

THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area
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CONGRATULATIONS AND A THANK YOU

Congratulations to incumbent Ernie Guerin on his return to the office of Port Henry Mayor and a sincere thank you to his opponent Jack Sheldon for offering his knowledgeable services to the village. Also, a thank you is due Staley Rich and Matt Brassard for continuing to serve as trustees. Fact Finder wishes the Board and our village another two years of progress. Yes, Port Henry *has* progressed, though slowly, and, like a tree, you don't notice the growth day to day, even month to month, but one day there it - is a sturdy tree.

VILLAGE BOARD MEETING NOTES

The Village Board meeting was held, as usual, on the second Monday of the month at 6PM at the Village Hall. There are beginning to be a few more residents attending than when I first began, but there are still too few showing an involved interest in the place which they call home. I know it is hard to come home and then go out again for a 7PM meeting. Even though I am retired, I am busy all during the day and, hey, I just celebrated my 88th birthday; but I have *never* regretted having made the effort to be at our Village Board meetings, nor the Town Board meetings that I am trying to attend more regularly.

First up for discussion was the recurring and re-recurring old business of FEMA'S last payment of \$188,285.13 to the Village covering cost incurred from restoring the Campground after Irene's devastation. At the meeting we were told that Jim Casey had said the Village would have the money within seven to fourteen days and - FLASH!!! – the Fact Finder learned that, as of today Monday the 16th, this so-long-anticipated money is in the BANK!!! This sum represents repayment on funds the Village had to borrow (and pay interest on) to repair the Campground. It is always wonderful to be able to close the books on a project.

Two Special (working) Meetings were held in February by the Board and consultants regarding zoning regulations. Zoning a village most advantageously for its residents and for possible new businesses is a long, but a very important, process for any municipality which wishes to grow favorably.

A letter was received February 23rd from Michael Arthur of the New York State Department of Transportation stating that the Department's study found no justification to modify the present truck routing on Grove Street. Residents had asked for a study as they felt routing the trucks on their street was a hardship and potentially dangerous.

The Coin Drop Schedule to date is as follows: May 23 – PHFD, July 4 – Moriah Ambulance Squad, July 18 – PHFD, September 12 – PHFD, October 10, PHFD. Fact Finder would like to comment on some questions I have heard in the village about Coin Drops particularly those *needed* by the PHFD. Fortunately not too many people, but some wonder why the Fire Department *needs* these drops as they get money from the Village. The word “*need*” has been printed boldly and italicized for a reason. Our Fire Department truly *needs* extra monies.

Often the Fire Department requests a grant but is denied it because the village's median income has been set (by outside decision) at \$53,000 per family. Fact Finder feels this is not a fact! Seemingly the Board feels the same way, as they are in the process of gathering information to contest this

finding. Also, all fire equipment which is very expensive, to begin with, must be maintained at the highest level of safety and the necessity of sooner-than-later replacements makes equipment even more expensive. Still another also, as the knowledge of how to fight fire increases and the equipment becomes more advanced, firefighters must receive more and more instructive training on how to get the best results from this progress. So please, remember the above facts when you are tempted to question why our Fire Department seems to have a lot of Coin Drops.

A resolution was passed by the Board to adjust Village resident's water usage fee's which exceed normal usage for the May bill, due to the Village having asked the residents to run their water from February until further notice, in order to prevent water line freeze-ups.

The campground will be opening Friday, May 8th with Norman Wright as manager and newly adjusted rates: Seasonal Lake Front increased from \$1675. < \$1800; non-Lake Front from \$1405 < \$1525; Tent sites remain the same at \$1050; Transients – Lake Front from \$40. < \$50., non-Lake Front \$30.< \$40., Tent site \$25. < \$30. Every time the word “increase” is attached to the word “fees” everyone seems to become immediately unhappy, but if you do the math on the campground increases, they come to less than the cost of a cup of coffee a week, where else can you get such a bargain? The beach will open Saturday, June 20th. Further information may be obtained by calling the Village Office – 546-9933.

