

## **From Blustery March Winds to Canoes in July**

Cold War Veterans who live in Saranac have received a tax exemption as the result of Local Law 1-2008 which was enacted after a public hearing and subsequent board meeting. The town law reflects the actions of the state and county. At the same board meeting, the board also resolved to oppose the closing of Camp Gabriel's. Board members recognize that in order to promote sustainable communities in the North Country which are interwoven parts of the common good, there needs to be advocacy for and from neighbors.

Later this month the DEC will announce if we are one of the recipients of a Smart Growth Grant. The DEC is awarding one million dollars to Adirondack towns for smart growth. They had three million dollars' worth of applications to evaluate. Ours was asking for funds to conduct a community wide visioning process to develop a strategy to revitalize hamlets and future planning initiatives.

Back in March of 2006 after a rideout we did in town with their local engineer, we were expecting Charter Cable to add 8.3 miles of lines to reach new customers. That did not occur. At a recent Clinton County Cable TV Commission negotiations session I asked Charter's new Director of Governmental Operations who came in from Worcester, Massachusetts, for an update on their plans. Since that session I have been in contact with him and I will continue to ask and to advocate for more miles to reach more consumers and I will report to you as Charter responds.

Although it seems early to think about it with all the snow still piled up in the woods and the blustery March winds still blowing, the annual Saranac Flatwater Challenge has been scheduled for July 19<sup>th</sup>. Last year 97 entrants from around the state took part. The canoe races range from an adult and kids' race of one mile to the more expert 14-mile race that starts at the boat launch behind the town pool and runs 7 miles to the Harney Bridge in Cadyville and back. Organizer Robert Rusnak forwards all proceeds from the event to CVPH to help fight asthma.

I was recently an invited guest at a lunch with the West Clinton Clergy. Reverend Peet Pearson, Pastor Tim Atwater, Reverend Don Kramberg and I discussed various issues as they were mutually pertinent. We talked about a youth center as it related to town planning, upcoming church events that will be occurring in the town, and other topics pertaining to how the churches and town can interface.

I had the honor and pleasure of being one of the judges for the Regional Spelling Bee held at Saranac Middle School last week. Congratulations to all the contestants from eleven area schools and especially to the champions from Saranac, Grade 4 Laura Farrell and Grade 6/ Regional Champion Nelson Moore. During intermission the Saranac High School Show Choir performed and that, too, was an additional noteworthy display of talent from other younger members of our community.

Many workshops at the recent Association of Towns meeting proved beneficial: employee handbooks, Fair Labor Standards Act, cyber security, and the changing face of the Adirondacks to name just four. I voted with fellow town delegates from throughout the state for mandate relief, increase in justice court funding, support for the Consolidated Highway Improvement Program, reform of the real property tax and assessment system, and preservation of local taxation on lands owned by the state. While at that meeting, along with some other local officials I had the opportunity to meet with Governor Spitzer before he spoke to the entire group and was appreciative of his willingness to listen to our concerns.

Engineer from Architectural and Engineering Design, Andy Abdallah, met with me last month regarding the Saranac Water System and we discussed various options for future plans. Much more planning is still ahead. Melissa McManus, the town's Community Development Consultant, has met with us regarding the dormant industrial park the town owns off the Trudeau Road.

I don't know if or how much the sap will be flowing when this column is printed, but if it's running good, I'm sure that those of you in town who delight in backyard sugarin' will be grateful for that springtime harbinger.