



Town of Franklin

March 2002 Newsletter

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March 2002

Town of Franklin

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TOWN OFFICIALS

Town Supervisor
Mary Ellen Keith
Deputy Supervisor
Gene Goff

Town Councilmen

Janet Goff
Timothy Goff
Walter Kretzer
Town Justice
Roger Symonds

Highway Superintendent

Donald Vorrath

Deputy Highway Supt.

Michael Canty

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. The meetings begin at 7:00 p.m. and are open to the public. The next meeting will be held Monday, April 8, 2002.

The town board welcomes newsletter submissions and feedback from town residents. Contact the newsletter by phone, mail, or e-mail at the town as listed above. Board members also welcome your comments. ❖

March Board Meeting Well Attended!

The Town of Franklin monthly board meeting was held Monday, March 11, 2002. Mary Ellen Keith, town supervisor, greeted board members and guests. The board was pleased at the number of people attending. Included were high school seniors Dan Hamm, Bruce Goff, and Brian Shortell, who were fulfilling an assignment from their U.S. Government class.

Highway report

Highway Superintendent Donald Vorrath announced that the county soon would be posting weight limit signs on Town of Franklin roads. Already the roads are softening up to the point that the large plow trucks aren't able to plow more than the center of dirt roads.

Vorrath voiced his concerns to the board that, because state funding to the counties has been cut back, the county may not be able to assist the town with road paving this summer. Although the county money has been cut, he is not expecting a cut in state money to the Town of Franklin.

Other Board Business

Clayton Smalley of the Fletcher Farm Road gave an update to the board on his Eagle Scout sign project.

Supervisor Keith reported that with the completion of the landfill closure project, the town received papers from Clough Harbor for a reimbursement to the town of \$1,206. The town also is expecting state reimbursements of approxi-

mately \$45,000 in the near future from the landfill closure project.

Gene Goff and Walter Kretzer reported on discussions with Roger Symonds, the Saranac Lake Central School District Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, regarding entering into an agreement with the school district in which the Town of Franklin will be able to purchase goods – such toilet paper, computer paper, and cleaning supplies - at considerable savings to the town.

In exchange the town would agree to provide some services to the school district. Those in-kind services will be decided and reported to the board before the final agreement is made.

Continued on page 3

EAGLE SCOUT PROJECT UPDATE

by Clayton Smalley

My Eagle Scout project, which is to make road signs for many intersections in the Town of Franklin, has passed the first step of asking residents who live near intersections where people ask to go when stopping for directions.

On February 24, I was joined by several other scouts who went door to door near the intersections in our area. We surveyed

residents about the directions they are asked and also on the questions they get about local attractions.

We found that directions for destinations most asked by motorists of local residents were for Wilmington, Plattsburgh, and Saranac Lake. Recreational requests included the golf course, the Visitor Interpretive Center, and the Silver Lake Conservation Trail.

Using this information we will find out exactly

where signs are needed most and where they will direct motorists.

This project, which should be completed by early summer, will hopefully assist the many tourists who come to our area for recreation and possibly emergency vehicles which would otherwise have problems reaching their destination.

Thanks to all who have helped in making this project possible! ❖

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Recreation Committee: NEW MEMBERS WELCOME!

The Recreation Committee meets every third Saturday of the month at the Franklin Franklin Town Hall at 1:00. Board members on the committee are Janet Goff and Tim Goff. They are looking for new members and encourage anyone who has an interest in the town's Kate Mountain Park to participate in these meetings.

At their last meeting, a list of some ideas for improvements at the park was drawn up:

- A chain link fence around the basketball court
- Improve the walking trail; needs additional mulch on the trail
- Move the backstop on the lower field
- Improve lower field for the younger league teams
- A bigger ice-skating rink
- Add a merry-go-round and a teeter-totter
- Additional bleachers

Your comments and questions are important in helping the committee move forward. You are invited to call them (Janet Goff, 891-2607; Tim Goff, 891-1943), or to e-mail them at www.townofffranklin.com.

