



TOWN OF BERGEN NEWSLETTER

December 2012, January and February 2013



Town News ... From the Desk of Town Supervisor *Donald Cunningham*

At this point in our winter season it's not hard to imagine another winter like last year; mild with minimal snowfall. It's also not hard to imagine that this might be okay with most folks, but snowmobilers, skiers and winter sports enthusiasts would be disappointed and many would suffer from the lack of precipitation filling the water table and putting needed moisture in the ground after a dry summer. Regardless of what the next few months has in store for snow accumulation, it's always time to remind travelers to be cautious of freezing temperatures and the affect on roads. Once wet roads reach freezing, black ice hits without warning, so exercise caution when traveling during rapid temperature declines, and as always, please be respectful of the highway crews trying to service the roads in snow and icy conditions.

Peachey Road Water District Update

The water district is moving forward at the direction of USDA-Rural Development who has scheduled a preconstruction meeting for January 3rd. Ground breaking will begin shortly after that with expected completion in the spring. All construction financing has been secured through a Bond Anticipation Note awarded to First Niagara Bank with the long term post-construction financing being provided by USDA-Rural Development. This district services a portion of Route 19 North of the Village and most of Peachey Road. Many residents have prepared for water line installation and interest to extend the public water service has already been expressed.

2013 Budget

The Town Board has completed the budget exercise for 2013 and again the board worked at keeping appropriations in check. With an increase in revenues from a renewed Host Community Agreement through Monroe County, we are able to experience a reduction in the tax rate, going from \$2.32 to \$2.25 per thousand. I'm appreciative to the entire Town Board for working diligently on this outcome, while recognizing and maintaining the needs of each department. Don't forget, county sales tax distributions remain one of the primary revenue sources for keeping property taxes down. So keep shopping in Genessee County... it helps us all!

Some needed recognition...

Over the course of 2012 the Town had many projects going on related to buildings & grounds. Primarily with the Library and Historians office, and we were very fortunate to experience good citizens and community members who were willing to donate time and in some cases material to these efforts. Town officials played a role in some of these projects and I really appreciate their help and willingness to participate, but I must recognize a couple of others for their efforts.



(Continued)

Martin Dilcher of Dilcher Excavating & Contracting committed labor and materials to repair steps at the Historians office as well as fulfilling work at the Library. Martin and his crew have always completed work in a timely fashion and he is noted for graciously extending himself beyond proposed work as a community supporter.

Town resident Rene' Ezell used his professional experience & equipment to aid the town in moving and transplanting a Japanese maple tree. He also provided new plantings for the front of the Library at a reduced cost to improve the landscaping at the entrance of the building.

Both are fine examples of community contribution that would otherwise go unrecognized. Thanks to both Martin and Rene' for their efforts in the past year.

Furthermore, as I mentioned above, it's not uncommon for workdays to be filled with volunteer efforts of officials (town & village) and even former officials. This kind of dedication is instrumental in accomplishing a lot of work that yields benefit and savings to all taxpayers, and it's my privilege to extend a "**Thanks**" to all who've lent a hand.

Bergen turns 200!

Next year the Town will celebrate its Bicentennial. Stay tuned for celebration details and prepare to attend!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Town of Bergen 200th Anniversary Plans!

We are so excited to celebrate the 200th birthday of our town. On April 2, 1813 the New York State Legislature approved the formation of three new towns from the Town of Murray, and Bergen was one of those. So a committee has been put together of interested citizens and the Bergen Business and Civic Association to give us a memorable year. Here are a few of the planned events:

April 13th, 2013 at 1pm at the corner of Route 19 and 262 - Dedication of a tree and burying of a time capsule.

June 7th, 2013 Friday Night - Bergen Park Festival - Band "Something Else" and vendors 6-10pm



June 8th, 2013 Saturday – Bergen Park Festival

Festival begins at 11am and ends with fireworks!

Huge Parade at noon!

Band "Pop Show" 6-10



If you would like to participate please attend our next committee meeting on

Monday, January 21st, 2013 at 6pm at 13 S. Lake Ave.

