

THE PORT HENRY FACT FINDER

Reporting the News and Needs of Port Henry and Surrounding Area

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Nicky and Bill Bryant, Natalie Clark's *Fashion Corner*, and Boyea's *Lakeside***

AS PROMISED: Last issue's article "Education Reformation" was written, as an assignment, in Patrick McCaffrey's tenth-grade English class, by Tanner "Toot" Whalen.

CONGRATULATIONS

Officially, this is congratulating Ruth McDonough and Tom McDonald on their winning the two Trustee spots on Port Henry's Village Board, but it should really be a grateful "thank you" from everyone in the village for their being willing to take on this job; for it is a time-consuming job and basically a "thankless" job, as few residents attend the Board Meetings to support the Board and yet most residents feel the Board should be on duty as if it *were* a full-time job, which it is not. Nor is it a well-paid part-time job - \$3,000., for Trustees and \$8,000., for the Mayor, for a whole year. I would take an off-the-top-of-my-head guess, if you added up all the hours they spend on village business, they might be making .50c an hour. Fact Finder keeps asking villagers to attend, at least, the monthly meetings, second Monday of each month, 7 pm at the Village Hall. Be informed about your village! Join in making us a community where everyone feels equal and needed.

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERVISOR

In today's world, the Social Media is a great way for public officials to communicate with their constituency regarding many different topics that can impact our daily lives. The internet also provides quick access to municipal budgets, tax rates, salaries, assessments and minutes from previous meetings and agendas for the next meeting.

The Town of Moriah and the Village of Port Henry have an official website, Port Henry-Moriah. This is our *only* official website, managed by a person privy to the correct data concerning the governance of both municipalities. Although we value all ideas and opinions, particularly those which differ from our own, any web site, other than our official web site, is only a group's or a single person's opinions or ideas and can, in no way, reflect the opinion of any officials directly related to the Village of Port Henry or the Town of Moriah in any official capacity. If you have any questions or concerns, the best way to get answers is to try and attend their monthly board meetings, or contact any of your elected officials.

As always, in your service, Tom

FROM THE DESK OF THE MAYOR

It's a busy time of year with elections, budget meetings, construction projects, and a long winter with equipment break-downs. Thank God spring is here. I want to thank my good friend Ruth McDonough for her unselfishness to run again for trustee. She is a valuable asset to me and the village. A "welcome back" Tom McDonald to the board. He brings a lot of experience with him.

Thanks to Congressman Owens and his aide Chance St. Germaine, FEMA is starting to send money it has owed us for two years, and thanks to Harry Gough our State guy. We have received \$137,000 which is just the start. It is already in the bank. I have spent hours, every week, on this and finally it looks like everything is coming together. We should get the lion's share of this money within a few months. The budget looks very favorable. We are going to

stay under the 2% tax cap which means a very little tax raise which I'm happy about because we are all tax payers.

In the budget, we eliminated the position of DPW Superintendant and that now lets the crew work with only a crew foreman as head. This will save the village thousands of dollars and made it possible to NOT raise water and sewer rates this year.

The Elizabeth Street project, for which we received a grant and has been bid on, will be awarded soon.

Looking forward to more good news down the road as I and the board, as always, work on things to make the village "shine" again, because ph *are* one of the "gems" of the Adirondacks!

Ernie

NOTES FROM THE MORIAH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Monday, April 21st, Moriah Chamber of Commerce President Tim Bryant and eight other members met to discuss plans for both annual and proposed events for 2014.

In May (date?) there is the Fishing Tournament held at Rowe Pond for kids 16 years and younger. For information contact Brian Venne at _____. The trout are donated by the Fish Hatchery and placed in the pond the day before and guarded until the tournament the next day.

The Iron Ore Man Challenge will be held June 7th at Cheney Mountain and, as this is also National Trail Day, there was discussion of how to draw groups of people, as well as the usual hikers and family groups, to the event. Suggestions ranged from having a photo contest to doing something with the boy and girl scouts to offering a package deal to a sponsor to having some sort of food available for the hikers.

Moriah Stock will probably be in July as might be the resurgence of Champ Day, primarily as a simple family and children's day down at the beach, with a build-a-cardboard-boat contest and other team games with prizes.

Linda Smyth and Frank Martin will be holding an Art and Architecture tour (as the English call it "a walk about") of Port Henry August 15th from _____, meeting at _____

There was some discussion of possibly building a "pump track" in the future. Not only a fun sport for Port Henry, but a real drawing card to bring people in from the surrounding area.

And then, of course, there is Labor Day. The whole celebration as well as the parade will, again, be held on Main Street and in the village proper. The Chamber has a core of very willing people to facilitate all this happening, but many, many more helping hands are needed to make each event the crowd-pleaser which will bring all attendees back next year - with their friends. Just a few hours from each person when there are many but hours and hours when there are only a few. Think of what you might enjoy doing to help, then drop by when you see the "Open" flag out or call the Chamber at _____. If no one answers, leave a message with your phone number and you can bet you will receive a call back - very soon.

NOTES FROM THE pH7 COMMITTEE

Project "Trees for Main Street" is going forward, slowly but steadily. The pH7 members, as are all Port Henry residents, rejoicing over the fact that water rates will not be going up this year.

