

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

November 2014

BERKSHIRE TOWN NEWSLETTER

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Newark Valley, NY
Permit No. 3

Published by the
Berkshire Community Association
Vol: 2014 Issue #4

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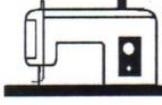
Karl and Ted installing the new Town Hall and Town Court sign

SUPERVISORS NOTES

Welcome back to the cold weather and Holidays. Seems like summer was only a couple of days long... oh well that how it goes in the southern tier of New York. After writing the letters concerning the highway condition through town, I was visited by a representative from Senator Libous's office. We talked about the situation and then traveled the bad section through town. He took pictures to take back with him to the state DOT and agreed with the residents that the State Route 38 through our community was in terrible condition compared to surrounding areas. He was not able to make any promises except that the Senator and his staff will be working to find a solution. He had already discussed the issue with the Regional Office of DOT, which happens to be located in the same building as his office. With the weather probably the best we could hope for is Spring 2015 for any improvements. Your Town leaders will not let this issue drop. Since the last newsletter, our Code Enforcement Officer has retired effective October 1, 2014. In looking to possible cost savings we pursued a possible sharing of services for this position with the Village of Newark Valley. Mayor Tornatore and his Village Board have been very receptive to this idea. We advertised together and have agreed to a cost-sharing plan along with new computer software to help save funds for both municipalities. We had 13 applicants for the position. An interview committee was set up with 3 people from each Board and it was able to bring the list down to 3 people for the final interviews. It was a great pleasure working with the Village officials and we were able to offer the job to Rachel Jacobs as the best-qualified candidate. She accepted the position and started in this shared capacity on October 1st. You will find an article in this newsletter telling a little about her and the activity she is working on. The new Code Enforcement Officer will be working on keeping property clean from trash, junk vehicles and abandoned mobile homes. We plan on using the new local law to begin taking action for non-compliance including removal of such items with the cost being assessed to the property owner. People enjoy living here but do not wish to have a junky town and neither does the Town Board. 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. We are now working with the Planning Board to draft a Comprehensive Plan for the Town based in part on the survey results. We have a new sign in front of the Town Office with great thanks to Roger and Dr. Sharlene Kinney for donating the sign that was formerly used at the Drs. Office on route 38. 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. Your Supervisor *Ron McEwen*

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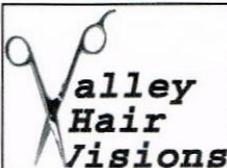


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BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY

Hours: Tuesday – 12-5, Wednesday – 1:30-7, Thursday – 1-5, Friday – 1:30-7, Saturday – 9-2 email – bfl@htva.net

We had a great summer and hope you did. We had 72 children participate in the Summer Reading Programs and together they read over 625 hours. The children received a medal for every 10 hours of reading and 49 medals were given out. It was great work from all the children that participated and all the people who helped with the programs. We want to thank the BOOKS Program for making our Summer Reading Program possible. I hope everyone has had fun looking for all the black mice in the library this past month. Watch in the future for more things hidden around the library, you never know what's next. If you don't know what I am talking about you have not been in the library lately. We now have our Young Adult bookshelves filled up and full of books. The new 8.1 computers are in, one is the staff computer the other is a public computer next to the printer. Thanks to the "Bernice Gould Memorial Fund" through St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Endicott for the grant to pay for the computers.

Story Time has started and we welcome any Pre-school aged child. In Berkshire, it is now on Wednesdays 10-11 am at the library and Richford is still on Fridays 10-11 am at the Richford Congregational Church. If school is canceled Story hour is too.

We will be having our annual Holiday sale, raffle and open house starting November 24th. We have hats, scarves and mittens for sale and maybe a few other items. The raffle will be great this year starting with a beautiful hand knitted afghan, a stoneware cider set, and more. The Open House will be Dec.5th at 1:30 – 8 pm and Santa Claus will be here from 6-8 pm so bring your cameras. There will be hot cocoa, coffee, cookies and candy canes. Watch our sign out front for more details.

Our outreach program for the homebound has started. If you know of someone who is homebound and would like books, books on CD or movies brought to them please let us know. Volunteers or library staff will bring the materials to them and pick them up.