The committee will have a bottle drive in the spring. Watch for further details. The proceeds will be used towards the purchase of a manual scoreboard to be used at the recreational field. ❖

Cemetery Committee: LANDSCAPING WORK PLANNED

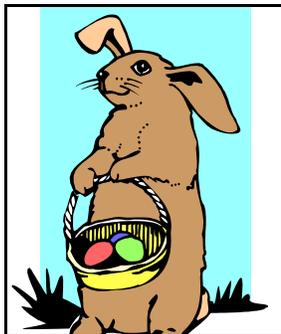
Board members Mary Ellen Keith and Tim Goff report that Cemetery Committee will be looking at landscaping needs at the cemeteries.

In addition to regular upkeep and post-winter clean-up, once the snow goes, plans are to put in shrubs and work on other landscaping. ❖

Celebrations Committee: EASTER EGG HUNT - MARCH 30

The Celebrations Committee will sponsor an Easter Egg Hunt on March 30, 2002, at 1:00 p.m. at the town hall. There will be a Golden Egg Prize. Volunteers are needed to help chaperone and to provide treats for the kids. Call Lauren LeFebvre or Janet Goff.

The Fourth of July will be the Town of Franklin Family Picnic Day. Tentative plans are for an afternoon of BYOB (that is, "bring your own blanket") from 4:00 until the start of the Saranac Lake fireworks. The committee is working on having a band - or bands - and games for kids. ❖



Food Pantry: HUNGER AWARENESS WEEK IN MARCH

The Food Pantry reported that they had served 4,499 people last year from the towns of Franklin and St. Armand. Last month an emergency housing issues arose on a Sunday, and by Thursday the pantry volunteers had the family housed and supplied with what they needed. The Food Pantry's success is the result of work by lot of volunteers, and the strong support of the community.

The third week in March is "Hunger Awareness Week". We all should give thought to being grateful for what we have. No one in our town should be without a home, without food. It takes your continued support. Take a minute to think how you can help. Volunteer at the pantry; take your bottles to the Bloomingdale drop box; come to a Soup Supper on Wednesday nights at St. Paul's Church; donate. Do what you can! ❖

Demong Competes in His Second Olympics

Congratulations to Town of Franklin Olympian Bill Demong. Bill competed in three Nordic combined ski events at the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics. The Nordic combined ski team finished in fourth place, the best showing for a United States team in the sport. Bill also finished 19th and 14th in individual Olympic events.

Nordic combined skiing is a grueling competition that includes ski jumping and cross country skiing. After many years of taking the back seat in this sport, thanks to the world-class performances of Bill and his teammate, Todd Ladwick, the United States suddenly became a serious contender in the field.

This was Bill's second Olympics. At 17, he went to the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics, where he placed 34th.

At look at Bill's pre-Salt Lake City successes shows that he is clearly at the top of his sport. Bill had skied his four personal bests, including a tenth place in Steamboat, Colorado, a seventh place in Ramsau, Austria, a fourth in sprint in Libevec, the Czech Republic, and, finally, the gold medal at the World Cup events in Libevec. He is ranked at ninth in overall World Cup standings. This winter Bill was featured in Time magazine and Sports Illustrated.

Bill grew up on Fletcher Farm Road with his parents, Leo and Helen Demong, and sister, Katie. He started cross-country ski racing at five, but he soon became interested in ski jumping. By nine years of age he became a Nordic combined skier.

Bill's parents and sister were able to go to Salt Lake City to be with Bill during the Olympics. Bill, on the other hand, is not yet done skiing. The World Cup season goes until the end of March. ❖

LOOKING FOR WOMEN HOCKEY PLAYERS

Kelly Battistoni is organizing a women's hockey team. A special invitation goes out to beginners.

Get out; get exercise; learn the game!

Anyone interested should call Kelly at 891-4746. ❖

Town of Franklin Senior Citizens

By Margaret Turnbull

Are you 55 years or older? The Town of Franklin senior citizens' club meets at the Franklin Town Hall in Vermontville every second and fourth Tuesdays of the month. Meetings begin at 12:30 p.m. during Eastern Standard Time and at 6:00 p.m. during Daylight Savings Time.

