



# Town of Franklin

## January 2003 Newsletter

Volume II, Issue I

January 2003

### Town of Franklin

Rt. 3  
P.O. Box 209  
Vermontville, NY 12989

#### **PHONE NUMBERS**

Town Hall - 891-2189  
Town Garage - 891-1578

#### **WEB PAGE**

[www.townoffranklin.com](http://www.townoffranklin.com)

#### **TOWN OFFICIALS**

Town Supervisor

**Mary Ellen Keith**

Deputy Supervisor

**Gene Goff**

Town Councilmen

**Timothy Goff**

**Walter Kretser**

**Janet Ordway**

Town Justice

**Roger Symonds**

Highway Superintendent

**Donald Vorrath**

Deputy Highway Supt.

**Eric Merrill**

Town Clerk/Tax Collector

**Lauren LeFebvre**

Attorney for the Town

**Edward Murphy**

Assessor

**Douglas Tichenor**

483-0188

Code Enforcement Officer

**Edward Lagree**

891-5976

#### **TOWN BOARD MEETINGS**

Regular town board meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the Franklin Town Hall. The meetings are open to the public.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, February 10, 2003, at 7:00 p.m.

**Check the town Website for up-to-date information on upcoming town events and meetings, minutes of past meetings, and agendas for upcoming meetings, plus lots of other information on the Town of Franklin. ❖**

## Paye Road Electricity?

In September 2002, Mark and Nanette Winters came to the town board with their frustration at trying to get electricity to their property on Paye Road. It was a story the board knew well. The situation had been at an impasse for many years.

At the January 2003 meeting, Mark Winters again came to the board – this time to tell them that the end is in sight.

According to Winters, as soon as the right of way along the road is cleared of brush, Niagara Mohawk will be ready to set their poles.

Asked by board members how the change came about, Winters replied, "I'm not sure why. The Niagara Mohawk customer service representative said they haven't talked to anyone at the state, but they

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## E911 Almost Set To Go

The Franklin County Office of Emergency Services is close to completing their work on preparing the Town of Franklin for the E911 emergency calling service. Director and coordinator of the project, Malcolm Jones, said, "The Franklin County E911 system should be on line by mid-2003."

Each property in the town has been assigned an E911 number, and the information has been put into the county's E911 database. Notices soon will be sent out to residents with the number assigned to each property.

The local post offices have been notified of the new num-

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Adelphia Franchise Renewal Process

In May 2005, the town's cable contract with Adelphia will expire. By federal law, the process of refranchising is an 18- to 24-month process. As part of the process, on December 30, 2002, the Town of Franklin Town Board invited Al Sutphen, general manager at Adelphia, to attend a public hearing at the Franklin Town Hall to give residents an opportunity to voice their opinions on Adelphia's perform-

ance to date and to give their input on any new services.

Regarding Adelphia's current Chapter 11 bankruptcy status, Sutphen assured the audience that that the company has taken all the right steps to come out of their difficulties.

"We have worked through the courts with banks for funds to get through. I don't think any of our customers

*(Continued on page 5)*

## Taxpayers: Check your Calendar

I know you've been "Evil Tax Collector"-ed to death, so I won't go on and on. There is one reminder I have to make before the end of the month. Now run and get your 2003 property tax bill . . . go ahead, I'll wait. Got it? Are you ready? OK, now let's let our eyes drift to the top portion of your bill. See where it says "Make Checks Payable To" and gives you the mailing address? Great. Directly to the right of that information is a column with the heading "If Paying in Person". Notice this portion states January hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. This information is true and correct. I am at the Franklin Town Hall every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the month of January from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Now here's the kicker . . . January 31, 2003, is a **FRIDAY**. No, I didn't plan this out to live up to my Evil name. It just happened.

I realize almost everyone hates paying taxes and I know better than most how angry people get when they show up to turn over their hard-earned money to the Evil Tax Collector and SHE'S NOT THERE! Take

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## Remember that time....?

by **Lauren LeFebvre**

My youngest daughter's favorite phrase is "remember that time . . .?" I always brace myself for her to launch off with something like "you drove away with the thing that they shoot they money out in at the bank drive thru?" Funny, those memories come flooding back to her while we happen to be in a very crowded, and painfully quiet, public place. Just when I wish I could whip up a time warp and travel back in time two seconds and save myself this embarrassing moment, I realize what my little girl is remembering is a time when we laughed and laughed. I mean, think about it, you have that little canister, bank capsule thing, and you've already pulled out into traffic before it registers what you've done. A quick look in the rearview mirror and you realize someone else has pulled up to the machine and the little rocket launcher is gone! Even in complete mortification I had to laugh at my situation.