We are now starting knitting and crocheting workshops. Our first was Oct. 30 at 7pm at the library. If you want to learn how to knit or crochet or learn new stitches come and join us. We will also be covering how to read a pattern, show some of the newer gadgets and exchanging ideas. If you already know how, come and help out or just come to show what your latest project is. Elaine Knapp and LuAnn Whirl will be heading up the group and any one is welcome to join. This will be a nice place to come and relax and enjoy others with a love of needle crafting.

Teen programming will start soon. We are purchasing two computer Tablets for some of the programs with part of the grant we received from the "Floyd Hooker Foundation".

With winter weather around the corner please remember to call a head to see if we are open, don't come out to return a book if the roads are slick. If we are closed no fines will be charged. If you can't make it in just call and we can renew your items over the phone. Hope to see everyone at the Open House, *LuAnn Whirl, Director*

BERKSHIRE PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board is pleased to announce the appointment of Bette Johnson as an Alternate Member through December 2014. Bette began attending in July and has been a great addition to our team as we continue to work on a Road Use Local Law and Agreement. As winter approaches, we would like to remind snowmobilers to be respectful of property owners. Snowmobiling can be a fun activity, but please remember to stay off the sidewalks in town so that the sidewalks remain usable by pedestrians and more easily maintained. And remember, never cross private property for which you have not been given permission to do so via local trails or expressly by the property owner. If you are a snowmobiler and need information about local trails, please contact one of the local snowmobile clubs listed at: http://www.snowmobilingusa.com/Snowmobile_Clubs.htm.

If anyone thinks they might be interested in the work of the Planning Board or joining our team, our meetings are the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Hall (18 Railroad Avenue). There is still an opening for an Alternate member, which carries a one-year term and voting privileges when regular members must be absent. If you are interested in more information, please contact Ken Ceurter at 657-2831.

kc_cute@frontiernet.net or 657-2831. *Sarah Albrecht*

BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY

Things are still progressing in the new station. All of the new furniture has arrived and been installed in the offices and break rooms and looks great. The last thing to go in will be the washing machine for firefighting gear. It will be installed in November. This washer will allow firefighters to properly clean and decontaminate their gear after calls. We held our second annual open house in our new home. A good time was had by all that were in attendance. There were many giveaways for the kids and free popcorn and hot chocolate as well as coffee. We also had several flyers on fire safety. Both kids and adults were trying on some of the heavy firefighting gear and got to see what was in the many compartments of the fire trucks. We hope to see more of you at next year's event. It will be bigger and better.

We have had several fund raising events and would like to thank all who attended. Several more events are planned and we would like to see everyone there. Remember you are not only helping a good cause but you also get a great meal and get to see friends and neighbors. Watch the sign for upcoming events. We also have a Facebook page for Berkshire Fire Company, like us and follow us for upcoming events. Our events are also sent out by Skip to the town wide e-mail group; if you are not on that you are missing many great notices. We look forward to seeing all of you for pancakes, fish, spaghetti, chicken and biscuits, or whatever the meal may be. We recently purchased a used fire engine from Lansing. It has onboard foam for use at car fires and other hazmat situations. It also has a six man cab to transport more firefighters when responding to neighboring districts for mutual aid. Both features we have never had before. It is 12 years newer than the engine it replaced which we bought for \$1.00 about 8 years ago from Scottsville FD. Remember to have your chimney checked and cleaned before starting up those solid fuel heating appliances. It's getting cold out and we don't want to see anyone lose their homes. Also, did you change your smoke detector batteries when you changed your clocks? Sparky says, "Be fire safe, we don't want to meet you by accident." In the US approximately 3000 people a year die in fires in their homes. Most don't have working smoke alarms. As always the most needed asset is members. We would like to see everyone join. Remember there is always a job everyone can do no matter who you are. We provide free training for firefighting and emergency medical services personnel. If you would like to come see how you can help your community by joining our family, our meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at 7:00 PM at the station. Feel free to stop by and check us out. Or, you can call Chief Welch at (607) 427-0964 and we can discuss the joys of being a member. We look forward to hearing from you. We can only survive through dedication of our volunteers. *Chief Bret Welch*

