: Lee Virtue 657-8635 c  
760-5551 - Thursdays from 1 to 7 pm

Dog Control Officer: Ron Raab 426-4567

Berkshire Fire Commissioners: Don Liddington,  
Chair, Bob Waite, Bill Morris, Butch Ceurter,  
Rodney Russell - Meetings 4th Wednesday, 7 pm

Fire Chief: Bret Welch

Berkshire Fire District EMS Squad Captain:  
Darlene Wait

Tim and Deb Stoughton (607) 642-3675	Open Daily May - Oct.
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<p>Home of the Area's Original Large Scale Corn Maze E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@stoughtonfarm.com">info@stoughtonfarm.com</a> 10898 State Route 38 <a href="http://www.stoughtonfarm.com">www.stoughtonfarm.com</a> Newark Valley, NY 13811 <a href="http://www.cornfieldmaze.com">www.cornfieldmaze.com</a></p>	

**CODE ENFORCMENT**

As I sit here writing this article I'm thinking of all the ways I can stress the importance of the Building Codes, especially to those who don't think we need them. At one time I also thought we did not need codes but as I go through life and see all the crazy things people do in building, electrical, and plumbing I have to agree we need them. Our building codes are changing all the time, and even though I question some of them, most of the codes make sense. We have a lot of fly by night guys out there that can swing a hammer but have no concept on how to build the correct way i.e.: structures, decks, and pole barns. It is my job the see that things are done correctly and to code. I want to stress that we have several contractors in our area who do great work and I'd like to recommend that the community try to use our local contractors first. Building season is starting so if you are building anything please call me and discuss your plans and or ideas. Some plans will need to be approved by a PE prior to building. In addition in the past I have tried to be lenient on the building permits, will be changing. If you don't complete a project within the one year time frame you will need to obtain a second permit to complete the project. This from NYS Dept. of Building and Fire Codes.

Lastly but not least. Bret Welsh and I try the work together when there is a house fire. Technically the Code Enforcement Officer is the only one to allow anyone to enter a building after the fire is put out. Because Bret works for the state I have been allowing him to do this as he is on scene most of the time. If he is not then I need to be contacted. This is for your safety to make sure it is safe for you to enter. Remember even though you may think I'm only here to harass you I'm not. I just want to make sure things are done safely. You may hear things that are going on about me but that is OK. I do not mind people questioning me, that is what keeps me on my toes, but I will say that I do research issues and I do talk to the state and that is how I learn and make sure I'm doing the correct thing and making the right decisions. Have a great summer and remember if you are going to burn large piles of brush let the Fire Dept. know first. Phone 607-760-5551 email: [berkshirecode@gmail.com](mailto:berkshirecode@gmail.com)

*Leon Virtue*

**BERKSHIRE FIRE**  
**COMPANY NEWS**

We are enjoying our new home. We have had several trainings and the extra room makes this much easier and more educational. We have also had several successful events and more will be coming so be sure to watch the sign so you don't miss out on the delicious dinners and breakfast. We also held our annual awards banquet in the station. It was the first time we could hold this event with

everyone in the meeting hall side of the station and not move the trucks out. We are still working with USDA and the contractors to complete some of the work on the station. We are also working with USDA to purchase items with remaining grant money. These final purchases are not yet approved but should be soon and we can wrap up the remaining open items for the station. We have been hosting a NYS Certified First Responder class that will be ending in May. The course has gone well and the instructor and students have given us many compliments on the new building. We would like to thank everyone for their compliments on the new station. If you haven't had a chance to see it yet please stop by some time when you see members there and let us show it off to you.

The burn ban ends May 15th; after that you can burn your brush. It is always illegal to burn trash in New York State. Remember if you are burning brush or having bonfires or camp fires, be careful, and keep the area around the fire clear of anything that can burn. Also, be sure to have a hose or at least a fire extinguisher handy in case the fire starts to spread. Everyone have a safe and enjoyable summer. As always more volunteers are needed. Please feel free to stop the first Tuesday of any month at 7:00PM and check out a meeting. We always have applications available. Or you can call me anytime at 427-0964 and I will meet with and show how you can help our community.

*Bret Welch, Chief*

**NEWSLETTER DELIVERY**

Our goal is to get this newsletter to everyone in Berkshire. Obtaining and keeping the address list current is one of the hardest and most 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



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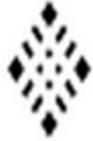
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Fax: (607) 725-8388  
Patsi3467@aol.com

**SPECIAL THANKS**

We are very grateful to our faithful helpers. Telessa Bean spends a lot of time organizing and laying out the plain vanilla version of the newsletter that we hand her each quarter. Artfully inserting the many ads from our sponsors is no easy task. Barbara Williams, Millie Stout, Louise Beebe and Tina Williams are always there to help with the time consuming task of labeling and preparing the newsletter for delivery. Please take note of our sponsors who make it possible to bring you the newsletter without using a penny of your tax money.