Each meeting begins with a covered dish meal. The second Tuesday is a business meeting and the fourth

Tuesday is a social time. Five-cent Bingo follows both meetings.

In addition to regular meetings, the group plans outings. On April 30, the seniors will be going, by bus, to the Akwesasne Mohawk Casino. The trip is free and each person will receive \$10 to play with and a supper buffet at the casino.

Other plans being made for this year include one-day bus trip in June and a bazaar in August. October's special

event is dinner at a local restaurant. Each December the group celebrates the holiday season with a party, usually at St. Paul's Church.

All seniors are invited and encouraged to come to a meeting. There's no need to bring a dish on a first visit. There is always plenty of delicious food.

It a friendly - and busy - group. For more information, call Margaret Turnbull at 891-2656, Florence LaFleur at 891-5771, or Marion Hamm at 891-0806. ❖

Changes at Bloomingdale Elementary School

Students returning to Bloomingdale Elementary School after their spring break will find they have a new principal. Tom Clark, who has been principal at Bloomingdale since 1987, will move to Petrova Elementary School to take over as principal upon the retirement of Lynda Neveu.

The interim principal at Bloomingdale will be Bob Schiller, who will hold the position till the end of the school year. Schiller is retired; he was

principal of the Lake Placid Junior/Senior High School.

The school board has begun their search for a new permanent principal at Bloomingdale and expect to have a decision by the end of May.

As principal of the Bloomingdale school, Clark also acted as principal for the Lake Clear and Lake Colby schools.

The Petrova school building also houses the Saranac Lake Middle School. The building is old and Clark

will be involved in much-needed renovation planned soon for the building.

Clark will actually be returning to Petrova. His first job with Saranac Lake Central School District in 1979 was as Petrova's principal, where he stayed before moving to Bloomingdale.

Although he is looking forward to the opportunity for change, Clark says that he always has enjoyed his tenure at Bloomingdale Elementary School, and he will miss it. ❖

March Board Meeting Report

Continued from page 1

The board agreed to a request from the County of Franklin Department of Real Property and County Treasurer to have Town Clerk Lauren LeFebvre continue to collect taxes due to the county until May 31, 2002, at the Franklin Town Hall. In return, the town will be able to keep whatever late penalty fees are collected, which LeFebvre reported that in past years have come to approximately \$4,000.

Landfill and Recycling

Frank Karl, who is on the board of the County of Franklin Solid Waste Management Authority, updated the town board on the evolving Comprehensive Recycling Analysis Plan. As required by state law, the CFSWMA plan needs to be submitted to the Department of Environmental Conservation for approval. He asked the board

to pay attention to the Authority's plan to purchase additional property for landfill before the plan is approved.

Another important issue is an upcoming decision in "flow control" laws that will require all haulers in Franklin County to take their trash to the Franklin County landfill or transfer stations.

Karl thanked the board for their work in having the town comply with state recycling laws. Gene Goff and Walt Kretzer drafted a recycling program for the town and distributed the guidelines to all town employees. They will make all arrangements to have adequate containers at all locations that require them. The recyclables and trash will be taken to a Franklin County transfer station.

Goff and Kretzer will continue to monitor the program.

Karl commended the board on their commitment to recycling, noting the im-

portance of the town setting an example for residents and local businesses.

Board Sets Workshop Schedule

Mary Ellen Keith noted that since January 1, the board has held several workshops on issues that have included reviewing employee applications, recycling, HUD, and the Procurement Policy. These workshops have been very productive.

After a short discussion, the board voted to continue work sessions on a regular basis. Tentatively, the workshops will be held in the evenings the last Monday of each month. These workshops are open to the public.

Upcoming workshop agendas will include a tour of town roads, a visit to the highway department, and a session on the Freedom of Information Law. These meetings will be advertised to the public as dates and subjects are set. ❖

ASSESSOR PLANS FOR APPRAISAL UPDATE

by **Douglas Tichenor**

Greetings.

