

THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

No, your memory is not slipping, the last issue of Fact Finder did begin with the same article heading. This time it is to correct an error in the Fact Finder; a seemingly harmless error, but not really if you think about the true meanings of the words involved. If you read “furniture store” and “home furnishings store,” it brings to mind two totally different types of stores. One store would seem to sell only furniture while the other would suggest a store stocked with many different items to compliment its basic reason for being, the sale of furniture for the home. The sign hanging above the entry to what the Fact Finder has called the “Firefly furniture” says unequivocally “Firefly Home Furnishings.” We in Port Henry know the abundance of all different types of home furnishings the Firefly holds, but all others need its full name, Firefly Home Furnishings, to be correctly guided to it. Fact Finder must try not to slip up on facts, of all things.

FROM OUR TRAVELING VOLUNTEERS

Linda Smyth and Jeff Kelly in Mexico

We had never been in a water taxi before. Getting on is battling suitcases and waves. Getting off is even harder. After an hour's ride, the boat turns into a cove and surfs onto a pristine beach. We jump off into knee high waters as the small boat dips and lunges in the waves. We are entering the Spanish speaking third world in a remote part of Mexico.

Our destination is a tiny experimental eco-village of Chonchos. This is where we will live in thatch-roofed palapas high above the Pacific. No electricity. Sleeping under netting in open air. Still, we have a rugged four mile hike through the jungle to Chimo, to be the location of our “Magic Murals.”

This trip was organized by our friend, Susan Shanley, with whom we had painted murals in Saratoga Springs. Our goal was to help Chimo celebrate the sea life and increase the awareness of the beautiful diversity of creatures living in the Pacific Ocean. The ocean was literally six feet from our paint brushes. The sea was ever present. Its constant roar crashing against the boulders, loud and intense. Every day we ate delicious, just caught, gifts from the sea - octopus, snapper, tuna and squid. We watched tortillas being made.

At first we were strangers to this land, but once we handed paint brushes to the children we felt we belonged as they were transformed into gleeful artists, eager to add colors and patterns to the whales and turtles and sea grasses.

In 5 days, 15 adults and 50 local children of Chimo weaved in and out of multiple murals skipping from wall to wall adding their touches. Each day the murals progressed, adding layers upon layers of patterns. One wall was very high above the rest. That is where we painted a huge yellow sun adorned with a red spiral and turquoises and blues behind it's rays. It shines out to sea welcoming all visitors to this remote fishing village.

One nine year old girl was named Andrea. Her smile still radiates with us. Little serious boys would tug on our shirt tails wanting a paint brush. We are happy because we helped transform grey walls into

bright colors and to bring what is under the sea up onto the walls.

We waved goodbye that final day feeling joy in having been given the chance, with brushes and gallons of paint, to help increase the pride of a far away village in Mexico. What an experience!

Dusti Pratt in Honduras

We made it home safe and are finally back into our routines of normal living. What a life changing experience! It was amazing to see how the rest of the world works without all of the modern conveniences we depend on each and every day. One example stands out in particular of this acceptance of so little. Our brigade had volunteers from the village to help us in any way they could, volunteers for the volunteers. The day I was on triage, one of these volunteers came through the line. He was a handsome young man of 26 with slightly odd looking eyes which were a very painful looking red and I expected this would be first on his help-needed list. It wasn't, he asked (through a translator) for help for his belly. Because of parasites, this was the most frequent complaint we heard. He never mentioned his eyes. I could not believe they were not painful, so I asked the translator to please ask him about them. It seems this condition is not uncommon in areas such as this village. Certain people react to their surrounding environment in this manner. Something triggers certain eye cells to duplicate too rapidly and these cells begin to cover the eye and cause irritation, discomfort and unusual redness. These excess cells need to be scraped off or they will cause the person to become blind. In the list below he was one of our referral patients. The Brigade will pay for him to be seen by a specialist for further assessment, however the operation itself is not paid for. If he does follow through with seeing the specialist and agrees to the operation, our group has decided to be his sponsor for this. I so hope he will see that specialist and have that operation. I just can't think of such a young and vital man doomed to blindness. Just one of the many, many reasons why I hope to be able to go back each and every year. The people of Honduras were very thankful for our help and cried when we were leaving!!! It is still taking me time to *not* feel bad for having so much; I guess that is what they call "post brigade" depression!

