

November 2012
TOWN NEWSLETTER
*Published by the:
Berkshire Community Association*

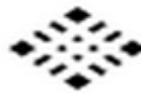
BCA
PO Box 113
Berkshire, NY 13736
Phone: 607-657-2742
www.BerkshireNY.net

Vol: 2012 Issue: #4

SUPERVISORS NOTE

I don't know about you, but to me it seems like just yesterday summer started and here it is fall already. Hope everyone enjoyed their summer. The Board and I would like to start by saying thank you to Kathy Hartwig for her 10 years of volunteer service with the "Whacky Weeders". Kathy is stepping down from this and will truly be missed. We now must try to maintain the Welcome signs on both ends of town to the high standards with which Kathy maintained them. Again, thank you Kathy. We would also like to say thank you to those town residents that either already have, or are in the process of, cleaning up their properties. It is appreciated and certainly helps to make your town look much better. As Election Day, November 6th, approaches I would again like to explain the 2 local propositions for Berkshire. 1st voting "yes" on these does not extend the current term for those presently holding the position. Should one or both pass voter approval they would become effective for those running for office in November 2013 for the term starting in January 2014. The Town presently has Board Member terms of two, three and four years. Passing these propositions would expand upon this to include the Highway Superintendent and Town Supervisor. The present two year term only gives the person holding the position one year to learn the job, start to work toward possible improvement or changes, and then it is time to run for office again. Even in the most progressive governments two years is really not enough time to start and finish most projects. We all know that State and Federal issues make holding a local office more complex each year. As your current Supervisor I hope that you will give the four year term a chance. However, whether you vote "yes" or "no" please be sure to exercise your right to vote and go vote on November 6th. We are presently working on a town budget for 2013. We have been informed that our Workers' Compensation bill for next year will be increasing over 100% or an increase of over 15,000 and this is out of the Board's control. Other costs are also expected to go up the same as with your household budget. Electric and gas, the cost of oil for paving are just a few examples. We are working to keep taxes as low as possible even with these increases. We will have a public hearing on the proposed budget at 6:30 PM on November 19th in the Town Hall.

We now have an updated Web Site for the town "BerkshireNY.net". We try to keep it current with information on meeting agendas and minutes of the Town Board as well as minutes from the Planning Board. All of the current hours and contact information has been updated. We are still working on this site and will be adding more information as time permits. Please take a look and we hope you find it beneficial.. Until next time I will continue to work for you and look forward to seeing you at our meetings on the third Monday of each month. *Ron McEwen*



BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL

Restoration Progress Continues. There has been very significant activity in the Berkshire Community Hall during the past 3 months. The Berkshire Community Association (BCA) has received 2 new grants – One from NYSEG to provide supplemental electric heat for the proposed Helping Hands Food Pantry and lighting as well as complete rewiring, of the entire lower level of the Hall; the other grant comes from the Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation. This second grant allowed us to contract for removal and replacement of the old deteriorating concrete floor. This project is complete. The Truman Grant will also supplement previously acquired funding from the Community Foundation of South Central NY for construction required to allow the Food Pantry to move from the basement of the Berkshire Congregational Church into the Hall. We expect to be able to complete the relocation within the next couple of months. Now that the new concrete floor is a reality, we can begin construction and a contract has been awarded. The new Pantry facilities will be the only one in Tioga County designed specifically for a food storage and distribution program. There will be a ground level ADA compliant entrance and restocking will be very much easier for Pantry Staff. The remainder of the Truman Grant will be used to install a septic system. BCA has a County approved plan for the system and this will bring us one step closer to having a functioning restroom. While long range planning calls for eventually having 3 restrooms (Men's and Ladies' in the main West Wing entryway, and one in the lower level), we are striving to get one in working order as soon as possible. The interior of a restroom is very near completion, thanks to significant individual donations and many man-hours of volunteer labor. We are working on the issue of water supply and hope for a resolution shortly. Both levels of the Community Hall now have heat available. *...continued on page 3*

BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT: NEW FIRE STATION PROGRESS

