THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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REPORT FROM OUR SCHOOL

As Fact Finder's editor, I called Superintendent Bill Larrow for an update on some school statistics before the 2013-2014 school year has progressed any further.

The student population has remained fairly stable as have the class sizes, ranging from approximately 15-22 students per class, with the larger numbers being found in the elementary grades.

College credit classes are offered at Moriah Central in many areas, such as: Sociology, Environmental Science, Calculus, Statistics, Advanced English, French, Spanish and Political Science and Government (a year course).

Distance Learning classes are also available in Anatomy & Physiology, College Pre-Math, Marine Biology, Sociology, Social Problems and Advanced Political Science and Government.

The school encourages students to balance academics with sports and sports with academics. I asked if any of our students had received a sports scholarship and Superintendent said that, just this year, a recent graduate Nick Gilbo has received a full three-year scholarship to the University of Buffalo to play football while majoring in Business Management.

I asked about our teacher's salaries and was told they are competitive with other schools within the area. Having grown up with a teacher for a father, having a teacher for a husband, having taught a bit myself and with a daughter who has been teaching for over fifteen years, I hazard to say, it is probably not enough to repay them for the money they spent on their education, the no pay they received while practice teaching, the long days of being patient yet exciting enough to hold a classes interest and therefore attention (without which nothing is learned) and then the hours in prepping for lessons, grading class work, not to mention helping at after-hours school functions. All these comments are my own, garnered from my own experiences and the observance of the teachers in my life.

I asked Superintendent Larrow when he thought he would reach "ground zero" in finding things he could cut to hold to his budget and not cut faculty or extra-curriculars. He said it was probably hit about two years ago. The Fact Finder believes it is particularly vital to Port Henry that its school maintain a full roster of extra-curricular activities as Port Henry itself has no center in which its children and youth may gather to relax and socialize.

My final question was about the Common Core Standards and Common Core Leaning Curriculum the State has required that all schools adopt and implement. Moriah Central is in full compliance. Before the Superintendent answered I said, I felt it was just another State attempt to change something that was working, unnecessarily spending money to try and make the State look like it was doing its job and, in the process using our children as the excuse. Superintendent Larrow sees it as a workable teaching plan but feels it places restraints on teacher creativity in the classroom, that schools are being over micro-managed

and should be allowed more freedom to design the workings of their schools to satisfy the needs of their specific communities.

From Patrick McCaffrey's *Literature Appreciation* class

Fact Finder chose the following essay because, whether you agree with its content or not, it makes you pause, think and question, illustrating one of the major remedies against "stupidity."

Never Underestimate the Power of Human Stupidity

by Brooke Dever

"Two things are infinite: the universe and human stupidity, and I am not sure about the universe." Albert Einstein said this quote about stupidity. There is stupidity everywhere in the world. I think this could bring the world to an end. Stupidity is shown in many different ways. Even though some people are getting smarter, there are still many stupid people in the world. This is one of the most daunting problems facing the world today.

I am about to share some scary statistics with you. Six percent of Americans believe in unicorns. Six percent! Thirty-six percent believe in UFO's. Twenty-four percent believe that man and dinosaurs hung out together. Tea party maybe? Nearly thirty percent believe cloud computing involves actual clouds. Only forty-two percent enjoy reading on a regular basis. This fact is the reason why most TV shows, all reality shows and many major media blogs and all of Fox News is scripted for a fifth grade education and attention span. If more people are watching television instead of reading (which they are), then what is that doing to our population?

Now if there are this many idiotic people on the planet, couldn't some of them be a danger to the rest of us? The answer is yes. There are many jobs in the world that have a huge effect over my and your life: the president, congressmen, firefighters, doctors, nurses, teachers, police officers and engineers, to name a few. I know I_cannot be the only person on the planet who would like it if these people were intelligent. Imagine if the President of the United States wasn't smart. The country could turn to chaos. If the firefighters weren't smart enough to do their jobs and doctors and nurses started making huge mistakes on patients, the world would become a huge disaster.

