

# THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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All Port Henry Residents**

**Each in their own way, most without knowing it, have been a support to the Fact Finder**

## NOTES FROM THE VILLAGE BOARD

as reported by Linda Smyth

The first Village Board meeting of 2015 was held as usual on the second Monday of the month. Fire Chief Hughes reported that in 2014 there were 89 fire calls and July had the most at 11.

Five residents of Grove Street attended to make an official complaint regarding the fact that their street is the official truck route to by-pass Main Street. Grove Street was not always the truck route; Broad Street was the designated route until a truck lost its breaks, hurtled down Broad Street and into Sagan's store, killing the two people in the truck. In 1973 DOT assigned Grove Street as the new truck route. In 1973 this decision made sense, it was a different time. Truck sizes and truck numbers have increased. Grove Street is a narrow street with no sidewalks. People must walk on the street which means children also must be in the street. Often trucks do not adjust their speed to the situation, it has become a very dangerous street. The village will be asking for the services of a DOT engineer to study the situation and make his recommendations to DOT.

Staley Rich talked about zoning. The Village sent a zoning plan to the county for review. The county was impressed. The Village talked to and will be working with a consultant to create a comprehensive zoning plan for submission which will include parking. There is a grant available to aid in the preparation of the zoning plan which will be offered to the public for approval. The Village needs letters from members of the community in support for this grant. Please have these support letters in the Village office by January 30<sup>th</sup>. Zoning is a vital step forward, not only in protecting our Main Street but in attracting the younger generation and new businesses.

The Village has received grant money to complete all the needs of Elizabeth Street to make it the model for all the other streets in the Village, as one by one each of their specific needs are addressed. For Elizabeth Street the near future holds all new sewers, water pipes, waste water drains, blacktop, sidewalks and whatever else it has needed. There will be surveys done for Rice Street to see if it qualifies for a grant which will upgrade it in the same way as Elizabeth Street's upgrade.

John Viestenz submitted a letter to the board on the status of garbage pickup in the Village once the Town converts to a weigh-station system in the spring. The village replied it will be moving to its own sticker system at that time.

Janelle Jurkiewicz asked the Board if there had been a public hearing on the \$500. which had been given to eight full-time employees? The Board said "Yes," on December 5<sup>th</sup>. Trustee Matt Brassard explained where the money came from. The Board had called the Comptroller's office; it was a cost-of-living bonus which did not come from the tax payers pockets. Everything was all above-board.

The village is currently seeking a new campground manager. They have already received a few applications. If anyone reading this paper, would like to apply or knows of anyone who would, come by the Village Hall office or contact them by phone [518-546-9933](tel:518-546-9933).

EXCEPTS FROM A HEATED EXCHANGE DURING A CONGRESSIONAL PANEL JANUARY 16, 2014

Please note the date of what is being offered in this issue – January 15, **2014** – an over-a-year-ago happening, but it seems that it is still relevant. I have not heard of Walmart giving an amazing wage raise to its employees and I am absolutely sure that if they had, at least a mention of this employee awareness would have found, at least a small, notice into their many, many TV commercials. Enough explanation, on with the story.

Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT), the one and only independent in the US senate, threw a gauntlet down before a Hearing on Income Inequality in the United States, Congress of the United States, 113 Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session; asking that this panel of experts justify why America’s shrinking middle class should continue to subsidize the nation’s wealthiest family. He pointed out that more Americans were currently living in poverty than at any point in the nation’s history as the top 1 percent siphoned off 95 percent of all income generated between 2009 and 2012. “Does anyone on that panel ... think that that makes moral sense or economic sense?” Sanders asked. “Does anybody think it makes moral or economic sense that one family, the Walton family, owns more wealth than the bottom 40 percent of the American people?”

He continued his attack on the family that founded Walmart, which drew a formal complaint Wednesday from the National Labor Relations Board accusing the retailer of illegally threatening or punishing employees who considered taking part in strikes to protest working conditions. “The Walton family is the wealthiest family in America,” Sanders said. “Does anybody on the panel think that they need significant welfare help? And yet it turns out that they are the largest recipient of welfare in America.”

He accused the retailer of paying its employees “starvation wages,” which in turn forced working families into taxpayer-funded social welfare programs to help pay for their medical care, food and housing.

“Do you think the Walton family, worth a hundred billion dollars, is in need of welfare from the middle class of this country, or do you think maybe we should raise the minimum wage so that those workers can earn a living wage and not have to get Medicaid or food stamps?” Sanders asked the panel.

