

THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area
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FROM MAYORAL CANDIDATE JOHN SHELDON

I, John Sheldon am running for the position of Mayor of the Village of Port Henry. If I am elected I would like to be the voice for the residents of Port Henry. Here are some thoughts I have had about our village.

The infrastructure of the village, as a whole, is very old and much is still in dire need of replacement and should be looked at closely. This means trying to do a breakdown of things below ground and above. The need is to make the village operate properly at as little cost as possible. This has been done before but needs to be looked at again.

We need to continue improving the conditions of all roads and roadways, the sidewalks and the operations of maintaining them. It is a tough job for the village crew when there are many emergencies. How do we alleviate these problems to make it easier for the crew? That is a tough question. One of the answers could be hire another person permanently or hire an extra hand as needed.

Residents would like lower taxes but it is tough staying in a budget to make this happen when many budget items are cost mandated and many other items need immediate attention. Getting the best we can get for the best price is always the goal.

I would like to take a good look at our campsite. There is a big income for the village from our campsite. We need to keep the campsite full with campers and make new people want to come here to camp. Maintaining the physical improvements that have been made and upgrading as much as possible makes campers want to return. So the goal is keeping prices as low as possible for the campers but high enough to give us a better income.

I would appreciate your vote on March 18th.
Sincerely, John Sheldon, Candidate

TRUSTEES MATTHEW BRASSARD & STALEY RICH REPORT TO THE VILLAGE

Although both Mr. Brassard and Mrs. Rich are running uncontested in the up-coming election this coming March 18th, they wished to let residents know their reasons for running and some of the projects they have worked on, projects in the works now and future goals.

Matthew Brassard

I am running again because I really enjoy what I do. I like interactions with my fellow village citizens on a daily basis. I also want to be able to be a part of the continued growth and infrastructure rebuilding in the Village.

There are a few more important things I would like to see done over the next two years if I'm re-elected. The first is to continue to look for and apply for infrastructure grants; much the Village infrastructure is still in very bad shape, and needs to be repaired.

The second is to try and replace a good amount of the sidewalks in the Village. The Village of Saranac Lake took a bond out a few years ago to replace a lot of the sidewalks there, which is an idea I think would work well for our Village. You can get all the sidewalks you want replaced done at one

shot, with the cost spread over many years.

I feel the Village has made great improvements in a few areas, one, having the correct equipment to do the required job. We have purchased a new front end loader and some attachments for the village's equipment, to save time and money in the long run. We have been pretty successful in just the last two years is getting grants. We secured 700,000 dollars for the complete reconstruction and infrastructure upgrades to Elizabeth

Street, secured a main street grant for property owners on Main Street which was a 50/50 matching grant. (Example: The updating of the old Sagan building)

I feel it's very important we start to upgrade the Village campground. Particularly, the bathrooms need upgrading. We need to really think about redesigning the sites and come up with an actual square footage per size, this will allow the campground to add a few more sites and generate more revenue as the campground is the second highest revenue coming into the village behind the taxes we collect.

Staley Rich

Serving two terms on the Port Henry Village Board of Trustees has been an incredible amount of work. Most people do not understand that the basic running of a municipality has changed drastically in the last decade. Status quo is gone and government boards are at the mercy of state mandates and highly competitive state funds. Port Henry, in particular, has struggled for decades trying to revive a community and business economy which collapsed with the closing of the mines.

I decided to run again for re-election because this current board has worked very well together. We recognize and are working to make Port Henry a community that is competitive for both state money and private development. In order to do this, much time and effort has been focused on modernizing outdated laws and procedures that no longer work for us. We have spent an enormous amount of time researching and investigating what areas in the village are our strengths, and what are our weaknesses. In that process we discovered we lacked long term planning and credible statistics to use for successful grant writing. These items are not glamorous headlines that make the residents go - WOW! Instead they are tedious housekeeping items we have had to work on for Port Henry to enter a very competitive marketplace for economic growth and state support.