*Fraser Williams*



# HOLLENBECK'S

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# FOODS

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### ASSESSOR NEWS

Grievance Day will be held Thursday, May 29 from 4 - 8 pm at the Berkshire Town Hall, 18 Railroad Avenue. Grievance Day gives property owners the opportunity to discuss and to seek relief for their property assessments with Board of Review members Frank Kunik, Paul Kunik and Bill Ward . By law, I must attend this meeting, but am not a member of the Board of Assessment Review. Property owners whose assessments were changed have been notified directly by mail.

Copies of the required assessment complaint form will be available at the meeting. Copies of the form can also be obtained from the Assessor Mike Maxwell at 315-391-8323, email: maxappraisal@hotmail.com. or from the County Real Property Tax Office, 56 Main St., Owego, NY.

I will be at the Berkshire Town Hall with the roll on the following dates:

May 13, 1-4pm

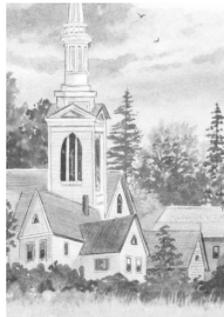
May 14, 4-8pm

May 17, 8-10:30am

May 29, 1-4pm.

*Mike Maxwell 315-391-8323*

## Caring... as only a neighbor can.



The meaning of a good neighbor is not only someone who is close by – it is someone you can always count on to be there. You can rely on us to be available for your family 24 hours a day, seven days a week, every day of the year...and on a moment's notice.

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**BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY**

It's a very busy time here at the library. We received the Bernard Carl & Shirley Rosen Library Fund Grant again this year for Story Time. This money will cover the cost of running the program in both Berkshire and Richford, buying more supplies for crafts and activities, and starting the "Every Child Ready to Read" program. This program works with both the children and the parents or caregivers and it helps to get the child ready for school. It will also give useful advice on helping other children with homework. We understand how hard it can be for parents to help with the homework the students bring home these days. Another item that this grant will cover is bringing the Ross Park Zoo Mobile to both Berkshire and Richford Story Time. Then lastly we will buy books for pre-school aged children, some of which we will be taking to the Richford Story Time so the children there can check out books. Don't forget we still have the Adopt-A-Book program going on. You can adopt an adult book for \$20.00 or a Childs book for \$10.00 we will put a book plate in the book with your name on it or someone you would like to honor or remember. It would be a wonderful gift for a friend or family member to honor them with a book at the library. If your child has made the honor roll at school or worked real hard to bring up a grade you could honor them with a book with their name in it for all their friends to see. When you Adopt-A-Book you are the first one to check it out and read it. Board members are hard at work on grants for much needed repairs and improvements to the building. They have received grant money toward insulating the library and some other projects that will help with making the library more energy efficient. Money for improvements to the ramp and a new paint job are also being worked on. We have a great start to our Teen Space with a donation from Warren & Marion Rutan for the new shelving. We were able to get a corner unit and two other shelves that have given us much needed space for books. High school students please let us know what good books you are reading so we might add those to our growing collection. We are making plans for the Summer Reading Programs. This year the theme is "FIZZ, BOOM, READ". We have "**MORELAND THE MAGICIAN**" Coming To the Berkshire Community Hall on Saturday July 19<sup>th</sup> at 1 PM. Admission is free and the entire family is invited. We will be doing experiments, having fun with games and crafts. Prizes to earn. Students can sign-up after the first of June and can start reading as soon as school lets out. They can continue to read until the end of August. We have lots of new books for young and old. We have the newest James Patterson, Clive Cussler, Danielle Steel and M.C. Beaton to name just a few.... *LIBRARAY Continued...* We also have the entire Percy Jackson series with the Heroes of Olympus and we just got the latest Diary of a Wimpy Kid. All of our public computers have been upgraded to Windows 7 thanks to the help of Charlie Steiglitz. This gives us a few more years to work on replacing the computers. Finger Lakes Library System that we replace computers every 5 years to make sure our community has what they need. We still have Story Time Tuesdays 10-11 at the library. Our hours are: Tues. 12-5, Wed. 1:30-7, Thurs. 1-5, Fri. 1:30-5 and Sat. 9-2. email – [bfl@htva.net](mailto:bfl@htva.net) LuAnn Whirl Director



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 email: [FCCBerkshire@gmail.com](mailto:FCCBerkshire@gmail.com)  
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 Sunday School + Adult Bible Study 9:30 AM  
 Summer Worship 10:00 AM

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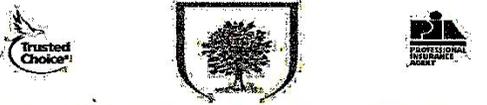
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Berkshire Town Newsletter

**TOWNWIDE EMAIL**

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 190 addresses on the list and have been using it to help keep you informed for more than 11 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](mailto:skhartwig@frontiernet.net).



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**Berkshire Post Office Hours**

**WINDOW Hours**  
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Sat 9:00 AM till 11:00 AM

**LOBBY Hours**  
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Sat 7:30 AM till 11:30 AM