Another thing we can think of is look at every war in history, every one of them started because one side was stupid – or both sides were stupid. If the entire world was involved in a war, it could easily wipe out the world. All of these things would affect people in a humongous way, particularly the last.

There are many huge disasters because of human stupidity. One example: in May 1962, the citizens of Centralia, Pennsylvania hired a group of volunteer firefighters to clean up the town's landfill. By "landfill" we mean "the abandoned mine where they stuffed their trash" and by "clean-up" we mean "set on fire." After burning the trash, the firefighters decided it was a "good" idea to not put the fire out. The fire spread, growing throughout the mine and gaining intensity as it did so. Signs of distress began popping-up as the fire caused damage to the terrain and began destroying sections of road across the borough, causing smoke to billow from below. People started getting sick from both the toxic smoke rolling up from the ground and the lowering of oxygen levels as the underground hellfire consumed it from the air. Despite the illness, ruined roads and sudden pillars of Satanic smoke, serious attention wasn't paid until 1979 when a gas station owner noticed his tanks had reached a temperature of 175 degrees Fahrenheit. This disaster was caused by human stupidity. They were too stupid to put out the fire and caused all those problems.

What is the definition of stupid? In truth, there are many definitions. The one I like is a poor ability to understand or to profit from experience. So I agree with Albert Einstein that, yes, there will always be human stupidity and these idiots might just wipe out the rest of us. That's just a risk all of us have to take – or give everyone a book.

Just for fun, here were some of my reactions to the article. When she said "Thirty-six percent believe in UFO's," I thought, "Hey, this is still an open possibility with me. All the facts aren't in as far as I'm concerned." And about that "man and dinosaur" thing, how can you blame the public when films like "Ice Age" are out there? ***And,*** about that "chaos" possibility, what about what Congress has done, or not done, this past week? I'm ***really*** with you on the war thing. That soldiers and innocent civilians die and are maimed is heart-breakingly "stupid!" Oh yes, a fascinating illustrative story, but what happened with those "hot" tanks, did they blow-up? Brooke, Fact Finder thanks you for your thought provoking essay.

REPORT FROM THE MORIAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Moriah Chamber of Commerce, if judged by its usefulness, is operating at a high level. It is open many hours a week and, considering its newness to the village scene, is serving a surprising number of "drop ins," both residents (new and old) and tourists. It is using its walls to display art works by local artists and visiting artists, serving as a temporary art gallery until Port Henry gets its own long-wished-for gallery. Some of the pictures have already been sold off the walls.

Joining works by local artist Linda Smythe (?) are original paintings and prints of Eduard Sangadzhiev, a noted Russian artist. Originally born in Kalmykia, the only Buddist republic within the southern part of European Russia, Eduard Sangdhiev's work combines Asian, Soviet and European influences. Painting in a variety of styles, his subjects range from Buddhist themes to flowers and historical portraits of Soviet oppression of the Kalmyk people. His varied work is an ongoing portrait of social change in Russia. In the early 1970s, when he was ten years old, he attended the famous boarding school, the Moscow High Art and Industrial School and specialized in Monumental and Decorative Painting.

A celebrated artist in Russia, he has exhibited widely there and in the United States. Today, he lives and works in New York City and frequently visits family in the Lake Champlain area where he is an avid fisherman and boater. Some of his most recent landscape paintings, shown at the Chamber, are of Port Henry's historic houses, Lake Champlain vistas and the lakeshore. These recent impressionist oils, along with Eduard's glimmering religious and historical portraits will be included in ongoing exhibitions at the Chamber. For further information on art at the Chamber, please contact Irina Bryant at 518-618-6756 or email her at kalmchka66@yahoo.com.

The Chamber has generously offered to allow The Fact Finder to receive mail at its office at 4317 Ste. 2 Main Street. This means that Fact Finder readers now have a place to send or drop off their reactions to articles in the paper or make suggestions for articles they would like to read - better still, drop-off articles they themselves have written. All submitted material will be given careful consideration, publication being dependent on how content fits with other articles in an issue.