We were out in the community for a total of four days and served 1076 people!!! Here is a breakdown of services we provided while at the clinic.

101 gynecology patients 92 extractions on 61 patients

5 referral patients 53 fillings on 30 patients

22 adult charlas benefiting 541 patients 1 cleaning

422 fluoride treatments

NOTES FROM THE BOARD

Prior to the Village of Port Henry's monthly Board meeting on April 8th, the Board held a Public Hearing to present proposed Local Law No. 2 of 2013 to the public for review and comment. This law extends the Moratorium on Street Level Residential Development in a Portion of the Village of Port Henry. A copy of this proposed Local Law is on file in the Office of the Village Clerk and will remain open for public inspection during regular office hours. Copies of this proposed law were available for those attending this public meeting.

Following the Public Hearing, an organizational meeting was held by the Board. Oaths of Office will be filed for those newly re-elected to office and appointments were made for Trustee John Sheldon as Deputy Mayor for one year; Denise Daly as Village Clerk for two years and as Registrar of Vital

Statistics for one year; Cathy Law-Davenport as Village Treasurer for two years; Bill Ball as temporary Code Enforcement Officer; Christopher Wolfe as Health Officer with Dr. Richard McKeever as a back-up; Trustee Ruth McDonough as Safety Officer for one year; Betty LaMoria as the Village Historian; Art Brassard as the Bingo Inspector and, as needed, Tina Soloski and the Miller, Mannix, Schachner and Hafner Law firm as Village attorneys.

Lifeguards will be paid \$10.00 per hour for the 2013 season and the Mayor's and Trustees' salaries will remain the same. The Board will continue to meet the second Monday of every month.

There are nine resolutions which must be adopted annually to maintain current policies concerning the day-to-day running of the Village. These were read and duly adopted unanimously by the Board and the Public Hearing was adjourned.

The regular monthly meeting of the Board was called to order at 7:08 pm. The Department Heads' Reports held nothing unusual or of particular public interest.

In answer to a letter mailed to Congressman Owens requesting his help in successfully negotiating with FEMA on behalf of Port Henry for the damages caused by Tropical Storm Irene in 2011, a letter was received April 1, stating that the Congressman had contacted the appropriate officials concerning this matter.

A letter was mailed to the New York Environmental Facilities Corporation with regard to the Village not receiving any correspondence on the updated Hardship Application that was submitted to the NYSEFC IN May of 2012, with regard to the Manhole 13 Order on Consent. *The Fact Finder has included this seemingly boring bit of fact to show just one of the difficulties with which Village government must contend when dealing with bureaucracies and their slowness of response, which then requires repeated correspondence, costing so much time and money.*

The engineering services for the Elizabeth Street Sewer and Water Facilities Replacement project was awarded to AES Northeast, PLLC. This much needed project was made possible through the Community Development Block Grant. *That word "Grant" is sooo wonderful!*

A Re-levy of the Unpaid Water and Sewer Billings for 2912 on to the Village Property Taxes was approved.

The Board approved (with certain provisos) a request from Ragnar Relay Events asking permission for their relay to race through our village September 27th between the hours of 8:00 pm and 12:00am.

The Board gave CMJ Productions II, Inc. permission to have a three member crew film in and around Port Henry April 18th through the 22nd. Remember to smile a lot on these dates, particularly at strangers with cameras.

A Vendor License was issued to Mr. Ding-a-Ling Ice Cream, Inc. for a six month period to sell ice cream from his truck within Village limits, including the campground. It is helpful to either accompany children or give them exact change for their purchases.

