



TOWN OF BERNE COURIER

Vol. 44

News From Your Town Government

Fall/Winter 2017

FROM THE SUPERVISOR:

The Consolidation Study is Just A Study - Berne Residents Will Decide In 2018

The Albany County Shared Services Study shows a potential \$9 million in taxpayer savings for all Albany County municipalities. One of the proposals in the County study is to examine a consolidated Town and County Highway Department to provide better services to all of the roads in our town. This consolidation study will take place in 2018 and will involve public input and then you, Berne voters, will vote on the proposal next November. All of the residents of Berne will have the final say as to whether the Town and County Highway Departments will consolidate.

Unfortunately, too much misinformation has been spread to frighten residents simply for political gain. Let's be clear. The Consolidation Study is only a *study* and it will be up to Berne voters to decide what you think is best for the Town.

However, the facts are clear if you vote for consolidation:

- All workers who currently work in Berne will continue to work in Berne.
- No full-time Berne highway employee will lose their job.
- Highway workers will have better benefits and the opportunity for advancement.
- Employees will continue to:
 - Go to work at the Berne Highway Garage
 - Drive the same trucks
 - Plow the same roads in Berne but, rather than having their plow up 50% of the time as they travel over state and county roads to get to Town roads, they will have their plow down and plow all of the roads in Berne.

The Town County Consolidation Study is about making both the County and Berne Highway Departments more efficient, providing better services, ensuring Town employees equal or better pay and benefits and a potential 20% property tax cut for all

PLAYGROUND OPEN FOR BUSINESS!



Included in photograph are Berne Town Councilperson Karen Schimmer, Berne Town Supervisor Kevin Crosier, NY Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, Berne Town Clerk Anita Clayton and Berne Town Councilperson Dawn Jordan. Special thanks to Albany County Executive Daniel McCoy and the Albany County Public Works Department who provided a skid steer and operator.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Sunday, October 1 at the Town Park. Assemblyman Angelo Santabarbara, who funded the new equipment through a SAM grant, was on hand for the event. Both Berne Supervisor Crosier and NY Assemblyman Santabarbara initiated the equipment with a fast ride down the six-foot slide. *(Cont'd...)*

Berne residents. My goal is and always has been to provide the highest quality services in the most cost-efficient way. The Town Board and I see the consolidation as a win-win for all the residents of Berne. We ask that over the next year you consider the facts, provide your input and concerns and work with us to vote in November of 2018 on the best proposal possible.

Five Straight Years of Property Tax Cuts

The Town of Berne is probably the only town in New York State to have its taxes reduced for five years in a row while at the same time adding services for our residents.

The Town Board and I have worked in many different ways to achieve this goal. Hiring a full-time senior account clerk, along with a new accounting system, allows us to closely track expenditures and keep our spending in line. The Town Clerk and I work closely together on pur-

chasing and bidding to assure that we are spending your tax dollars wisely. The upcoming year's Berne Town Budget is a 4% reduction. This fifth year of tax reductions has been done at the same time as increased investments in Town services, property and financial security.

However, there will be new challenges in the coming years. We will see increases in: landfill tipping fees because of the Albany Landfill closing; retirement and health care costs; emergency medical services; as well as other unforeseen costs. The Berne Town Board, Town Clerk and I will continue to search for ways to make your government more efficient and effective while continuing to reduce your taxes.

As always, we welcome your input and ideas as we take pride that Berne is such a wonderful place to live in the heart of the beautiful Helderberg Mountains.



-Kevin Crosier

One Hundred Years Ago

*From The Altamont Enterprise,
October-December 1917.*

Thousands of our boys "are somewhere in France without their favorite smoke - fighting for you." Send 25 cents to *The Enterprise* to ship them a "smoke kit" - two packs of Lucky Strikes, loose tobacco and cigarette paper. The East Berne Red Cross makes up Christmas kits and the Lutheran Church collects nickels for the Red Cross. A War tax bill raises the cost of postage stamps from 2 to 3 cents, and postcards from 1 to 2 cents.

By mid-October, the last summer residents at Thompson's Lake are gone and the Lakeside Hotel is closed. In East Berne, dancing classes are available at Mattice's Pavilion, \$5 for ten lessons. In Berne, Chesebro and Sand have started making cider. On October 31, there is a Halloween social at the Berne Reformed Church. Two East Berne men drive back from the Adirondacks with a 200 pound bear. A portion of motor vehicle fees is being returned to towns under a new redistribution law. Each town will get a prorated amount based on its town highway mileage. Berne has 116 miles, second only to Westerlo's 127.

On Election Day, 54% of the all-male electorate approves the right of New York women to vote, 47 years after women won it in Wyoming Territory. President Wilson had sent an open letter urging voters to "set a great example" by amending the N.Y. Constitution. It will be another three years before 2/3 of the states ratify the 19th Amendment to make women's suffrage the law of our land.