The first panelist, Scott Winship, of the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research, offered to answer an earlier question, but Sanders insisted that he justify why taxpayers should subsidize Walmart’s wages with welfare. “I would not use the word welfare, I think it’s stigmatizing,” Winship said, adding that Walmart offered low prices to its customers.” *Fact Finder’s Editor just has to jump in here and make comment. Welfare is “stigmatizing” by its very definition: That’s probably just how the majority of all welfare recipients, including Walmart employees, feel, stigmatized, to be marked or branded (dictionary meanings, derived from the original word “stigmata”.*

Scott Winship continued after Sanders insisted that Winship answer the question as he’d asked it, saying, “I think that we should not raise the wage above levels that’s going to cause Walmart to not hire their workers,” Winship said. “The only way that they’re able to have the prices, which benefit low-income people more than people up on the income distribution (scale), is by paying wages that are not as high as you or I might like.” *Again the editor feels compelled to add some thoughts. This to me is an amazingly arrogant statement. Walmart’s below-living-wage employees are expected to subsidize other wage-poor people’s chance to buy “cheap” products. I italicize the word “cheap” meaning that something is priced inexpensively (sometimes not even that), but frequently is quality defective. As the ole adage says “you get what you pay for” is all too often proven by Walmart’s “quality.”*

The next panelist, former Labor Secretary Robert Reich, said he did not think taxpayers should subsidize any corporation that failed to pay its workers enough to survive. “That is corporate welfare of the worst kind,” said Reich, a public policy professor at the University of California-Berkeley. Reich added that Walmart, the nation’s largest private employer, paid its workers an average of \$8.80 an hour. By comparison, he said, the nation’s largest employer in 1955 was General Motors, which paid

workers an average of \$37 an hour in today's money.

Sanders next asked Aparna Mathur, American Enterprise Institute, to defend Walmart's labor practices. "I don't think we should be subsidizing Walmart, but I think workers have a choice about where they want to work," Mathur said. "If they're choosing to work at Walmart, you know, that is their choice and we should not decide for them whether it's a good choice." *A final editorial intrusion. Where has this person lived? In some areas, such as we have here in the Adirondacks, choices of where one is able to find work can be very limited.*

### MORE ABOUT A COMMERCIAL AND BERNIE SANDERS

Last issue I discussed commercials, but there was one that has annoyed me from its beginning, but I was hesitant to mention it, even to friends - *The Wounded Warrior Project*. I was always touched by the soldiers, themselves, but all I could think of was that they should not have to ask for help to get everything they need and as quickly as they need it. Where was our government on this? Well, again thank you Bernie Sanders, you spoke out on interviews and on the Hill, saying that the wounded are part of the price of war and that if you (the government) are not willing to pay that price, then don't send them. Now, good news: this past November there seemed to be real effort and progress on solving this problem and as quickly as possible. I would like to add that the *Wounded Warrior Project* should continue as a support to "honor and empower" service men and women but become a public "thank you" for extras, special things, gifts - not for the best care possible **due** soldiers from our government. Seemingly, what Fact Finder has discovered, is that government care is excellent, **when** it is available.

### HIDDEN WORLDS

Port Henry is home to a treasure trove of hidden worlds. Literacy Volunteers of America's Essex and Franklin Co's office is right here on Broad Street. Literacy is not just about reading or math or learning to speak English or obtaining a GED. It is really about people, the people who come to Literacy to fill-in areas of their knowledge which is weak or never existed. It is about the joy and excitement of learning. Each time a person learns something new they create new synapses in their brains, quite factually they are smarter. Everything a person learns is an accomplishment and accomplishments help people feel happier about themselves. This alone should encourage each of us to seek out something new to learn each day, but the stakes might be much higher, we might discover hidden abilities we never knew we had, a hidden world to explore. Each student, each teacher in Literacy is (as are we all) a complete world, explored and being explored, while exploring the world of knowledge.

### "BAKER"Y OPENING

Yes, there is a new bakery opening in Mineville **TODAY!** It will be open from 8am, with specials being offered from 10am to 2pm. Fact Finder apologizes to readers for not getting this wonderful news to you in the last issue, but news gathering has been difficult recently, hope to be back on schedule very soon. Is Fact Finder going to Mineville between 10 and 2? Absolutely!

### FINALLY

***"The more laws, the less justice ...***

***A nation can survive its fools, and even the ambitious.***

***But it cannot survive treason from within.***

***An enemy at the gates is less formidable, for he is known and carries his banner openly.***

***But the traitor moves amongst those within the gate freely.***

***His sly whispers rustling through all the alleys, heard in the very halls of government itself.***

***For the traitor appears not a traitor.***

***He speaks in accents familiar to his victims, and he wears their face and their arguments.***

*He appeals to the baseness that lies deep in the hearts of all men. He rots the soul of a nation.  
He works secretly and unknown in the night to undermine the pillars of the city.  
He infects the body politic so that it can no longer resist.  
A murderer is less to fear.  
The traitor is the plague.”*

Marcus Tullius Cicero - January 106 BC – 7 December 43 BC - was a [Roman philosopher](#), [politician](#), [lawyer](#), [orator](#), [political theorist](#), [consul](#) and [constitutionalist](#). He came from a wealthy [municipal](#) family of the [Roman equestrian order](#), and is widely considered one of Rome's greatest orators and prose stylists.

Please note the time in which Marcus lived. Do the affairs of mankind ever truly change?

**Look for the next issue on Saturday, February 7, 2015** at Mac’s, Moriah Pharmacy, Sherman Free Library, George’s Restaurant, 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.