TOWN BOARD MEETING NOTES

The Town Board met as usual on the second Thursday of the month at the Town Court in Port Henry. Meg Parker from the Essex County Public Health Department was a special guest. She came to discuss the department's Healthy Places Program and their Complete Streets Program which is available to help municipalities in projects which directly improve and encourage healthier daily life for its residents.

Specifically, improving sidewalks and considering the needs of bicyclists would encourage more healthy walking and biking; considering the needs for a growing senior population, such as non-step-up access to sidewalks and ramps or, at least, railings for steps into buildings; and, for communities with water access, kayaks, canoes, and paddle boats for day-rental for a small fee. This equipment would be stored (locked) on the beaches with rental being overseen by the lifeguard staff. Insurance would be involved, but often the “umbrella insurance” of a community would cover this. Both the County and the State share in the costs accrued from participation in the Complete Streets Program.

There are many different types of grants available; each is designed to fit the specific needs of a particular community. This is where the Essex County Public Health Department can be most helpful. It will come into a community, study its needs, take pictures of these needs which then can be presented when applying for grants. They will help in the creation of the best plan for a specific community. A plan is necessary in giving the best possible chance for a positive outcome in running the grant gauntlet. Jaime Wilson, the Moriah Highway Supervisor, thanked Meg Parker for her valuable role in obtaining grant funds for the new playground and court equipment at Moriah's Lynley Field and the new fence for the Raymond Wright Memorial Cemetery.

During this very difficult winter, Town and Village crews have been continually helping each other in repairing frozen and broken water lines and sewer conduits caused by the extreme cold acting on very old infrastructure. The use of salt and sand has been very high and purchasing more might be difficult.

People who wish to rummage through the metal pile at the Transfer station must be aware that there is a procedure to follow to be able to do this. You check-in with the Transfer manager, sign in and then search for the item(s) you want.

In an effort to make the Transfer station a monetarily self-maintaining operation, the Board has

been looking into placing a scale at the station, as trash is received and paid for by bulk, but its disposal must be paid for by weight. Schroon Lake will be lending the station a scale so the feasibility of a scale may be checked before the buying and installing of one.

OF PARTICULAR NOTE: After over ten years of study and preparation, **The Mineville Hydro Project** has finally reached the presentation-to-the-public stage. There will be a public meeting at **Moriah Central School at 7PM, April 8th**. This is a not-to-be-missed meeting, as, if it comes to fruition, will be a real area changer.

The following resolutions were approved: Authorization for Supervisor to Renew Contract for Waste Water with Moriah Shock 10/1/14-9/30/19 @ \$104,000 Per Yr.; - Increase Hourly Rate to Lifeguards to \$12.00/Hr.- Head Lifeguards to \$13.00/Hr. for 2015 Season; - Authorization for Supervisor to Sign Contract with Mountain Lake Services for 2 Employees at \$8.75/Hr., 6 Hrs/Week for Cleaning Town Hall and Work at Transfer Station;. - Renew contract with Adirondack Landfill Services for Sampling as Required by NYS at a Total Cost for 2015 of \$4,230.00.

NOTE: Applications for Summer Program Director and teenage councilors is due by April 8th.
The campground will open May 8th and close October 12th.

AN INTERVIEW WITH DYANI MAE BRYANT

This interview grew out of Fact Finder's recent plea for news stories and a suggestion from a reader that I interview a young Moriah Central student who is working on luge at Lake Placid. I was very excited, a news story and on a subject I knew very little about. Could it get better than this? It did! I was given two stories instead of one and even more wonderful, I didn't have to write it.

I met with Dyani Mae and her mother Brenda. Brenda had, not just informational notes, but a write-up on the family history in the winter sports of skeleton sliding and luge. But the best was that it was so informative and well written that I am using the complete article. This fulfills another desire of mine, to have more than one voice (mine) in the Fact Finder. Thank you so much Brenda for these gifts.

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WRITTEN BY BRENDA BAKER:

When most people think of sliding, they think of sliding down the powdery snow on the gentle slope of a hill, but not this family!