Over the past year, the Celebration Committee has pulled off some pretty great stuff. Remember the Easter Egg Hunt in the snow, the Old Fashioned July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration and the Haunted House? Those all started with a group of people getting together sharing ideas, talking

and laughing. Not one person involved in the planning ever said, "I know how to do this". Believe me, we flew by the seat of our pants for every event. Now we want you to come fly by the seat of your pants with us.

The Celebration Committee will be meeting Thursday, January 30, at the Franklin Town Hall at 7:00 p.m. to begin planning this year's events. Our main focus (we think -- we won't know until YOU get there) will be the Easter Party/Egg Hunt and July 4<sup>th</sup>. The hope is that there will be enough interest to form a committee to search for and choose the "Citizen of the Year" to be named at the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

If you missed the events put on by our brave little committee last year, you'll never know what people are talking about when they say, "Remember that time Mary Ellen Keith gave that nice speech after she was named 'Town of Franklin Citizen of the Year,'" or, "Remember that time the Town Officials had to commando crawl under black plastic for two days to get into their offices because the Town Hall was being transformed into a Haunted House?"

Please come to our first meeting of the year; you'll be welcomed and appreciated for whatever you volunteer to do. ❖

## From the Supervisor

by **Mary Ellen Keith**

As we face a new year, I would like to take a moment to say how much I appreciate how well our town board has worked together, and to thank the committees for all they do. I have enjoyed this past year, and I feel that we have accomplished a great deal.

I can compare this year to the twelve years I was in office before. I had some great years then, too. This board has been enthusiastic. We haven't agreed on everything, but we have been able to talk

about our differences and resolve things. And of this past year, I have to say, it has been fun.

We still have projects we need to move on in 2003. Ours is an "open door" board. We invite the voters -- our neighbors and friends -- to come in to the town hall and to come to our meetings to let us know their thoughts.

I'm looking forward the challenges of the new year. We will work hard to be successful, and I hope we'll remember to continue to have fun, too. ❖

### Upcoming Town Meetings

Thur., Jan. 30—Celebration Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Town Hall  
 Mon., Feb. 10—Next Regular Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Town Hall  
 Wed., Feb. 12—Citizens Building Committee Meeting, 6:30, Town Hall

## Scholarships Available

Attached to this month's Town of Franklin Newsletter is a scholarship application for local students pursuing post-high-school education. The deadline for this year's scholarship awards is April 1, 2003.

The Scholarship Committee encourages all eligible Town of Franklin students to apply. Thanks to the support of town residents and local businesses, 2002 was a very successful fund-raising year and there are several \$250 scholarships to be awarded this spring.

The Scholarship Committee raises funds for the scholarships with three annual events. The first fundraiser for next year's scholarships will be a mailing to go out in mid-January. This summer the committee will again take part of the town's July 4 festivities with a tag sale fundraiser, and in September the second annual Back-To-School Lasagna Dinner will celebrate the beginning of another school year.

Scholarship Committee members are Shir Filler, Lorraine Rumble, Fran Oliver, Al Berg, and Walt Kretser. They are grateful to all the neighbors and friends who have shown their faith in our town youth by their overwhelming support and generous donations.

Filler would like to hear from anyone who would like to join the committee. There is a great deal of satisfaction in helping our local students to

### History Quiz by Lane Knight

How much Town of Franklin history do you know? Take Lane's test and see how you do:

1. Where does the "Kate" name of Kate Mountain come from?
2. What was "Roakdale"?
3. What was the "21 Bridges Road"?
4. What was in Kusahaqua before the "White Fathers" seminary?

*Answers are on Page 4*

# Hammond to Assist Building Committee

Significant progress has been made by the Citizens Building Use Committee with their preliminary planning work for the future Town of Franklin offices. At their January meeting they were joined by Robert Hammond who will help the committee take the next step in the process.

Over the past few months, the committee looked closely at the current town hall building and they completed their study of the space requirements for official town business and town functions. Hammond will help the board use that information in a "request for proposal", or RFP, which summarizes the information into a format to be used for designing actual plans and making cost estimates.