Plans for the Port Henry Farmers' Market are in the works and the gardeners of the group are getting out their gloves and digging equipment in anticipation that, eventually, the snow will melt and the soil will thaw.

If you have ideas of how Port Henry might be improved or if you just like to plant things come to the pH7 Committee meetings, every Wednesday from 10 – 12 at the Chamber of Commerce office on Main Street. We heartily welcome new faces and new ideas.

THE LATEST NOTES FROM YOUR LIBRARY

Good news! One of the library's wishes was granted - a lovely Bulletin Board was donated by Laura Muniz in honor of her father, George Jarvis. You might recognize the bulletin board as the one George used in his restaurant in Port Henry. Many thanks to Laura!

April 13 through 19 is National Library Week: Visit the library on Tuesday, April 15 from 12 pm to 4 pm and enjoy a tasty treat. The first 30 people who check out books on that day will also receive a special bookmark!

Thursday, April 17 - The Book Group will meet at 6 pm in the library to discuss Mrs. Lincoln's Dressmaker. The book for May will be Saving CeeCee Honeycutt by Beth Hoffman. Call the library for more information or to join the group.

Wednesday, April 23 - Computer Help Desk for Older Adults (55 and over) from 1 pm to 3 pm. Bring your computer questions and get individualized help with anything from using a mouse to using a laptop to using Facebook or the internet. We will also have a Moriah Central student here to help you on Wednesdays and Thursdays after 2:30 from April 23 until May 29.

If you haven't visited our new Book Sale Nook, stop in soon! We've got a great variety of books available including mysteries, children's, westerns, and more. No set prices, just donate the amount you feel is fair for the items.

In June, the library will start accepting donations of clean, used or new books for our Annual Book Sale on August 30. Call the library at 518-546-7461 for more information. And keep us in mind if you've got books to donate!

Our librarians are Andrea Anesi, Library Director and Gail Baker, Library Assistant, a big *THANK YOU* for all your efforts on Port Henry's behalf.

LITERACY VOLUNTEERS' GOOD NEWS

Five students in Literacy's GED program, successfully passed the GED© exam in December 2013, earning a high school equivalency diploma! These students and their tutors worked very hard and, obviously, their diligence paid off! Congratulations to all the students, and a HUGE THANK YOU to all the tutors who helped make our students' goals a reality! Fact Finder would like to add its congratulations to both tutors and students, particularly the students who are our future.

EDITORIAL

All the while I was growing up, just about my only political thought was that the Supreme Court was wonderful. When someone became a Supreme Court Judge, they became non-political, using their knowledge and unbiased opinions to interpret the Constitution. I never had many pedestals, but I had one for the Supreme Court and had it for many years, until the Court made a political decision in the Florida election mess. Not only did the Court fall off its pedestal, the pedestal itself crumbled. So I have not been too surprised by many of its decisions until the most resent, which I find difficult to believe that the judges have eliminated most of the restraints on campaign donations, using the First Amendment's assurance of "freedom of speech" as part of their reasoning. What happens to the free speech of the

middle class and the poverty-level citizens, how can it be heard, because in this world, these days, money talks and the more money there is the louder it speaks. Below are some statements, I took off the internet, which mirror some of my thoughts: "The U.S. Supreme Court, in a **5-4 vote**, this week struck down federal limits on the total amount of money a donor can contribute to candidates, political parties and political action committees.

Chief Justice John Roberts, in his **written majority opinion** on the *McCutcheon v. Federal Election Commission*, said the overall limits violated the First Amendment. "There is no right in our democracy more basic than the right to participate in electing our political leaders," he wrote.

In a dissent from the bench, Justice Stephen Breyer said the decision by the conservative majority raised the overall contribution ceiling to an infinite level. "If the court in *Citizens United* opened a door, today's decision may well open a floodgate," he said.

Shaun McCutcheon, the electrical engineer from Alabama who filed the lawsuit that made its way to highest court in the land, told **The Washington Post** he was "very excited and very happy" with the court's decision. He also reacted to those who criticized the ruling:

"The wealthy people are not elected. It's the elected officials that we need to look at - the people who are in office. We're talking about people who are outside office, and we're talking about private people. You know, "We The People." And also they need to think about what we're spending the money on, which is advertising political ideas in the political marketplace. media, mail, TV, all kinds of communications. ... I think they really don't understand that it's just about marketing good and better ideas. And hearing too many good ideas is not going to hurt anything. You may not listen to any of them, but allowing people to disseminate ideas is a good thing." Well, Fact Finder thinks Shaun doesn't really understand that without a lot of money a person cannot run for the big offices and "money" seldom has an unselfish agenda; so the disconnected wealthy are the ones choosing what is offered to we, the general populous, from which we may make choices.

Richard L. Hasen, a professor of law and political science at the UC-Irvine School of Law, writing for **Slate**, said the Supreme Court took a step closer to gutting the last bits of campaign finance reform with its decision: "Today, once again, the government lost a campaign finance case, *McCutcheon v. FEC*. And while it could have lost in somewhat worse ways, this opinion is pretty awful, portending a raft of new First Amendment attacks on soft money and even on the basic rules limiting how much individuals can give candidates for office."

Look for the next issue of the Fact Finder on **Saturday, April 19, 2014** in all its usual "hard-copy" places and on the internet.