

# THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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## NOTES FROM THE VILLAGE BOARD MEETING

reported by Sandra Lovell

The monthly meeting of the Village Board was held February 10<sup>th</sup>. The Water Department reported that the drinking water facility was fine, but the waste water plant had had to replace some equipment parts due to the freezing weather. The Fire Department has already had three calls in February and continues its usual skills-training classes and the time-consuming maintenance of its equipment. The DPW crew has been doing an amazing job under dreadful weather conditions. Bravo!

In answer to the Village's appeal for additional funds to cover the monies spent on the construction of the Rip Rap at the Campground, FEMA has sent a letter of acceptance in the amount of \$365,663. An amendment to the project worksheet will be prepared to include the engineering and inspection fees as well.

A letter was received from NYS Department of Environmental Conservation approving the engineering plans and specifications for the Village's trunk sewer reconstruction from Manhole #13 to the wastewater treatment plant.

A Public Hearing will be held at 6:30 pm, just prior to the scheduled March Village Board Meeting at 7:00 pm., to discuss the tax-cap override and, also, zoning.

Wonderful news! All the electrical problems, that kept Port Henry in the dark this past Christmas, are finally solved! Not only will next Christmas be lovely, but there will be summer benefits also. The Park will be lit, the Info Booth will have its own light source, as will the Oval.

Village Elections are coming up March 18<sup>th</sup> at the Fire House. Polls will be open from 12:00 – 9:00 pm. There are two Village Trustee positions up for election. You must be a registered voter of the Village of Port Henry to be allowed to vote. If you are not registered, or are not sure whether you are,

you may contact The Essex County Board of Elections at 873-3474 by March 7<sup>th</sup>. Each resident has not only the right but a responsibility to vote. Your vote will be especially important in this next election, as there are three candidates vying for two Trustee openings. I am sure the winners would like to know they were chosen rather than that they won by accident of non-voter interest.

#### FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Well, I was supposed to write about one of my days being Mayor of Port Henry and, unfortunately, I chose today. I got up at my usual time, 5 am, so I could get to my pay-the-bills job in Plattsburgh. I have often wished Port Henry could have a full-time mayor, as there is that much needed work to be done for our village. But for the time, that is wishful thinking.

I sat at my work desk and called the Village Office to see if there was any business that needed my immediate attention, none as yet. The office will call or email when there is anything needing my personal attention. Got home at 7 pm to find a broken down furnace which didn't get up and running until after 11 pm. This ended my day and my article. Next month's article will have a lot more village information, I promise. Have a good month.

Ernie Guerin, Mayor of Port Henry

#### FROM THE TOWN SUPERVISOR'S DESK

I just returned from the annual *Association of Towns* meeting in New York City. There were many informative sessions, with the focus on the Governor's proposal for property tax relief. The concept of the proposal is that any taxing jurisdiction that stays within the 2% tax cap limit, can show that they are "sharing" service's with another taxing jurisdiction (Schools, Villages, Counties) and meet the requirements for a two year period, then the property tax payers will receive a rebate check from the state. This sounds good, but there are also many problems associated with the proposal. For instance, the taxing unit that takes on the "shared service" will obviously have additional costs associated with providing the service. Another issue is what happens if one unit of government stays within the cap, but the other units exceed the cap, what happens to the rebate? Also there are many restrictions as what any taxing jurisdiction can do "outside their taxing jurisdiction." The reason is that most schools, towns, villages and special districts all have geographical areas where specific taxes can be billed for a service. I fully endorse the concept of the tax cap, and also the sharing of services and even the elimination of some units of government. Although the Governor's proposal has many hurdles, he is on the right track and, at the very least, has started good discussion on the property tax problem within this state. The Town Board will work with the school and also the village to try and find ways to reduce "costs" and hold the line on property taxes. I will keep you updated as this proposal is fine-tuned.

Tom Scazzafava, Supervisor of the Town of Moriah

#### THE CANDIDATES' CORNER

To help voters in choosing the candidates of their choice, The Fact Finder will introduce a few facts about each candidate separately and then offers a joint statement encapsulating ideas all three agree upon.

Ruth McDunough has lived in Port Henry all her life. She was Mayor, the first woman mayor, for four years and has been a Trustee for the past six years.

Tom McDonald is another candidate born and bred in Port Henry. He too served as a Trustee, for thirteen years and then served as Town Assessor for eight years.