From the Desk of County Legislator *Robert Bausch*



After a lengthy process, the County Legislature passed the 2013 budget at their November 28th meeting. There were many difficult issues and the following is a brief synopsis of some of the more noteworthy:

- The 2013 property tax rate remained the same as the 2012 rate - \$9.89 per thousand. A limited amount of reserves will be used but with strong sales tax projections from the County Treasurer's office no adverse effects are anticipated.
- The county nursing home continues to be a drain on tax revenues. A number of personnel changes were budgeted with the elimination of some positions in the Domicile Care Facility (DOM). Because of the DOM's low occupancy rate, these changes will have minimal impact.
- Two positions that were eliminated in previous budget years were reinstated.
 - There had been significant personnel reductions in the Probation Department the past few years while their work load continued to increase so an officer position was reinstated.
 - Also reinstated was an education position in the Health Department. I was opposed to this expenditure but there was strong support from other legislators.
- A significant budget increase was required to cover the cost of housing female prisoners. The 2012 expenditure is approximately 30% higher than 2011 with no sign that this rate of increase is slowing. Because the Genesee County jail does not accommodate female prisoners they are boarded out, generally to Orleans, Livingston or Allegany counties. In addition to the cost of boarding, there is the cost to transport them back to Genesee County for hearings, trials & etc.
- There was considerable discussion concerning funding for Genesee County Economic Development Corporation (GCEDC). In the end, their appropriation remained at the 2012 level.
- Funding for potential bonding was included. If the bonding goes forward, the funds will be used for road and bridge replacement.
- Lastly, as always, the increase cost of unfunded state mandates continues to grow as a percentage of total county tax revenue.

In the end, the budget is a good budget for county residents and should allow the county to continue to move forward on various fronts. If you have questions concerning the budget, or any county issue, please contact me anytime.

Lastly, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and to thank everyone for allowing me to serve as your county legislator.



Highways & Byways by **Superintendent Mike Johnson**

As my first year ends, and another winter begins, I would like to remind everyone that winter driving requires additional time, planning, preparation, and most importantly, at times, reduced speeds to allow for increased stopping distances.

This winter, as in the past, we will strive to continue to provide the same level of the safest possible roadways at all times, within reason and budget constraints.

Please be reminded that during a “normal” snow event, it will take plow trucks 2 ½ to 3 hours to complete one pass on all roads. As such, it is very possible that everyone will encounter less than pleasant driving conditions at times. Late evenings and early mornings, with very light traffic volumes, will receive lower levels of service. Every attempt will be made to maintain open and passable roadways, both for normal and emergency traffic. At times, lanes may narrow and accumulate snow. The Town is responsible for snow and ice removal on all Town and County roadways in Bergen as well as some State routes.

Two additional reminders: Mailboxes, if damaged by our plows will be repaired or replaced, within Town Board adopted limits, as soon as, weather/time permits. PLEASE, when installing or repairing your mailbox, remember that our trucks require a minimum 17 ½ feet from the center of the roadway. Also, take into account the excessive force of the exhausted snow as it strikes your mailbox assembly.

In addition, NYS statute states that the depositing of snow or other materials onto a highway is dangerous and illegal. Please be sure to clean up any snow that may have been accidentally placed in the roadway.

Please don't hesitate to call me at 494-1362 if I may be of service. Highway department hours are 7:00am to 3:30pm Monday through Friday. However, you may leave a message 24 hours a day on our answering machine, and I will return your call as soon as possible.

In closing, the entire highway department would like to wish everyone a healthy and happy holiday season, and a safe winter.



Happy Holidays!! During your holiday rush of activities don't forget to enjoy the many holiday books and movies available at your Library! We have quick cooking books for meals on the go! Make a family tradition by baking cookies from our many cookbooks! Stop by when the children are on vacation for boredom buster books and craft books to inspire their imaginations. Don't forget your audio books for the long car rides to Grandma's house!! Search our website at www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org and check out happenings and our on-line catalog or join us on Facebook!



The Library will be closed : December 25th –Merry Christmas! January 1st -Happy New Year!

Book discussion for January 10th will be Calling Invisible Women by Jeanne Ray. On February 14th, we will be discussing May the Road Rise up to Meet You by Peter Troy. If you're interested in joining, stop by to pick up a copy or log on to the catalog at www.byronbergenpubliclibrary.org to place your request.