My name is Doug Tichenor, and I am sole appointed Assessor for the Town of Franklin. I was appointed by the town board to replace John Ryan, who retired as of October 1, 2001. My appointment is for six years.

I was asked to submit an article for this newsletter to give Franklin property owners an idea of my duties, so here goes.

First and foremost, I am required by law to assess (appraise) all real property in the municipality and enter that assessment on the Town Assessment Roll. Furthermore, all property has to be assessed at a uniform percentage of their respective market value. This percentage can be anything, 10% or 20%, etc., as long as all properties are on the roll at the same percentage. The Town of Franklin assesses all property at 100% of market value. This means that the assessment you see on your tax bill is equal to the Assessor's estimate of the full market value of your property.

If market value never changed, my task would be simple. I could merely use the same assessments year after year. However, this is not the case, for some properties increase in value, buildings are built or torn down, or other properties decline in market value over a period of time. The only way

that I can maintain assessments at market value is to periodically update them by reappraising each parcel in the town using current sales as comparisons. This process is known variously as a Mass Appraisal Project, a Revaluation, or an Assessment Update Project. It all means the same thing: it is the way to compare each property to sales of similar property in order that the different properties are being taxed uniformly. Periodically, I will review all assessments townwide and update them. My goal is to update every three years and I will be updating them next for the 2004 assessment roll. For the in between years, I will be adding new construction and taking away demolition. I will post more on this subject at another time.

Another task I am required to do is to administer exemptions, such as veterans, STAR, non profit, agricultural, forestry, to name a few. Property owners fill out the required state forms and submit them to me for approval. The exemptions, if approved, are the entered on the roll and appear as a deduction on the tax bill.

Some things I do not do are: send out taxes, levy taxes, or decide what the tax rates are going to be. My official title is not tax assessor. That is a misnomer.

My work is one segment of the process that ultimately results in your

tax bill. However it is a big segment, and it is very important that you always have a good handle on what your property is worth. If you feel your taxes are too high, you need to know your property value in order to file a complaint, for that will be the issue when discussing your assessment with me or the town Board of Assessment Review. Some important dates you need to know are:

March 1 - Taxable status date.

You must have your exemption applications filed with the assessor on or before this date. Also, this determines when new construction or demolition is taxable or removable from the roll.

May 1 - Tentative Roll file. The assessment roll for the upcoming year is filed with the Town Clerk complete with assessment changes. Property owners who received value changes are notified. Anybody can come and look over the roll at this time.

First Wednesday in June - Grievance Day. This is the day the Town Board of Assessment Review meets to hear complaints about property assessments. They consider evidence and arrive at their conclusion of a fair market value estimate on a case-by-case basis. Since I am an Assessor in multiple towns, the Town Board was able to pass a local law to designate this date to hold grievance day each year. Grievance Day is held at the Franklin Town Hall in Vermontville and the Board of Assessment Review decides the time they will meet.

July 1 - Final Roll filed. The final copy of the Assessment Roll is filed with the Town Clerk and the school, county, and town will use the grand totals to decide their tax rates based on their budget requirements.

September. School tax bills are mailed

January. Town and county tax bills are mailed.

This sums it up for me for now. I intend to hold a public information meeting at the Franklin Town Hall in Vermontville in August to discuss the pending appraisal update. Try to be there, for the more you know, the easier it is on me! ❖

The United States Department of Commerce has sent to the town reports on housing in the Town of Franklin from the 2000 Census. The 1990 Census numbers are given for comparison.

	2000		1990	
Total Population	1,197	(100%)	1,016	(100%)
Occupied housing units	473	(100%)	375	(100%)
Owner-occupied units	424	(89.6%)	324	(86.4%)
Renter-occupied units	49	(10.4%)	51	(13.6%)
Total housing units	982	(100%)	929	(100%)
Occupied housing units	473	(48.2%)	375	(40.4%)
Vacant housing	42	(4.2%)	42	(4.5%)
Seasonal housing	467	(47.6%)	512	(55.1%)
Total households	473	(100%)	375	(100%)
Family households	325	(68.7%)	283	(75.5%)
Non-family households	148	(31.3%)	92	(24.5%)