Port Henry has moved forward with a long term plan in place that addresses infrastructure, housing, recreation and waterfront, aesthetics, community, and preserving our historical resources. Please feel free to stop by the Village office to look at it. The Comprehensive Plan capitalizes on our villages strengths and identifies the areas we will concentrate on in the future. This plan is a roadmap to our future and puts Port Henry on equal footing with other communities competing for the same opportunities. New York State wants a plan before it will invest in a community. They want to know where we are going and how we plan on getting there. Developers and Corporations demand and expect written regulations so they can know upfront what will be allowed and expected within a community so they can plan financially to invest in a community. These expectations are not options anymore for any community that wants growth. Together as a board we have got these done and will capitalize on them to move Port Henry forward.

With some major milestones reached I have high hopes for my next term. I believe you will see improvements in infrastructure, on the waterfront area, and a much improved streetscape in the Downtown area. With our homework done and a plan in place, expect to see Port Henry actively compete for improvements and processes that will complement and enhance our community.

NEW NEWS FROM THE MAYOR'S DESK

Jim Casey from the State Finance Department called saying the final reimbursement payment from FEMA of \$188,285.00 had been processed and the Village would be receiving it in seven to

fourteen business days!!! Today, Friday the 20th, the Board met with Nicole Allen of Labarge Agency concerning zoning which is a necessary step toward attracting businesses to Port Henry, as Trustee Staley Rich noted in her report.

Not “new news” but something the Mayor wished to encourage people to remember to do in this unusually cold winter – leave your facets open so there is a strong trickle of water at least over night and in any area of the house that has seemed prone to freezing up. Fact Finder’s editor is old enough to remember that this was the norm in winter, even in Texas.

SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT - FACTUALLY

In a small village, because it is small and because everyone is connected, in some way, by family or friends; rumor-telephone exists at a high level. There are at least two reasons the rumor-mill grinds so speedily and so fine - trust, because it is coming from a family member or a close friend it can’t be lie and it is too time-consuming to google-around searching for the facts of the matter. Here we depart from the main road to explore a side-path, the distinction between the two words – fact and truth. Fact can be stated as an event or the existence of anything visible or, in some way, tangible. Truth can be expressed as the subjective form of fact, a perception of a fact. Each person experiencing a fact will perceive it differently, sometimes quite differently, as testimonies taken at the scene of a crime seem to prove.

All of the above being said, Fact Finder would like to provide the facts concerning a rumor that seems to continue its life on the rumor-telephone. December, 2014 at an open meeting, the Village Board awarded eight employees COLA (Cost Of Living Adjustment) checks which raised the hackles on many a resident’s neck and speedily ran the rumor gauntlet. These were once-only benefits which were already in the budget under staff salaries and costing no additional monies to the tax payers. Taxes were withheld and they are pension reportable. **None of these checks were for anyone on the Board!** To be perfectly certain that these checks were unassailably legal, the Board checked with the New York Conference of Mayors, the Comptroller’s Office and the firm that does the yearly audit for the village, all gave their nod of approval. Fact Finder does not expect that all residents, even a majority, will read this and learn the facts, but if any readers do hear others who are not on the page of these facts, please, help them understand. Our village mayor and trustees are a group of people who are trustworthy, if only because they live here too. Whatever choices they make for the village, they are affected by these choices the same as everyone else in the village

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS NAMES A NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Literacy Volunteers of Essex and Franklin Counties has announced the appointment of Diane O’Connor as Executive Director.

A resident of Ticonderoga, O’Connor brings more than 20 years of non-profit management experience in both local and national organizations to her new position. She holds a bachelor’s degree in History from Point Park University and a Certificate of Non-Profit Management from Duke University. Most recently, she served as director at the Adirondack History Center.

“I am delighted to be a part of Literacy Volunteers,” said O’Connor. “They are one of the most responsibly managed non-profit organizations I have ever worked with, and their mission is a compelling one. Everyone is entitled to achieve their personal goals and literacy is an important step in that process.”

Founded in 1986, Literacy Volunteers of Essex and Franklin Counties, is an affiliate of Literacy NY. The organization empowers adult learners by providing Basic Literacy, Numeracy Literacy and English as a Second Language in a student –centered, individual learning environment.