Hammond, who lives on Payeville Road with his wife and two small children, works with the Olympic Regional Development Authority in Lake Placid. He has had experience in working with municipalities as an engineering tech in

the Albany area, and he has done office space planning for the American Management Association in Saranac Lake.

Hammond will use his planning and engineering experience to see that the plans include utility needs and will meet current code mandates. Because it has been so many years since major maintenance has been done on the current Franklin Town Hall, it is going to require considerable work to bring the building up to date. Whatever the committee comes up with, Frank Karl, chairman of the committee, said, "Doing nothing is not an option."

At this point it is premature to say whether the current town hall will be expanded, or if plans will include construction at the Kate Mt. Recreation Park. Rather than come up with a take-it-or-leave-it plan, the committee hopes to put together several options for the town board and residents to consider. What-

ever is planned will require acceptance by the town taxpayers. At that point, committee member Walt Kretser said, "Everything will be driven by cost."

In his report at the January board meeting, Karl said, "We would like to move along as rapidly as possible, but we are not putting in time constraints because we want to be sure we have everything done right. We don't want things outmoded before it's completed."

As the committee refines the plans, the meetings are open to the public. "We are still looking for comments and input from residents in town," Karl said.

Eventually, town board, and then the public, will be asked to approve final plans.

The next planning meeting will be Wednesday, February 12, at 6:30 p.m. at the Franklin Town Hall. In addition to Karl and Kretser, members are Roger Symonds, Jean Baltzly, and Janet Ordway. ❖

# Looking for Local History Enthusiasts

Town Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith and Town Historian Teresa Eshelman are looking for people in town who share their interest in the history of the Town of Franklin.

Over the years, Eshelman has produced eight of the nine "They Told Me So" journals for the town. In her annual report to the board, Eshelman reported a balance of \$2,224.03 in an account at Adirondack Bank. All of the funds were raised by Eshelman and include no tax funds. She would like to use the money for a new journal and is looking for help.

Town Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith, too, would like to see more of the town's history collected and shared. "People out there have done historical work – sometimes it's family history, and sometimes people research the old homesteads they live in. There also are people out there who have stories and memories that need to be recorded," she said.

Although it is not part of her function as town historian, Eshelman says she is inundated with requests for historic and genealogical information. "There is a lot of interest, people doing research," she said.

Keith and Eshelman encourage anyone who shares their enthusiasm for local history to contact them.

"I know there are other people in

town who are interested," Keith said. "People have done historical work. We'd like to establish a group to collect this information. There's so much out there."

Mary Ellen Keith can be reached at 891-2189 or 891-1619. Keith and Eshelman also can be reached through the town's website ([www.townoffranklin.com](http://www.townoffranklin.com)). ❖

# Check Your Tax Calendar

*(Continued from page 1)*

heart my friend, I'll let you in on a secret: Payments mailed with the postmark January 31 are legally considered "on time". So please, save yourself the aggravation and frustration of the "SHE'S NOT THERE!" syndrome. Instead of pulling into the Town Hall on January 31, drive over to the Post Office and drop that sucker in the mail.

Now as a complete aside, chances are

very good that I will be at the Town Hall on January 31. Barring sick children or other unplanned events, of course. I already know I have somewhere to be that morning until around 11:00 a.m. Remember, I have tried to save you the trouble of being completely angry with me on January 31 in three different ways. My office hours are listed on the tax bills, on the sign at the Town Hall, and right here, right now. January 31 is a Friday. ❖

## Highway Superintendent's Report

by Donald Vorrath

We begin the new year with snow, snow, and more snow. While each snowfall isn't in double digits, it still necessitates the incessant use of sand and manpower (at times seven days a week). The recent icing conditions put an extra drain on sand stocks. One should remember that two inches of snow per day for one month accumulates to five feet of snow. Also, there is the on-going process of keeping the trucks road-ready, repairing flat tires, changing steel plow blades, cleaning/washing trucks, oil changes, etc.

Michael Canty and James Rascoe recently resigned from their appointed and elected positions of deputy highway superintendent and shop steward. Darin Lindsay was elected by the union membership to represent them as shop steward and I appointed Eric Merrill to the position of deputy highway superintendent. I look forward to working closely with Darin and Eric to provide the ser-

vices that the residents expect and to ensure the safety and earned benefits of your highway employees. I wish to thank Mick and Jimmy for their service to the town, and me personally. While much has been accomplished, more can still be achieved.