Pre-school story time is at 10:30am on Fridays: If you are 2-5 years old, join us for a story, related craft and a snack!! January 11th starts our Winter Fun story time. Home schooled children are welcome. Please registration by calling the Library at 494-1120 or stop in and see us.



Want something fun to do during your Holiday Break?

We will be having a Movie Day at the Library on **December 27th** on the Big Screen- the movie we are showing will be *Ice Age-Continental Drift*! The movie will be showing at 2:30 and 6:30 and snack too! Please call to sign-up!

Craft Day on **December 28th** from 11-6 – come anytime between 11am to 6pm to make and take a noisy craft to help ring in the New Year!



So check us out www.byronbergenpubliclibrary.org for the movie information or "Friend" us on Facebook for updates!

Save the date for our pre-school show on February 27th! The Wizard of Oz Story Book Show will be entertaining our younger patrons. More information to follow.

Our A Tale for Three Counties book for 2013 will be May the Road Rise up to Meet You by Peter Troy. The author will visit in our area March.7th to both Genesee Community College at 1pm and the Richmond Memorial Library at 7pm. Log on to www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org and reserve your copy of the book now.

Getting a new E-Reader for Christmas or have one now.....Check out our catalog for downloadable e-books free with a valid Nioga Library card. New children's books arrive weekly! New DVD's monthly! Check out a *Playaways* too! All you have to do is stop at our website www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org to order all materials!

Stop in and get a Library card that will open up the whole NIOGA system for ordering books from the comfort of your home!! There are databases; Librarian 24/7, Tumbling Talking Books, NOVEL list, downloadable books, e-books, Freegal –downloadable music. and much more are available to you!! Just go to www.byronbergenpubliclibrary.org and you're on your way!

The Library has Roadrunner Internet service available. The Library has copy /fax service for a small cost. Interlibrary loans from any Library in the NIOGA Library system at our catalog www.byronbergenpubliclibrary.org. If you can't find it, please ask! Stop in soon! For more information on our services or programs, please call the Library at 494-1120.

Free music downloads available with a valid Byron-Bergen Public Library card! Choose from thousands of songs in over 100 genres of music from the Sony Music Entertainment catalog, though a service called "Freegal". Songs downloaded in an MP3 format, compatible with any computer, mobile device or MP3 player including iPod To access this new service, go to www.byron-bergempubliibrary.org and lick on the Freegal slide on the main page.

Historian News by Thomas Tietel

I will start by wishing everyone a happy and prosperous New Year! I hope "Santa" has more of us "Bergenites" on the "nice list" rather than the "naughty list" lol !

As 2012 draws to a close, I have reflected on the accomplishments made to preserve our town's history. I must say it has been a zenith year overall and I'm looking forward to it's continuation into 2013.

Museum Update: The W.J. Davy Carriage Works exhibit has gained a new neighbor! Finishing touches are being put on the A.S. Fisher & Son Pharmacy exhibit. This particular exhibit proved to be quite a challenge as we only had a limited quantity of original artifacts to work with. After extensive research along with some creativity, I believe it will be a fitting representation of one of our town's most vital merchants. One of the main highlights of this exhibit will be the restoration of the original clock that not only survived an 1880's fire, but an additional 130 years of "time". It has sat quietly all of these years waiting to chime once again. This exhibit, along with 5 others will be part of the May 2013 grand re-opening of the Harford Barn & Livery Museum.

I wish to give a BIG thank you to Mike Johnson and his crew of the Town Highway Dept! After a long and diligent effort working in conjunction with the village, 4 of the last remaining 120+ year old slate sidewalk slabs have been painstakingly removed from Main St. and installed near the Livery Museum. The sidewalk slabs will become part of the Museum's exterior exhibit reflecting Bergen's bygone era. A large millstone that was once used in the Bergen Roller Mills has also been erected in an upright position by the town highway crew to make viewing this mammoth artifact more educational.