NEW VILLAGE PEOPLE

New people and returnees are beginning to boost the numbers of Village residents. This is such exciting news we are printing the names of those we have met or discovered from friends. If you meet any of these folk, (need it be said) please, make them welcome. If you know someone to be added to

this list, by all means, use the Chamber office and drop off their names. The Chamber is hoping, in the near future, to acknowledge these new Villagers in some more official way, but until then and in no particular order: "Welcome!" Bernadette Hansen, Robert Squires and Daniel Deyoe, Nancy and Kim Gilbertson, Kris and Erin Jarrett, Karen Jaques, Andrea and Kyle Anessi and "Welcome Back!" Lucas J. Venne, Eric and Fran Wilhelmson, Sue McCone, Sarah and Erik Tishonuk. If we have missed someone, call the Chamber, 518-250-1050 or 546-3161, the FF.

SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

There was a special meeting of the Village Board on Monday, September 23rd pertaining to existing needed repairs, and the future needs of the Campground and its operations. Some of the subjects covered were: trees needing cutting, a re-do of the showers and some of the bathrooms, stand-up spigots and spigot lines, utilization of more of the beach, ropes needed to show changes in swimming depth, the possibility of putting up a pavilion and using BOCES help, fencing in certain places, etc. It was a long meeting but I found it informative and interesting. The Campground has been almost deserted for two weeks and will be closed as of October 5th. My understanding is the gates will be closed against vehicular traffic because the beach has been abused in the winter by such traffic and to repair this damage is costly to the tax payer. Most people are respectful of beach use, but it is the few who make these restrictions necessary. Of course the beach is open at all times to pedestrian traffic. If you beach walk your dog, please remember to bring the proper equipment so your dog won't have to be embarrassed.

NOTES FROM THE pH7 COMMITTEE

Thanks, in large part, to the efforts of Bernie and Tommy Trow the *Funky Folk* are out and making people do double-takes. They have become such an expected part of our October days that, in only three years, they have become a tradition.

Saturday, September 28th, pH7 opened the Info Booth to do a test-run on a new project: *TREES FOR MAIN STREET.* We have been given the nod by the Village Board to plant seven trees on Main Street on the Lee House side. There has been much research done by Frank Martin to be sure to plant just the right trees for our region and the location in our village and there have been volunteers to do the work. What is lacking? Money, of course! Saturday saw one money-making idea put into action, have mini-"yard-sales" at the Info Booth. "Yard-sales" in quotes because items will change ownership only by donation. In fact, there will be a pile of Free items, a group requesting donations and a group where an offer is to be made and accepted or no, if no, then barter may begin. It will be on Fridays and/or weekends, always weather permitting. Look for the "Open" flag, if it is out, then the "barter" is on. It makes for a fun gathering place.

A bit of paraprosdokian whimsy to brighten the coming weeks:

1. Where there's a will, I want to be in it.
2. The last thing I want to do is hurt you. But it is still on my list.
3. Since light travels faster than sound, some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
4. If I agreed with you, we'd both be wrong.
5. We never really grow up, we only learn how to act in public.
6. War does not determine who is right – only who is left.

7. Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.
8. To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research.
9. I didn't say it was your fault, I said I was blaming you.
10. In filling out an application, where it says, "In case of emergency, Notify:" I put "DOCTOR."
11. You do not need a parachute to skydive. You only need a parachute to skydive twice.
12. To be sure of always hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.
13. I'm supposed to respect my elders, but it's getting harder and harder for me to find one.
14. You are never too old to learn something stupid.

Oh, paraprosdokians are figures of speech in which the latter part of the sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected, frequently humorous. Winston Churchill loved them.

Look for the next issue of the Fact Finder on **Saturday, October 19th** at Adirondack Hair Associates, Macs and Moriah Pharmacy; also, find copies to read at the Sherman Free Library. There are read-while-you-wait copies (but no one will be upset if you leave with one) at John Eisenberg's Service Center, Ken and Paula LaDeau's Champlain's Best Wash, Don Foote's "Miss Port Henry" Diner, and TFCU. NOTE: The Fact Finder may also be found on-line at porthenrymoriah.com. Go to "Living Here" and you will see "Fact Finder" to the far right, one line down