Offices are located in Malone, Saranac Lake, Lake Placid and Port Henry. For further information, contact:

Diane O'Connor, Director
Literacy Volunteers of Essex and Franklin Counties
3265 Broad Street, Port Henry, NY 12974
518-546-3008 www.litvol.com

Fact Finder would like to thank Literacy Volunteers for allowing the above reprint of their press release.

GOOD NEWS

Fact Finder truly needed to know how the Fashion Corner was doing after its loss and how the "Baker"y in Mineville has been prospering after an amazing opening a few weeks ago. I visited both on Friday the 20th and was very relieved and happy to report good news from each visit.

I have been watching the windows of the **Fashion Corner** and have seen no change in the beauty of the weekly changes in dresses. On stepping in Friday, I was greeted with the same racks filled with the usual gorgeous array of dresses and with the same feeling of being in a flower garden of every color possible. Candy Baker was serving a customer so Allan stepped out to welcome whomever had come in. This was the only change but the atmosphere had not changed and I began asking Allan how things were going. He said it was still a full-service store and that they had been receiving new dresses regularly, in fact two new wedding gowns had arrived the day before and a box of prom dresses which they had not yet opened. If anyone needed comforting proof of Allan's commitment, this is it. Once, Natalie told me that when these gowns were bought, they were bought, no returns, they were Fashion Corner's and had to be sold. I asked Allan if they ever had sales and he said, "Yes." The last one was in December and the next sale has not, as yet, been planned. I invited him to be sure and let Fact Finder know when the next sale was due and this news would appear in the Fact Finder issue closest to the sale date.

The "**Baker**"y in Mineville, opposite the graveyard, was just about as empty of goodies at 3 pm when I dropped in as when I first visited it on its opening several weeks ago; this was an encouraging sign as closing is around 4 pm. When I asked how business has been Laura said that it has been so much better than she had expected, sometimes even a bit overwhelming, but always welcome. I cringed at her answer to my question as to when she had to get up; her day usually begins at 3 am! Customers came in and took twelve coconut macaroons and some chocolate chip cookies from the small display of remaining goodies. I was particularly concerned about those macaroons; I wanted to try some (they did not take them all!)

Laura and her two-and-a-half year old son live above the shop. I now have a new love in my life, Barrett, Laura's son. He reacts and speaks like a five year old and is an absolute charmer. When I was leaving he kept saying something we couldn't at first identify, finally, we realized he was saying softly "I'm a peanut." Laura didn't know where that came from as he had never said it before.

Later, I learned interesting history of the building itself. In 1876 it was a hotel probably with a bar, as it was a bar, called Club Restaurant (which did not allow women) before Prohibition and was the first bar in Essex Co. to reopen when Prohibition was repealed. Another rather disturbing but fascinating story is that during Prohibition moonshine was peddled from the "honey wagon" as it went around cleaning the outhouses; as I said, a rather disturbing mental picture but a fascinating anecdote.

For a good many years the bar was run like a true English pub. There was a dart board where many people played darts and in the summer games of horse shoes were played outside in back of the bar. Things began changing in 1992 when DWI laws were put in place. Now, the area has this truly wonderful new drawing card – the "**Baker**"y.

Laura suggests that people would be wise to place special orders such as doughnuts (Laura said that Donut Days were going very well) or large orders 24 hours in advance and 48 hours for specially designed cakes. Also, she has all the ingredients to bake gluten-free, which would need to be ordered ahead as other special orders. She said how grateful she is for all the support she has received and to please thank everyone. The phone number is [518-942-6549](tel:518-942-6549). It is Fact Finder's choice to put in the "518" just in case people from Vermont or New Hampshire happen to want fresh, hot doughnuts on their travels.

As there is a bit of extra space, this editor would like to remind everyone that a paper needs news to print and, of course, readers. As for the news, if any of you out there has news you would like to have appear in the Fact Finder or if you know of someone who has a bit of news, place your name and phone number or email information in the mail box outside the Chamber of Commerce and I will begin to check there often and will respond as soon as possible. Please realize there are some difficulties that can arise because the Fact Finder has a two-week schedule, so anything happening quickly may or may not be in time to be included before the event. I *need* news and hope I find some in the Chamber mail box.

Look for the next issue on **Saturday, March 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. "Fact Finder" is the first item on the third drop-down menu.