After bobsledding for many years, Danny Bryant started racing skeleton at 29 years old with his first competition being held in Winterburg, West Germany in 1982. Skeleton sliding is a belly-down, head-first version. Competitors hurtle down bobsled runs of speeds up to 80 mph with their chins one inch over the ice. Unlike the old Flexible Flyers, the skeleton slider has his hands and arms at his side and steers by moving his head and shoulders. Besides competing in Winterburg, Danny competed and placed in competitions held at Mt. VanHoevenberg, Lake Placid; he raced World Cup for 17 years in Austria, Germany; St. Moritz, Switzerland; Sarajevo, Yugoslavia; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Calgary, Canada. With too many medals hanging at home to count, Dan raced skeleton World cup and Nationals from 1980 to 2000. Dan also had the opportunity to coach various teams from Japan and Iraq, through the Federation of International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Teams (FIBT), and coached Jimmy Shea to his gold medal victory in 2002.

Following dad's lead are his children, Joy, Blaise and Dyani Mae. Joy and Blaise competed in bobsled starting at 5 and 6 years old. His sister, Joy was a great coach "steering" him in the right direction by telling him "turn left" or "turn right," until he had the track mastered by feel. Dad also took Blaise on a walk down the track so that he could get the "feel" for the track. Joy and Blaise were a team duo in ORDA's Junior Bobsled Program. They won a gold medal in the 2000 Empire State Games held in Lake Placid, NY. It took less than 37 seconds for them to win their first gold medal

riding down Mt. VanHoevenberg in their bobsled. Twisting and turning on the half mile track with a 200 pound bobsled, and speeds up to 50 miles per hour, Joy would rather have been driving that day, but it was Blaise's turn, so she sat behind him as his brakeman. Being blind since birth, Blaise counted the turns and steered the sled with the ropes and when they crossed the finish line and the finish time was announced, you could hear the hoots and hollers from the top of the hill, as they knew they were in 1st place. After winning their gold medal, Blaise and Joy had the opportunity to interview with the TODAY show and Soledad O'Brien an American broadcast journalist. Blaise also appeared in a movie called TOP SPEED, produced by MacGillivray Freeman Films. It enters the lives of four fast individuals who take daring risks, go to new extremes and push the science of performance beyond the limits in the pursuit of ultimate velocity. He appeared with some of the other world's fastest competitors, such as Marla Streb (the world's fastest downhill mountain bike champion), racecar sensation Lucas Luhr, five-time Olympic medalist Marion Jones (the world's fastest runner) and Tuffy LaTour & Brian Shimer, members of the US Bobsled Team. It was a movie about the light hearted look of the science of speed, including why and how humans keep going faster and faster.

Blaise competed on the Jr. Bobsled team until he turned 18, at which time he graduated from Moriah Central School and attended the College of St. Rose, where he earned his 4 year degree in journalism and communications. He currently resides in Albany, NY and works for the Independent Living Center.

Joy started her training at the OTC (Olympic Training Center) in Lake Placid for the National USA Luge Team and continued on to race with the Jr. World Cup Skeleton Team. Joy has raced on various tracks around the world, including Salt Lake City, Utah; Innsbruck, Austria; St. Moritz, Switzerland; Altenburg, Germany, collecting medals like her father Danny. She most recently retired from her career of after attending the 2014 Olympic in Sochi, Russia as a representative of Energy Bits. After traveling around the world to Canada, Jamaica, Austria, Switzerland, Russia, Egypt, Germany, and a lengthy stay in Italy, she currently resides in Southington, Connecticut.

Now it's Dan's youngest daughters' turn. At 13, Dyani Mae Bryant just started her career in luge the summer of 2014. Riding a wheeled sled down a blacktop road for the USA Luge Search, she spent 6 weeks training in Lake Placid last summer. She also had the opportunity to train on the indoor "ice start" in Lake Placid at the Luge Training Complex, where she took a 2nd place in the USA Luge Association race for starts, bearing a 1.599 second start time.