NYS DOT funds under the CHIPS program (which are supplemental monies used for town road repair and resurfacing) are questionable at this time. With the state fiscal condition as it is, these borrowed funds will, in all likelihood, be scaled back or eliminated. This will impact town plans for resurfacing. More on this in future reports.

The arbitration process is ongoing. Delays since last month include illness, proposals and counterproposals.

Several meetings, called by the town board's Highway Liaison Committee, concerning various allegations have taken place. While not all concerned parties were in attendance or invited (a prerequisite for solution), certain issues

remain unresolved. I'm not going into detail at this point. There is already much misinformation and rumor circulating. I will report that this committee recommended to the town board the elimination of compensatory time by town employees, which the board adopted. This practice, although not formally in the union contract, was tacitly condoned. It was a procedure and practice for at least eight years, all the time incurring savings of thousands of dollars to the taxpayers. With union negotiations scheduled this year on a new contract, I'm sure this will be a hot-button issue.

And, finally: On behalf of your highway department employees, I want to thank all the residents who sent holiday cards and greetings, baked cupcakes and cookies, sent candies, while other folks stopped drivers on the road to offer a cup of coffee and a word of thanks. Your appreciation of what these guys do goes a long way. ❖

## State Highway Money In Question

As New York State faces record deficits, town governments have to prepare themselves for what impact it will have at the local level. Town Highway Superintendent Donald Vorrath reports that he has been notified that state money given to towns for the maintenance of roads and highways, known as CHIPS, may be cut or reduced this year.

Every year, the town highway superintendent is required to sign a contract with the town board called an "Agreement for the Expenditure of Highway Moneys" in which the road work planned for the upcoming year, and the amount of money to be spent, is defined. This year's agreement calls for permanent improvements on the Kushaqua-Mud Pond Road and two sec-

tions of the Oregon Plains Road.

Vorrath made it clear to the board that what work actually will get done will depend on how much of the CHIPS money will be available. In recent years, CHIPS brought in about \$80,000 a year.

Highway departments in the north country keep costs down by sharing equipment and crews with the other towns and the county. While state money is supposed to supplement town funds, it makes up a large part of the Town of Franklin's highway repair budget. With the loss of the state funds, there aren't many other options available, and the "Agreement for Expenditure of Highway Moneys" may have to be amended. ❖

## Properties Cleaned Up

Funds remaining in a grant from the New York State Adirondack North Country Community Enhancement Program have been used this winter to remove two abandoned trailers, one from Fletcher Farm Road near the Norman Ridge intersection and the other from Route 3 near Kate Mt. Park.

Whiteface Construction won the bid for the work. Final raking and clean up will be done this spring.

The grant, applied for on behalf of the town by then-supervisor Mary Fredenburg, has been used for clean up of sites that have been declared an eyesore and a potential danger. The grant has made it possible for the town to clean up properties that otherwise would not be taken care of, such as illegal dumps.

There still is money left in the grant, which the town can use until July 2003. Anyone who knows of a property that needs clearing should contact Mary Ellen Keith. ❖

### Answers to history quiz on Page 2

1. The Cate family, nineteenth century, from central Vermont. Cate Farm still exists in Plainfield, Vermont.
2. It was a settlement founded in the mid-1800s. It had a sawmill, school, tavern, boarding house, and a short railroad. It was named after John Roak. After the early twentieth century fires, it became a dairy farm and eventually a Christmas tree farm. The first legal deed was issued in 1891.
3. It was the name of a road, often "corduroy", between Roakdale and Loon Lake.
4. Stony Wold Sanitarium.

# Light at the End of the Road

*(Continued from page 1)*

have come to the conclusion that the state does not own to the center of the road.”

Over the years, Franklin town boards had joined with the Paye Road landowners to come to a settlement with Niagara Mohawk and New York State. The state wouldn't allow poles along the side of the road on what they claimed was state land; one plan to run power underground fell through because of rock ledges; plans to cross private property kept falling

through as landowners worried about incurring the responsibility of maintaining the right-of-way.

Frank Karl was pleased at the news. “This is a major change,” he said. As town supervisor in the 1990s, Karl worked for years to get power down the road, writing letters, making phone calls, and visiting state officials to ask for their help.

Current town supervisor Mary Ellen

Keith, who also was delighted at the news, couldn't resist: “Finally, a glimmer of light at the end of the road!”