The Fire Station has been sold. Ed Brown from E&B Salvage purchased the old station for \$100.00. This saved the district from having to pay \$5000.00 to have it removed. During the demolition DEC stopped the work due to a complaint filed through the tip hot line about lead paint and asbestos. The district had to hire a company to do testing. The results were the bathroom doors had lead paint and need to be disposed of separately from regular debris. And, there was asbestos caulk in two window panes as well as mastic on the original backsplash above the kitchen counters. The asbestos was then abated by Sunstream. Once the demolition is completed Preparations for the new building will begin. The contractors have asked for an extension of the 180 day deadline to build it due to the late start and winter being here. The architect had already put provisions in the contract for extensions due to weather. All parties are content and construction will start as soon as the site is ready. We hope to be moving in some time in the spring. Lee Virtue has been hired by the district as the clerk of the works and will oversee the entire project. We would like to thank Karl and his workers at the highway department for emptying out room in the old highway garage for us to put the trucks while the station is being built. It is cramped for both us and them but will work for the interim and keep the equipment from freezing which is the important issue. Also, we would like to thank the Town Board and the Congregational Church for allowing us to hold meeting at their facilities. The number of fire calls continues to stay down which is very good but, the number of medical calls for the ambulance is on the rise. To help make the ambulance responses easier we are purchasing a used power stretcher for loading and unloading patients with less chance of injuring our responders. The stretcher is only a year old and still has a year of factory warranty left on it but it is only \$8250 instead of the new price of over \$12,000. The ambulance is also going to be purchasing a new electronic medical reporting system. This is required by the state and must be done by January 1, 2013. Unfortunately, since we have no station we cannot do any fund raising dinners this winter. We will still sell food at the motorcycle races starting in the spring. Next year will continue with various breakfast and suppers for our community. We would like to thank the community for supporting us through this long process of getting a new station. We hope the end is in sight. As always we are looking for more volunteers. Remember there is something everyone can do. Our meetings are now being held at the Congregational Church the first Tuesday of each month. Stop by and talk to your friends and neighbors and join our family.

Be sure when you see one of our members to thank them for what they do. We are all volunteers and give up our time to help you the people of Berkshire.

Bret Welch Fire Chief



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HIGHWAY NEWS

Our summer road work is winding down and we are nearly through with Shaff Rd. When we are done with Shaff we will also have finished the FEMA work associated with both 2011 flooding rainstorms. We have applied for the final payments from FEMA and CEMO its New York State counterpart. Although the 2011 rains did inflict quite a bit of damage here in Berkshire, the funds that we received helped us to do many projects that otherwise would have had to be funded by taxpayer dollars and most likely have taken many years to get the required funds. We still have money coming from FEMA and that should help us next year.

The Berkshire Fire Company has moved their equipment into the original section of the highway garage. While we had to maintain some of the space for oil and some smaller equipment, the Fire Company appears to have at least as much room available for their trucks and ambulance as they did in the old station. So far the "temporary" fire station seems to be working out well for all of us. We sold the old Gradall recently and surprisingly we got nearly as much for it as when we bought it 5 or 6 years ago. Our snow removal equipment is in good shape and once we are finished with the roads we will mount the wing plows. Our sand stockpile is in really good shape, thanks mostly to last year's exceptionally mild winter. I hope we have the same break this year. *Karl Spoonhower*

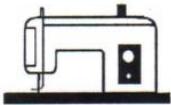
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The "West Wing" designed to be the main entrance, will house restrooms and provide all weather handicap access to both levels. The West Wing outer shell was constructed 2 years ago. The interior has been framed, wired and insulated by volunteers. A contractor applied the finish coats of paint and trimmed the exterior last month. We are always looking for those that would like to volunteer an hour or two or perhaps wish to contribute toward achieving a completed facility. We still need funding for 2 additional restrooms, interior framing and insulating, sheetrock, chairs and tables, kitchen appliances, and floor tile.

If you would like a tour of the Hall, please call me at 657-2742 or Skip Hartwig at 657-8418. You may be surprised to see how this 1932 Historical building has come to life. We invite you to drop in at one of our meetings to learn more about this restoration project. Our meetings are held on the first Monday of each month at 7PM in the Town Hall. The November meeting will be this coming Monday, Nov.5. *Fraser Williams*



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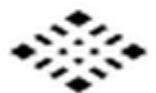
Monday - Thursday 9 - 9
Friday-Saturday 9 - 10
Sunday Noon - 7

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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 Box holder. 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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TOWN OFFICIALS & MEETINGS

Town Board Meetings 3rd 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 426-4567
Thursdays from 1 to 7PM

Dog Control Officer: Ron Raab 426-4567

Berkshire Fire Commissioners: Don Liddington, Chair,
Bob Waite, Donny Liddington, Butch Ceurter, Philip Davis

Meetings 4th Wednesday - Jan, Feb, Mar 5 pm. Apr
thru Dec – 7 pm

Fire Chief: Bret Welch

Berkshire Fire District EMS Squad Captain: Scott Albrecht

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BERKSHIRE LIBRARY NEWS

With the weather being so wet this fall and snow around the corner come on in and find a good book to curl up with. We have some new Children's books and new books for older students. I am trying to develop a "Young Adult" section in the library. I just received a grant of \$500.00 from The Friends of Tompkins County Public Library.