After the summer session was held, she joined the Adirondack Luge Team and in December 2014 started racing at Mt. VanHoevenberg Olympic Bobsled Run. She trained every Saturday night and every Sunday morning with the ADK Luge team and then again Sunday afternoon with the local luge program.

A luge sled is a small one- or two-person sled on which one sleds face up and feet-first. Steering is done by flexing the sled's runners with the calf of each leg or exerting opposite shoulder pressure to the seat. Racing sleds weigh 21–25 kilograms (46–55 lbs) for singles and 25–30 kilograms (55–66 lb) for doubles. Lugers can reach speeds of 140 km per hour (87 mph), depending on the track conditions. Lugers compete against a timer and are timed to a thousandth of a second, making luge one of the most precisely timed and fastest sports on ice in the world.

The first luge run in North America was built at Lolo Hot Springs, Montana in 1965. Perhaps this is why Dyani loves luge so much. Montana is the birthplace of her grandmother, Colleen Bryant. Although the United States competed in every Olympic luge event from 1964 through 1976, it was not until 1979 that the United States Luge Association was founded. The first artificial American track was completed in that year for use in the 1980 XIII Winter Olympic Games at Lake Placid, New York. Since that time the United States' luge program has greatly improved. A second artificial track was constructed near Park City, Utah for the 2002 XIX Olympic Winter Games at Salt Lake City.

Once an athlete is on their sled they are audibly notified that the track is clear. At this point a tone sounds and the athlete has thirty seconds to begin their run. A run becomes official when an

athlete and their sled, in contact with one another, cross the finish line. If they crash, or “81”, they are disqualified for that particular run. The sport of luge requires an athlete to balance mental and physical fitness and spend decades honing their skills. Physically, a luger must have strong neck, upper body, abdominal, and thigh muscles. Strength training is essential to withstand the extreme G-forces of tight turns at high speeds.

Since lugers have very little protection other than a visor and helmet, they must be able to endure the physical pounding administered by the track when mistakes are made. Dyani has received her share of “luge tattoos,” but that has never stopped her from getting back up and going again. When she is not running, at the gym or on the bow flex, Dad enjoys getting Dyani to “work out” in his wood pile.

Mentally a luger must maintain total focus as they steer their sled through more than a kilometer of curves and straights at a high rate of speed. Dozens of subtle movements and weight shifts are required to find the perfect line down the track. Consistency is essential for success. Dyani currently has track times between 46-48 seconds each run with her pod racing sled.

Sled maintenance is also an important element for success. All lugers start out with a training sled, then progress to a pod sled. Lugers spend hours meticulously sanding their steel runners, and making other important adjustments and repairs to their sleds. No luger can possibly achieve elite status without working closely with an experienced coaching staff, implementing suggestions and fine tuning technique. Dyani has had the opportunity to work closely with her Adirondack Luge Team coaches, her National coaches, her local luge coach, Coach Dad, and Coach-sister Joy, who is always available to talk to Dyani via Skype or phone any time of day or night.

Other luge athletes whom Dyani has had the opportunity to slide with this past season, all gave tips that have improved her slider's ability to find that "sweet spot" on the track. Dyani's mom says “They are a great group of kids, eager to help each other out. Though luge is a winter sport, it will require daily, year-round training if she decides to make a career out of it. We will be there to support her in every decision.” As with many extreme sports, lugging has risks. Though most injuries involve bumps, bruises, broken bones and concussions fatalities do, occasionally occur. Knowing that Georgian luger Nodar Kumaritashvili suffered a fatal crash during his final practice run for the 2010 Winter Olympics in Whistler, British Columbia, Canada due to a steering error, is where Dyani's mother, Brenda gets nervous. Kumaritashvili was the fourth athlete to die while in preparation for a Winter Olympics competition, following speed skier Nicolas Bochatay, 27, who died while preparing for the Albertville 1992 games; British luger Kazimierz Kay-Skrzypeski and skier Ross Milne, 19, who both died in the run-up to the Innsbruck 1964 games.