**BERKSHIRE CODE ENFORCEMENT**

Hello! My name is Rachel Jacobs. I am the new Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Berkshire. I am a New York State Certified Code Enforcement Official. I have been CEO for the Village of Newark Valley for a couple of months now and am excited to work with Berkshire. I plan to follow the state laws as well as local Berkshire laws. I am hoping to clean up the Town and restore pride in the community. Heating season is now approaching. Please remember to test your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors monthly. Also, batteries should be changed yearly. Remember to get a proper container for ashes and do not put them in or on any combustible materials. 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 at the Town Office 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. My focus this quarter will be closing open cases and organizing the office to ensure efficiency and accuracy. My current office hours are Thursday evenings 4:30-6pm. I am readily available by e-mail at racheljacobsceo@gmail.com and calls/texts at 607-744-9383. Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns. I look forward to serving your community! *Rachel Jacobs*

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL

Recent renovation activity includes the insulation, sheetrock, lighting and electrical work completed on the first floor. Volunteers have primed the sheetrock. A generous grant from the Tioga County Seniors Foundation will help complete a handicap accessible restroom also on the first floor. BCA is seeking additional donations and grant money to fully fund this project. Money has been approved to improve the West Wing entrance by adding sheetrock, lighting, flooring and doors. Labor will be performed by volunteers. Another generous contribution by Alan Westfall, a former Berkshire resident, will allow us to buy and install 2 new basketball backboards. The Hall remains popular with local residents and activities. The first floor is constantly used by the Helping Hands Food Pantry. The Berkshire Free Library held their annual book sale on the first floor and their summer reading as well as several other activities on the second floor. The Hall has recently hosted several weddings, anniversary, graduation, and birthday parties. Youth activities, including 4H and Scouts are common. For more info on what is happening and planned for the historic Community Hall, consider stopping in at one of our meetings, held on the first Monday of each month at 7PM on the first floor of the Community Hall. BCA is currently seeking members. This membership has no fees, no commitments no meetings and no strings attached. We merely wish to keep people interested and informed about Community Hall plans and activities. We keep members informed by frequent emails, including minutes from our meetings. For more info feel free to contact *Fraser Williams*, BCA President 657 2742, email – Fraserw@citlink.net or *Skip Hartwig* at 657 8418, email – skhartwig@frontiernet.net.

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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

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 -
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and 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Call Martin Kilmer, Post
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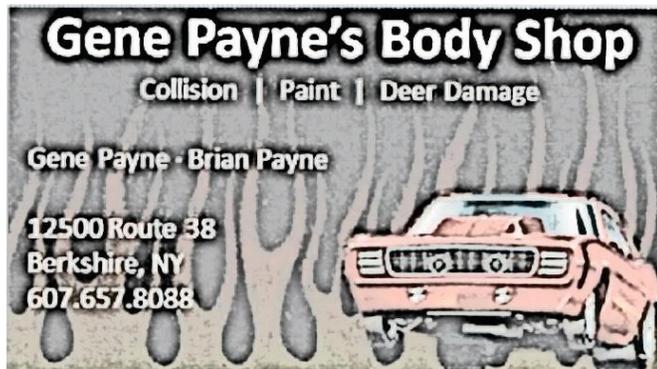


BERKSHIRE FIRE DISTRICT

The Berkshire Fire District Ambulance has responded to approx. 100 calls so far this year. We have two in EMT refresher class. Darlene Wait and Melinda Case. I want to remind you to check your 911 numbers on your houses or mail boxes. If they need replacing we have signs that we can provide you with so that we can find you in case of an emergency. As always we would welcome anyone who is interested to volunteer and join us. There is a great need for providers to help our residents. If you are interested you can call the station 607-657-2727 and leave a message or Darlene Wait at 607-201-9071.