The money is to be used for children's and Young Adult books. I am also working on starting a "Reading Dog" program, where students can come into the library and read to a dog. Several residents who have dogs would like to help. Please let the library know if you have a dog or a child who could benefit from this program. We will be giving out treats to Trick or Treaters who stop in to scare the Librarian on Halloween until 7:00. The book sales in the community hall and the Potato Festival brought in about \$555.00 making our total for the year around \$710.00. We have set up a book shelf in the library for an on-going book sale. The books are \$.25-\$1.00 and if you buy 4 you get the 5th one free. We can keep track of the number of books you buy so you don't have to buy them all at once. The books will change often so keep watching the shelf. We also have handmade bookmarks for sale at \$2.00 each. You can put them in a card or letter to anyone at any time just for a little gift or a thank you. We will have handmade hats, mittens, shawls, and other items for sale at Thanksgiving time to start off your holiday shopping. Annual fundraising mailing as of 10/23/12. 53 of our neighbors have contributed \$2,140.00, our goal is \$4,500.00, and your donation of any size will be greatly appreciated. All book sale and fundraising goes toward the library's operation budget. The library has received two special donations from the Berkshire History buffs. \$1,000 will be used for the library's next building renovation project. \$3,000 was given to the Berkshire History Museum, also a part of the library. We would like to thank the History Buffs for their generosity. The current work on the roof and gutters is almost done. This was funded through grants from the Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation and the Community Foundation for South Central New York. Library Hours: Tuesday 12-5, Wednesday 1:30-7, Thursday 1-5, Friday 1:30-7 and Saturday 9-1. *LuAnn Whirl - Director*

LIFE IN BERKSHIRE

So why would a pastor from Missouri want to move to Berkshire, New York? And do you really like it here? Those are two of the questions I and my family have been fielding from folks we meet around the community since we arrived in mid-June. Kathy and I and our kids had come for a "candidating visit" to the church and community on the beautiful apple blossom weekend at the end of April, the one that turned terribly cold and did in the apple crop. We had been back in my hometown in Missouri for the past 4 years, and we'd been having an extremely warm, even hot spring so far, with a number of days approaching 90°. While people here assured us that the trees and flowers were actually several weeks early, we noted that the trees here were just budding, while back in Missouri the trees were already looking like early summer, and farmers had most of their corn already planted. So going to church Sunday morning at 24° did make us wonder what we were getting into! However, as a family, we're used to the cold. Kathy grew up north of Boston, with the cold, wet winters the coast of New England is famous for. And when I was growing up in Missouri, I remember a couple of very cold winters where it got down to 24° below zero. More than that, my first pastorate was in Minnesota, and in our 14 years there, the ground turned white about Thanksgiving, and rarely thawed until the end of March. The cold winds whistled down from the Canadian plains blowing lots of powdery snow. It gave snowmobilers plenty of fun — and snow-blowers plenty of work. Our kids (Elizabeth, 16, and David, 12) are actually looking forward to living again in a place that does get snow that lasts more than

...continued on page 7

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BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD

Your Town Planning Board has been busy this year reviewing some local laws that were out of date and updating them. The past several months have seen the update and passage of the Junkyard Law (regulates the establishment of new junkyards as well as existing, though there are not currently any existing in the Town of Berkshire) and a law to establish the Planning Board, which was necessary due to a change in NY State laws since the establishment of the Planning Board. We are currently working on the updating of the Manufactured Home Law, which regulates mobile home installations and replacements. In addition to other updates, we must incorporate the change by New York State to the terminology of "Manufactured Home" instead of "Mobile Home." Building permits are still required for the installation or replacement of any mobile/manufactured home within the town. We have also worked with the Highway Superintendent to install signs on the roads where snowmobile and ATV use is posted for the local clubs. The clubs provided the funding for these signs, and some of them have come up missing since their original placement. We are working on getting those replaced, and the clubs would appreciate if they could be left in place. It is a legal requirement for the roads to be posted for their use, and it costs them money to install them. We are still interested in having an additional Alternate Member join the Planning Board. Alternate Members are appointed annually (regular members are appointed to 5-year terms). It is a good opportunity to learn about the laws of the town and state, keep current on some local issues, and to give back some service to your community. If you are interested in serving, please contact the Planning Board Chair, Ken Ceurter, at 657-2831. Other members of the Board are: Sarah Albrecht, Wayne Antal (Alternate), Jim Lacey, Joe Palmeri and Tim Pollard.