A Special Meeting/Budget Workshop was held April 10th and a ***Public Hearing*** to consider this tentative budget will be held ***Monday April 15th at 7:00 pm at the Village Hall.***

After Fire Chief Hughes had made his monthly report, acting Mayor Sheldon invited him to address the larger-than-usual number of meeting attendees on the day-to-day running of the department, how it raises money and its projected needs for the ever-escalating requirements of a well-run, emergency-ready fire department in 2013. He spoke so knowledgeably and sincerely from having been a part of the fire department for over 25 years that Fact Finder asked if he could re-create these thoughts in an article. The results are printed below.

The Village of Port Henry, incorporated in 1869, has provided fire service to our residents dating back to 1874. Our department is one of the oldest fire departments in New York State. The Port Henry Fire Department is an organization with forty-eight (48) members serving a community of approximately 1,200 village residents and covering a fire response area of eight square miles.

As history dictates, the fire department acts as an anchor to the community. Our ALL volunteer fire department assumes the responsibility of protecting our businesses, residences, and people. Municipal law dictates that it will be the responsibility of village government to budget for fire protection that includes providing a fire station, fire trucks, tools, and equipment. However, it is up to the volunteers to complete the mission. The continuous planning, maintenance and improvement to our village infrastructure is imperative if we desire our community to thrive and grow while attracting new businesses and residents to our village. The unique bond and positive relationship that exists between village government and the volunteer serves the population well.

The Port Henry Fire Department provides many services to our residents within the incorporated village and surrounding communities. For example, our department provides fire protection that includes the use of three pumpers, one brush truck, one rescue van and a dive/rescue boat. In addition, our department supports a Jaws of Life Team consisting of sixteen (16) certified Vehicle Extrication Technicians, sixteen (16) Surface Ice Rescue Technicians, five (5) certified NAUI scuba divers, three (3) Emergency Medical Technicians and two Certified First Responders. In addition, we have two members who are on the Essex County HAZ MAT Response Team. In 2012 alone, our department responded to seventy-two (72) total incidents. These incidents include structure fires, motor vehicle accidents, Hazardous Materials incidents, water and ice rescues, missing person, and Emergency Medical Assistance calls.

Supporting the needs as described above can be a challenge for a village fire department. The fire department accepts this challenge and sponsors various fund raising activities in addition to actively pursuing grants from multiple foundations in order to offset the burden on the village taxpayer. This is necessary in order to provide the level of service and protection the community has grown accustomed to. Fund raising activities support rescue equipment purchases, firefighter training, and on-going maintenance of our trucks and equipment.

The Port Henry Fire Department has accomplished a great deal over our 139 years of existence. However, so much more must be done. To continue our work and meet the obligation to our residents, we need help from people who care about our community, our neighbors, our department, and our mission.

Help came and is best exemplified by the recent donation of \$40,000 from the estate of Rita and Helen Dragoon. These ladies were lifelong residents of the Village of Port Henry. What better way to honor these fine citizens and preserve their memory than to continue to protect and preserve the village that they so loved. In keeping with municipal law, the volunteers are now faced with the challenge on how to best utilize these newly acquired funds with the concept of “giving back” in mind.

For example, a portion of these funds may be a perpetual contribution to The Ray McCabe Scholarship Fund, established in 1996 by the firemen, which awards \$500 to a graduating senior from Moriah Central School who excelled in the sciences. Mr. McCabe was a past science teacher and acted as President for the department. Another portion may be allocated to the Fire Prevention Program where the fireman may purchase and distribute smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in addition to night light flashlights for the elderly throughout the village. Understanding the financial stress the village is under, the firemen may opt to step up and provide matching funds to their village fire equipment budget towards the purchase of new Self Contained Breathing Apparatus and portable high band radios. Therefore, a team approach between village leaders and volunteers is the most beneficial way to

achieve our goals

while keeping the best interest of the taxpayer in mind.