HIGHWAY NEWS

The road working season is over even though we are still working on sluice pipes and ditches. We rebuilt the south half of N. Ketchumville Rd. this year and if funds permit we will apply oil & stone next year. I would also like to rework and pave the remainder of McMahan Rd. Last month we 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. The price of paving tar has increased nearly five times since I first began as Highway Superintendent. Ford Hill cost \$70,000 not including stone, equipment rental and our own involvement. We have finally received FEMA money derived from storm damage in early 2012. That should help us with next year's budget. Although NYS CHIPS funding has increased, which is good news, we now have to submit verification of expenditures with our application. This creates considerably more paperwork. All our equipment is running well and the used Clark grader we purchased this spring has proven to be a good investment. In accordance with our truck replacement schedule, we should be purchasing a new plow/dump truck in 2015. With skyrocketing prices and deteriorating reliability (mostly due to tighter emission standards) I will discuss possible options with the Board. We are now stockpiling sand for the winter, which I hope is not as severe as the last one. We used much of our waste oil reserves last year and are working to rebuild our stockpile. It seems like more businesses are converting to waste oil furnaces and sources are a bit more difficult to find. 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. *Karl Spoonhower*



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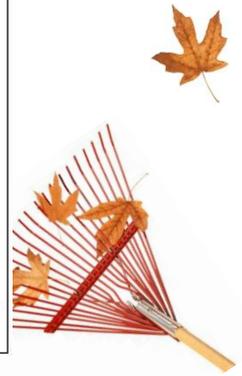
TIOGA COUNTY NEWS

As temperatures drop, heating costs rise for all New Yorkers. This rise in heating costs forces some to make an impossible choice - pay to keep your home at a safe temperature or buy the groceries you need to stay healthy. For those New Yorkers facing this decision, SNAP could make it possible to heat their home and buy the food they need. SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps, is a monthly supplement to your food budget. People that participate in the program are given a special debit card called an EBT card that is used to buy groceries. Because SNAP dollars are spent at local grocery stores and farmer's markets, SNAP is helping the residents of our community and the businesses that serve them. With SNAP, lower income families, children, veterans, students and older adults will be able to buy the nutritious foods they need to stay strong and healthy through the winter months while keeping the heat on. Anyone in Tioga County interested in getting more information about SNAP or getting a free and confidential prescreening to find out if they may be eligible to participate should feel free to contact me. Sincerely, **Kathi Latson, NOEP Coordinator for Tioga County, Family Enrichment Network, 1277 Taylor Road Owego, NY 13827 607-201-5678 or 607-723-8313 x590**

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Youth Group and Youth Praise Band at the Berkshire Congregational Church have continued to grow this fall. We've had a number of new faces on Sunday nights at the Youth Group meetings (6pm) as we have fun, and discuss real life issues and how Jesus helps us with them. Our opening night had a hilarious "Olympics" series of team competitions. We recently went to the Corn Maze together. In November and December we'll be helping with some service projects, including helping with the Food Pantry holiday boxes, and Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes. We've also had several more young people learning musical skills to be part of our youth band program. Mike Kunik meets with the newer kids (Team 2) on Thursday nights, and is training several on guitar and drums. Team 1 has evolved into the main worship band for the church, spanning all the ages. We have several youth and several adults, playing and singing together to lead part of the church service 2 mornings a month. It's a good mix. If you're interested in learning more, call the youth band leader, Mike Kunik, 657-8077.

Blessings, *Jerry Platz*

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Fruit Trays and Veggie Trays!!**Check out our weekly ad to see our wonderful specials***BERKSHIRE HISTORY**

Ray Hunt and Maurice Stoughton just published the third book about Berkshire, titled, *Berkshire The Town and People We Remember*. This book is a collection of new pictures and articles from the early days of the Town of Berkshire. The articles written by residents provide information from the early years of the town. This is an excerpt from one of many articles in the book. Memories of Blackman Hill by Lillian Gregrow "We had no electricity, no television nor all the things that young people have today. We enjoyed visiting with family and playing games. As young girls, my sisters and I loved to play in grandma's attic. We dressed up in old fashioned clothes and looked through old photo albums. Grandma would tell us stories about the early pioneers and how they settled the hills." To order the book (\$20.00) you can contact Ray at 607-657-4416 or email rayhunt@frontiernet.net or Maurice at 642-5422 or email amstoughton @frontiernet.net. The book will also be available at the Berkshire Free Library. The first two books titled, **History and Life Around The Town of Berkshire, New York**, and **More History and Life Around The Town of Berkshire, New York**, are also available from Ray, Maurice and the Library.

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