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a few days at a time. (We'll see how they feel after a winter of shoveling it!). But enough of weather. One of the questions put to us during a conference call with the church's search committee last spring, was whether we'd really be comfortable with the rural, small town nature of Berkshire. To which, Kathy answered, "Let me tell you about rural" Kathy spent every summer with her mother and brother in a rustic cabin up on the coast of Maine, near relatives, but a 30 minute drive from the grocery store and Laundromat. Our church in Minnesota was in a town of 1000, though there was good shopping, etc, about 20 miles away in Rochester, MN. But the last 4 years we'd been in rural Northeast Missouri. From my hometown of Shelbina it was 80 miles to Columbia, MO with same range of shopping and services that can be found in Vestal, Johnson City, and Binghamton. So Berkshire doesn't seem that rural to us! This area also is much better for our homeschooling. There are many more homeschoolers within driving distance. Kathy and the kids are already starting to participate in joint homeschool activities in the Binghamton and Ithaca areas. I still haven't answered the first question: do we like it here? YES! We enjoy the great people and the beautiful hills. There are good things happening in the church and more in store for the future. But most of all, we like it here because we've got a strong sense of the Lord's calling to come. He has been faithful in leading us in the past, and He's given us a peaceful sense of assurance that Berkshire is where He wants us.

Jerry Platz, new pastor at the Red Brick Church

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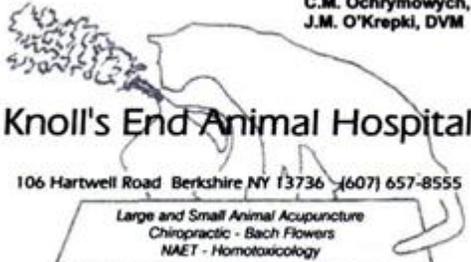
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- Reasonable Rates -

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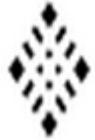
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Fruit Trays and Veggie Trays!!**Check out our weekly ad to see our wonderful specials***CODE ENFORCEMENT**

A lot of the items below were put out in the Spring of 2012 and are still being pursued. The Town Board has placed an emphasis on getting the town cleaned up. This is a big issue and you will be taken to court for non-compliance. For those of you that are cleaning your property up and keeping your properties nice, THANKS. Here are some issues that everyone in the Town of Berkshire needs to be aware of:

Building permits: required for: Electrical upgrades (services, main breaker panels), Plumbing, New additions, Porches, Repairs that involve a building's structure, Roof repairs. Call if you have a question.
House numbers: The Berkshire EMS Inc. is really having problems finding addresses. We have new drivers on the squad who are not familiar with the area, so it is to your advantage to make sure we can find you. New York State says numbers have to be 4" high and every house must display them. It is recommended to also get a sign made up from your local fire department - the GREEN ones placed by your driveway at the road. If you need the Fire Dept. or Squad it is hard for them to know what address is yours. This is a HUGE problem at night.

Wood Burning Stoves: need a permit to install. Code has seen some that are not installed correctly. Remember to clean your chimneys and keep them clean during the winter months.

Buildings that are falling down or in disrepair: Get them cleaned up or removed. This is the Code.

Trash, junk cars, and tires: Get rid of them. NYS Property Maintenance Laws states that you **Shall** keep your property clean and healthy.

If you are planning on installing a single wide, modular, or double wide home it needs to be installed by a **New York State certified installer**. A permit is needed and if replacing a unit you have 90 days to get the old one removed.

One last note, if you see someone that needs help during the winter please take some time to help them or call for help. Someday it may be you who needs help.

These are just some of the issues. If you have a question you can call me. My cell number is 607-760-5551.

New office hours – Thursdays from 1-7pm. *Lee Virtue Town of Berkshire Code Official*

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Berkshire Town Newsletter

TOWN WIDE 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 180 addresses on the list and have been using it to help keep you informed for more than 10 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.



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