NOTES FROM THE pH7 COMMITTEE

At the April 10th meeting the following topics came under discussion: +The Port Henry Farmers' Market which will again be on Wednesdays from 9 am - 1 pm at "Boni's Bistro" parking lot, beginning June 26th and ending August 28th. +A proposed arts gallery, there are so many interested artists in this area who work in so many different mediums. The main drawback to beginning immediately is start-up money (so what's new?), also the wished-for venue is probably not available until July. +The new Chamber of Commerce office and the Chamber in general. The office is in the Stahl building on Main Street and is turning out to be quite a nice office-y space and a lot of good office furniture was allowed to be bought for **\$1.00**. It will be a real plus for the village to have not only a viable Chamber of Commerce but a highly visible one. +The History sign in the Park. +The pros and cons of remaining a village or being absorbed into the Town, an on-going source of healthy debate. +The lovely spring flowers Jackie Viestenz planted in the two boxes as you enter Mac's Market. All this discussion gave us an appetite so we adjourned to Don Foote's Diner for a tasty lunch and more talk.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FREE! FREE! FREE! NEW! NEW! NEW! BOOKS! BOOKS! BOOKS!

Being GIVEN AWAY at Mac's Market on April 23rd, from 5-7 pm. "The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency" by Alexander McCall and Tina Fey's "Bossy Pants" will be the free books given away at this event jointly sponsored by Literacy Volunteers of Essex and Franklin Counties and the Sherman Free Library,

Honoring National Poetry Month in April, the Library will be giving out "poems for your pockets" for adults and children. Tuesday, April 23rd, you can hear poems read aloud by the authors from the Cds "The Poem I Turn To" and "Poetry Speaks To Children."

The Elizabethtown Social Center presents...

BELLS ARE RINGING!

a musical celebration of what life was like before cell phones took over...

Thu, Apr 18 - Sat, Apr 20 @ 7:00pm

Sun, Apr 21 @ 3:00pm

Tickets \$5/\$3 (Thu only), Fri - Sun \$10

in the ELCS auditorium

directed by Susan Hughes

choreographed by Karin E. DeMuro

musical accompaniment by Kerry Mero

A CONCERNED WARNING

Recently I dropped by the Fashion Corner to check-in with Natalie Clark one of Fact Finder's sponsors. It always amazes me how many dresses she has on display and the beauty of each of them. I had a few free minutes and felt like enjoying the beauty all around. We sat and talked. She is still feeling the loss of Jeannie Suddered who was much more than a long-time friend and associate, she could and did take over the shop whenever Natalie was away. Natalie has had no days off for months.

I am very interested in how businesses are doing in Port Henry and asked her about the Fashion Corner. She said well enough, but that the internet had made incursions into the business, as many dresses can be found on-line (offering appealing prices) which in the photos look like the dresses offered in the Fashion Corner but, in reality, may not be at all like them. Natalie said, purchasing on-line could turn out just fine, but she knew of at least five instances where it did not. I asked what were the differences. A shop dress will have many layers under the outer material, while a “knock-off” may have only one or two under layers. The decorative design may be skimpier or different all together. There can be color variations. Sometimes what you ordered arrives and is just not what you ordered, particularly if it comes from over-seas. The seamstresses are given a picture from which they construct a dress to look like the picture, but it will not necessarily fit like the original. Even on-line ordering in America may have problems. One always existing problem is that it is delivered in a small, flat box and must be ironed before it can be worn and that can be a daunting task. The Fashion Corner irons everyone of their dresses before they are hung for showing and gowns can take three or more hours to iron. I told Natalie that people should be warned of these possible problems. You are now so warned.

Look for the next issue of the Fact Finder on Saturday, April 13th 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 Best Wash, Don Foote’s “Miss Port Henry” Diner, Danielle and Andy Brassard’s Firefly Home Furnishings 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.