Swearing that she would never allow her daughter to slide down the track after watching Joy and Blaise slide at high rates of speed for many years, and after herself taking one trip down the track with Dan in a bobsled, Brenda now waits patiently along the track to hear the announcer say “Dyani has crossed the finish line,” at which time she lets out a big sigh of relief. “The worst part was when Dyani would have an “81” as they call it... which is a crash....and you are waiting to hear that she is O.K.,” says Brenda. “There is nothing worse than seeing/hearing your child is hurt. All of the athletes tell me they have crashed at one time or another. One broke his ankle during a race just a few weeks ago. It has taken me a while to relax, but I feel comfortable with her sliding now. I just wish I had the opportunity to have more than a 3 second glimpse of her as she slides by at 50 mph.”

Moving up from Start 5 (the lowest start position) to start 4 on the track qualified Dyani to slide in the Empire State games. “We never expected her to be in the Empire State Games this year” said Dyani's mom. “That usually doesn't happen for a few years after they have developed some skills. Nonetheless, there we were for the Opening Ceremonies, for which some 1600 athletes were registered. Dyani received an official Empire State Games jacket and credentials identifying her as an

athlete. Senator Betty Little addressed the athletes and spoke about how the athletes have to practice hard in order to have such an opportunity to represent their town, county and state. She had all of the registered athletes turn to the audience and give one big thank you to their parents, coaches and teammates. Karen Courtland-Kelly, a 1994 figure skating Olympian addressed the athletes with a theme of inspiration. She encouraged all of the athletes to bring good energy and inspire all who play with them. She encouraged them to perform with every ounce of effort they have and make a difference for themselves and for others. It was very nice. The torch was passed and the announcement came, "Let the games begin."

Dyani's parents, family and friends attended the 2015 Empire State Games women's open luge race held on February 8, 2015, ringing the old 1980 Olympic "cow bells" as Dyani raced by them, seeing Dyani with two runs at 47.816 and 48.014 respectively, putting her in 6th place. Not a bad take for a rookie in her first ever race! After the Empire State Games were held, Dyani continued to train with her Adirondack Luge Club and local luge team, and had the opportunity to spend two weeks training with the National Luge Team members. She also has to keep up with school work, and maintain high honors, and currently holds a 98 average.

Dyani was excited during the Empire State Games to not only slide herself, but to have the opportunity to watch her cousin Wyatt Carniglia play squirt hockey for the Lake Placid team, her cousin Bella Baker from Rome, NY play hockey for the Bobcat team, and also a classmate, Luis Flores race bobsled. She also got to meet the Jamaican Bobsled Team.

Ending the season for the Adirondack Luge Team, all athletes competed in the Les Mayers Memorial Classic luge race, Dyani proudly took 2nd place – her 1st Silver Medal.

Outside of luge, Dyani enjoys soccer, Irish Dance, fishing, modeling at fashion shows, hanging out with her friends, painting faces at our local Lobsterfest, cardboard boat racing, playing the clarinet in school, drama club and cooking. She also had the opportunity this summer to be a scuba diver in the movie Champosauras.

She will return to the OTC the week of March 30th to continue training, while all of her friends are on Spring Break. She wouldn't have it any other way. She loves to slide. Good luck and God Bless you Dyani Mae Bryant.

Fact Finder is sure its readers will have enjoyed this article as much as its editor did.

WELCOME SPRING AND ALL GOOD THINGS TO PORT HENRY

In conjunction with the Friends of the Sherman Free Library, Zelda, a new local artist, will be honoring spring and celebrating National Library Week, on Monday, April 13th from 5-7pm with a participatory art project to be held at the Moriah Chamber of Commerce, 4317 Main Street. The community, adults and children, is invited to decorate eggs with festive colors and positive words or phrases defining what we'd like to bring into our lives and community this spring. Materials will be provided, but we welcome light-colored eggs, food coloring, glitter, glue, any suitable craft materials. Volunteers will be asked to come back over the weekend to hang the eggs on the tree outside the library. Come, one and all, join us in welcoming spring!

Look for the next issue on **Saturday, April 4, 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.