

This Winter Anything but Dormant at Town Hall

Joe Donnery, member of the Planning Board, addressed the Town Board recently. After researching the feasibility of converting Town Hall to solar power, he presented the board with his findings of the cost to install a system, the estimated payback period, implications of future innovations, implications of government policy, and then his recommendations. The board will study his research.

Local resident Bruce Kilgore has offered to speak to the Town Board sometime this spring. Bruce lives on the Nashville Road and received a waiver from the 40' height limit from the APA for his personal windmill. He has some PowerPoint slides to show and will give the Town Board some insight on the process he went through.

Some building issues recently: the Town Hall roof sprung a leak, ice fell off the Court House roof and damaged our outside tank, and the emergency lights in town hall failed. Buildings and Grounds worker Glen Hamel addressed all the issues and we will have to take further actions in the spring or summer. We also anticipate renovations to our restrooms in Town Hall.

NYSEG held conference calls with area supervisors and emergency personnel during the power outage as a result of the windstorm that blew through the area the second week of January. On the 10th at 2:00 p.m. there were 281 homes in Saranac without power. On the 11th at 11:00 a.m. that number was down to 68. With perhaps one or two exceptions, all power was restored by 9:00 p.m. that night.

I recently spoke to the fourth grade classes of Mrs. Napper and Mrs. Long at Saranac Elementary School and we used the town's website projected onto a screen as a spring board to talk about town topics. On another occasion, along with Superintendent of Schools Ken Cringle, Board of Education President Jules LaPoint, and Saranac Elementary teacher Jan Couture, I enjoyed being the fourth judge at the local Spelling B competition. From Saranac High School there are 24 new pieces art work – all photography -- decorating Town Hall and the Court House as part of the Community Art Connection program. The Saranac Key Club has adopted a highway: the first four miles of the True Brook Road.

Jan Couture is also the Town Historian and she recently held a workshop "Walk with Champlain" at Town Hall. Thirty-five people attended, one from as far away as the Bronx. In anticipation of the 2009 Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Celebration, the attendees used software to see if they have a genealogical lineage to any of Samuel de Champlain's crew. Hill and Hollow music sponsored a successful Franco-American Festival February 1st -3rd.

Damian Gormley of the New Land Trust on the Plumadore Road has invited residents to ski their trails on Sunday February 10th. Visit their site www.newlandtrust.org for directions.

Verizon has applied to the APA for a permit to locate 12 wireless panel antennas on the smokestack at Clinton Correctional Facility.

There was a leak in the Saranac Water System and a resultant boil water order for parts of the system. We thank New York Rural Water Circuit Rider Morris Coolidge as well as volunteer Wayne Lavarney for their help. We still have the Ground Water Under Direct Influence to our system that we will continue to address.

At some times this winter, old tires have been dumped on our town roadways. If you have any information of this unlawful waste disposal please let town offices know and we will follow up. The Town Board had petitioned the State for a reduced speed limit on the Soper Road and our request was denied.

Last August Judge Jill Myers with help from Judge Karen Waldron-Munson and Court Clerk Carol Plumadore, applied for a Justice Court Assistance Program grant. The grants were supposed to be awarded shortly after the holidays. I called Albany and was

told there were many more grant applications to process than were anticipated and that the announcement date was pushed back. We are still hopeful that the security system we applied for will be awarded.

In court issues, we are keeping a close eye on the Dillenburg case which, although it has been stayed, says the State should stop paying taxes to local municipalities. Because a resident didn't abide by a local law which provides for the removal or repair of a building in the town that is deemed unsafe to the public, Codes Enforcement Officer Eugene Dickerman issued a violation. As a result, the building was demolished. Locally, Saranac vs. Reed is tentatively scheduled for a bench trial in Saranac Town Court March 11-14th.

We are waiting to hear if the town will be chosen as the pilot community for the CBN-Connect "Broadband for Everyone" initiative.

As we work our way through winter, a season that could seclude us in our own homes if we're not wary, I encourage you not to let any winter blues get you down and to reach out if you need to – or if you're one of those who rarely gets glum -- to offer your support to your neighbor, as David Bengston shows us this human need for connection in his poem "What Calls Us."

In winter, it is what calls us
from seclusion, through endless snow
to the end of a long driveway
where, we hope, it waits—
this letter, this package, this
singing of wind around an opened door.