Sandra Lovell has been a part of the Port Henry for over forty years, first as a holiday and summer resident then, nine years ago, *permanent* in the house bought in 1973. She is editor of the Port Henry Fact Finder.

Is Port Henry a perfect, little fairy book village? Absolutely not! Are we even a prosperous

village? It is doubtful anyone would answer “yes”, but – and this is a “but” filled with promise and therefore hope. We live in a marvelous part of the Adirondack Park (although the park thing has its problems) with mountains footed by Lake Champlain, we are a scheduled stop on the Amtrak line linking New York City and Montreal, Canada and we are like a hub: an hour from Burlington, VT., forty-five minutes from Middlebury, VT., forty-five minutes from Plattsburgh, and only two hours from Montreal, Canada. The majority of Port Henry people are friendly and interesting. New people are moving here to live because they feel a certain “magic” (a new villager’s word) in the place. It is as sure as it is slow, villagers are beginning to help Port Henry look better and, as any woman can tell you, if you know you look better, you feel better about yourself and others will begin to see you as you see yourself.

Why do people ask to be allowed to take on the job of Trustee? To help build back the sense of community that existed when trees lined Main Street and Port Henry had all the businesses it needed to be self-sufficient enough that people could find whatever they needed within walking distance, even a movie for entertainment. It can’t be exactly the same (nor should it be) but we shall become self-sufficient and prosperous again, just in different ways. As Trustees, we hope we shall be able to help, if only in small ways, to move closer toward this goal.

### JANUS NOTES

On February 7<sup>th</sup> Linda Smyth’s Art Studio (located across from the Post Office) hosted a “*book signing*” evening to celebrate local author Jeff Kelly’s latest book “Being a Boy.” People gathered in the gallery to be sure to get a copy of the book signed by the author and have a lovely evening out of good conversation, good food and enjoying the gallery’s excellent art work. If you like to read books set in our area and like a little mystery thrown in, this book would be a good choice for you. If you missed the book signing, “Being a Boy” is still available for purchase at our Library.

Literacy Volunteers of Essex / Franklin Counties will host its annual WINTER SCRABBLE TOURNA-MENT on Sunday, March 2, 2014 at the Knights of Columbus in Port Henry. This year’s event is being sponsored by Avery Energy. Prizes will be given to the top three winners. This event will raise much-needed funds and awareness for our adult literacy programs. The fun begins at 12:30 pm with registration, and the first game begins at 1:00 pm. Registration is \$10.00 per person and refreshments are included. Visit our website- [www.litvol.com](http://www.litvol.com) or contact Literacy Volunteers’ main office at 518-546-3008 for more information.

**Note:** A flyer about this tournament has been attached to the back of this issue. Please remove and place on your refrigerator, so you won’t forget and miss out on the fun, maybe a prize.

### A BIT OF FUN FROM JEFF FOXWORTHY

If you consider it a sport to gather your food by drilling through 36 inches of ice and sitting there all day hoping that the food will swim by, you might live in Upstate New York.

If you're proud that your region makes the national news 96 nights a year because Saranac Lake is the coldest spot in the nation, and Syracuse gets more snow than any other major city in the US , you might live in Upstate NY.

If your local Dairy Queen is closed from October through May, you might live in Upstate New York .

If you have worn shorts and a parka on the same day, you might live in Upstate New York.

If your local ice cream stand is closed from October through May, you might live in Upstate New York.

Your 4<sup>th</sup> of July picnic was moved inside because of frost.

If you have had a lengthy phone conversation with someone who dialed a wrong number, you might live in Upstate New York.

*YOU KNOW YOU ARE A TRUE UPSTATE NEW YORKER WHEN:*

"Vacation" means going south past Syracuse for the weekend.

You measure distance in hours.

You know several people who have hit a deer more than once..

You can drive 65 mph through 2 feet of snow during a raging blizzard without flinching.

You install security lights on your house and garage and leave both unlocked.

You design your kid's Halloween costume to fit over a snowsuit..

Driving is better in the winter because the potholes are filled with snow.

You know all 4 seasons: almost winter, winter, still winter, and road construction  
You have more miles on your snow blower than your car.

Your local Farmers' Market isn't a sure thing until July and August.

Look for the next issue of the Fact Finder on **Saturday, March 8, 2014** 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](http://porthenrymoriah.com). Go to "Living Here" and you will see "Fact Finder" to the far right, one line down