Harford Ledger Update: On a final mention, in the September edition of the newsletter I indicated that I was on a quest to obtain "THE" missing ledger belonging to the Harford House Hotel circa 1880. The ledger is in my possession and this was made possible by a generous monetary gesture of Willard & Theresa Pengelley who have purchased it and have placed it on loan to our museum! The ledger reportedly contained the signature of legendary showman P.T. Barnum of Barnum & Bailey Circus fame. While the ledger indeed contains the signature/entry "P.T. Barnum – New York, New York", the entry has become steeped in mystery and its authenticity has come under question. While the actual date is not indicated in the entry, it is surrounded by other names of general travelers listed to check in around 1895. P.T. Barnum passed away in 1891. An obvious miscalculation.... or signed by an imposter....??? well, not so fast. The P.T. Barnum entry is found on the last page. It clearly stands out not for whom it is, but rather how it is written. The signature looks very different than the rest due to the style and discoloration of ink used. It raises the question, that maybe, just maybe an astute Harford check-in clerk recognized the renowned showman and thought to have him sign the ledger in the back in hopes of preserving the entry for future preservation or reference. Or... an oblivious or overtired check-in clerk had been "snowed" by a "John Doe" committing a harmless and humorous prank. I have been deep in thought of how to go about solving this mystery. I have 2 choices. A: I could attempt to check into an out of town hotel under the name "Brad Pitt" and see if I'm successful or B: seek the help of a handwriting expert to verify the signature. My peers have encouraged me to pursue the latter and call in "the expert"! Stay tuned.

As always, the historian's office is located at 15 S. Lake Ave in the village of Bergen. If you would like to contact me for any reason, feel free to call 585-494-0080 and I will be happy to assist you!

Town & County Taxes



If you pay your own taxes, you will receive your tax bill shortly after January 1, 2013. If you should receive a tax bill that an escrow company or someone else is supposed to pay, please call me right away. Don't put it aside and assume that it will be paid. Also, if you have paid off your mortgage and did not receive a tax bill, you should call me. No matter what the situation is, you are responsible for your taxes and penalties, if it is not paid. If you are leaving town for the winter please leave your "winter" address with me so late fees can be avoided.

Tax payments cannot be received before January 1, 2013 per the County Treasurers office, all payments will be stamped after that date. Taxes are due January 31st without any penalties. All taxes have to be paid to me by March 31st. After **March 31st**, the unpaid taxes are returned to the County Treasurer. If you are going to pay them to the County Treasurer by mail, you will need to call his office in Batavia. The telephone number is 344-2550, ext. 2211 as there will be additional penalties.



Dog License News:

I hate to "hound" you, but if your dog's license renewal is due or past due, please take care of it so we don't have to send you a reminder notice or eventually a court appearance ticket. All dogs, four months of age need to be licensed. Proof of a rabies vaccination and proof of neutering or spaying must be presented at the time of licensing. If you receive an appearance ticket, you will have to pay a fee of \$25.00 plus also pay for your dog's renewal. If there is a problem getting an appointment for a rabies vaccination, etc., please call me. I have an answering machine so you can call anytime day or night.

Office Closing

- December 24, 25, 26 – Christmas
- December 31, 2012 & January 1, 2013 – New Years
- January 21, 2013 – Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- February 18, 2013 – Presidents Day



Office Hours

- Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday
- 8:00 am – noon & 1:00 – 4:00
- Saturday 9:00 am - noon
- Closed on Thursdays

Property Exemption Reminder

All renewals have been mailed out to property owners that received a STAR Enhanced, Senior Citizens or Agricultural Land Exemption in 2012. STAR Basic recipients do not have to renew. Please remember that if an owner of the property in which they reside will be turning 65 by December 31st, 2012, they may apply for STAR Enhanced by March 1, 2013. Please call the assessor at 494-1484 and an application can be mailed out. STAR Enhanced for 2013 is based on your 2011 income.

2013 -2014 Town of Bergen Directory

Any Changes to the Directory should be turned into the Town Clerk's office as soon as possible 494-1121 Ext. 21. Adding Cell phones, name changes, P.O. Boxes and new residents are what we are looking for.

**TOWN of BERGEN
10 HUNTER STREET
BERGEN, NY 14416
bergenny.org**