The Niagara Mohawk customer service representative advised Winters to set up a meeting between Niagara Mohawk and the town as soon as possible. They will give the town a map of the planned right of way. According to Winters, the customer representative told him, “Believe me, you are going to get electricity!”❖

## Adelphia Franchise Renewal Process

*(Continued from page 1)*

have seen any changes in our service. We have actually added a few services since then,” he said. “The next six to twelve months will be extremely important to this company. I am very confident we will get through this.”

The good news for the Town of Franklin is that there is still a lot of time before the franchise expires to see how Adelphia fares over the next two years.

When asked if subscribers could have more options beyond the glut of sports in the package deal for programs, Sutphen answered, “A lot of folks have the misperception that we control programs. We don't create the programs. We only broadcast them. If you look down through the lineup we do have a large number of sports channels. But if you look at what else is in the lineup there is a lot of content for anyone looking for something to watch. We are really at the mercy of what broadcasters offer. You won't find much in the dish other than what we have. The one thing would be NFL sports.”

Another issue is the small area of the town that now gets Adelphia service. The current contract requires Adelphia to serve areas where there are 35 potential customers per mile. To date there are 212 subscribers and 13.5 miles of “plant”. Although some contracts have gone as low as 15 customers, Adelphia is looking extend service in the Town of Franklin to where there are 25 or more homes. “With Chapter 11, one of the things we have to pay close attention to is the formula we use to make sure of a return on the investment,” he said.

Areas they are looking at for possible extensions are Loon Lake and down Cold Brook Road from Route 3 to Fletcher Farm Road, and then down Fletcher Farm Road back to Route 3.

What about dish customers?

“We have a dish win-back program to take the dish off their hands and several months of good programming offers,” he said. Compared to national averages, Adelphia does “pretty well” in the number of dish users in their franchise areas – below two percent.

“We have offered a good lineup to compete with dishes,” he said.

Regarding Adelphia's customer service, he said, “One of the things we are fortunate about is that we have a lot of good people working for us right now. They are really superb computer people as well as being good technical people.”

Acknowledging the uncertainty of Adelphia's future, he said, “Most likely, Adelphia will remain Adelphia. The general economy right now is depressed and there isn't a lot of capital around for a buyout. If we keep doing what we are supposed to do, we will come out of this OK.”

Adelphia will provide the town with a map and in late spring or early summer and they will do a survey with a representative from the town to decide where to extend their services. An actual franchise document will be prepared within the next year. Another public hearing will be scheduled six to ten months in advance of the refranchise date of May 2, 2005, as required by the federal regulations.❖

## E911 Expected to be Operating by Mid-2003

*(Continued from page 1)*

bers. The post office will continue mail deliveries to the old addresses for twelve months after they notify their customers of the new addresses.

According Richard Brown, who worked on the E911 Numbering Project in the Town of Franklin, it will be up to

each individual post office customer to notify everyone they get mail from of the new address. “Notifying the people who send you your bills doesn't have to be done overnight,” Brown said.

The Emergency Service Office is asking residents to number their homes and businesses. Should an emergency vehicle

need to be sent out to an address, rescue workers will look for the property numbers to find their destination.

Anyone with any questions regarding the new addresses or any other aspect of the project can call the Malone Office of Emergency Services 911 Numbering Project at 483-8584.❖

TOWN OF FRANKLIN SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE  
HCR 1 Box 18A  
Bloomingdale, NY 12913  
Application for Scholarship

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Our committee is interested in awarding scholarship money for post-high school education, including vocational/technical programs as well as college work, to local students. The basic requirements are as follows:

1. You must be a resident of the Town of Franklin.
2. You must have successfully completed at least one term of your educational program as a full time student with at least a "B" average (or equivalent).
3. You must currently be a full-time student and not be on a full scholarship from any other source.

With these requirements in mind, please fill in the following items and return this paper and attachments to "**Application for Scholarship**" at the address noted above by April 1, 2003.

**Name:**

**Date of birth:**

**Home address:**

**Home telephone:**

**Name of your school:**

**Address of your school:**

**Your address at school:**  
(If you're not living at home)

**How long have you been at this school?**

**What is your course of study?**

**How are your grades? Please attach a copy of your most recent transcript (can be unofficial).**

On an attachment, please write a short essay about what you plan to do in life and how your current educational work will help you to achieve your goals.