Barely an hour after December begins, the Lakeside Hotel ends - by fire. Between 1 a.m. and 2 a.m., fire is detected in the unoccupied hotel at Thompson's Lake. Many respond, but there is a high wind and lack of firefighting equipment. It burns to the ground. Three chimneys and their fireplaces are all that remain. Owned and managed by Daniel Casey and Mr. Fitzgerald of Albany, the Lakeside's days as a summer boarding house are over. Perhaps Alfred Brunk of Thompson's Lake will tell the story when his friend visits over Christmas.

-Submitted by George Christian

HARVESTFEST

Hay rides, giant slides, life-sized scarecrow making! It all happened at Switzkill Farm's 3rd Annual Harvest Fest, Saturday, October 7, 2017. The air was redolent with the smell of hot dogs and moldering leaves as even the youngest took part making pumpkin magnets, spooky spiders, decorated leaf necklaces and dipped for donuts at the donut tree. Music filled the air, and everyone delighted in the pig roast cooked by our own chefs, Chance Townsend, Kevin Crozier and Josh Duell.

Our scarecrow project produced some very fine, life-sized scarecrows under the watchful eye of Richard Ronconi. Little scarecrows, monster scarecrows and everything-in-between scarecrows could be seen being carried away to grace home gardens and doorsteps. The radio-controlled cars exhibited and run by the Radio-Controlled Car Club enticed everyone to look on with awe and excitement. Working with Mark Hohengasser, our resident trail maker, the club has coalesced into a vibrant group of avid hobbyists.

Special thanks go to Kevin and Chance, who rose with the dawn to get the roasted pig going; to Terry Schwende-

man, who manned the craft tables; and, to Todd Schwendeman who braved children slathered with chocolate frosting from donuts hung on the donut tree.

Thanks also to Ted Kunker, our resident barbecue master, for his stint at the grill and to Diane Kingston for her delicious Ghosts in the Graveyard puddings. And, like the "House That Jack Built," it was Diane Poole who picked, washed, sliced, and then pressed the apples to make the cider that everyone consumed by the

cupful! Special thanks to Fox Valley Vail Farm and Gizelle Przywiecki for generously donating the wonderful pumpkins.

Last, but certainly not least, our special thanks goes out to Roger Chrysler. Roger's hayrides



were the hit of the day. Riding through the gorgeous fields he grooms so beautifully, surrounded by the sweet smell of freshly mown hay and the reds and orange of newly turned leaves, was the very essence of fall. Undaunted, and seemingly tireless, Roger made trip after trip, stopping each time in the highest field to give folks a chance to relish the view and to let the kids run around freely, in the large, wide-open space. He regaled everyone with his history of the land, answering questions and giving background information, before heading back down the hill in the beauty of the surrounding countryside.

(Playground cont'd) A simple cookout of hot dogs, chips, and light refreshments followed the ribbon cutting. Berne's Playmakers were on hand to help celebrate the start of the new venture.

The equipment obtained from Assemblyman Santabarbara's grant represents the first phase of a playground expansion at the park. Plans for the next phases were developed by Mark Hohengasser, a Berne resident, who donated his services to the Town. Development will continue through the defined phases for the next several years. Included in his plans are a paved bike path, tunnels, climbing structures and active and quiet areas for children five through 12.

Emma Detlefsen of Emma's Incredibles hosted a lemonade stand and bake sale throughout the day. Proceeds from her sales benefited the Lymphedema Education and Research Network. It is the mission of the Lymphatic Education & Research Network to fight lymphatic disease and lymphedema through education, research and advocacy. Emma, a resident of Berne, has been a Youth Ambassador for Lymphatic Education & Research Network since September of 2015. Now eight years old, Emma was diagnosed with Primary Lymphedema when she was 16 months old. As a seven-year-old, she traveled to Washington D.C. to act as a lobbyist in support of The Lymphedema Treatment Act where she attended 12 congressional meetings.

What Does it Take to Age in Place?

An African proverb states that it takes a village to raise a child. However, that adage works for all stages of life. Who hasn't needed help when confronted with a challenge, whether it's a car that won't start or a personal health crisis?

As we age, most of us want to continue to live at home. Often, we can do so by creating connections in our community to combat isolation and to improve our ability to live at home for as long as possible.

Throughout the Hilltowns, residents have a reputation for helping neighbors in everyday life and in crisis. Community Caregivers is a local organization (founded in 1994) and is dedicated to assisting those who need a helping hand to stay at home.

The Village Movement

Community Caregivers, Inc. is also working in our region in partnership with older adults who seek to form, or have formed, "villages." What is the Village Movement? Here, the term "village" refers to individuals who form neighbor-to-neighbor associations in their communities to help each other. The mission of Villages and ours is similar—to help people live with quality of life and dignity. Villages embrace the idea of not just aging in place, but *aging in community*. Com-

munity Caregivers is a member of the Village to Village Network, a national organization, and the newly-formed Capital Region Villages Collaborative in our area.

If you're interested in exploring a Village of your own, have questions or would like to schedule a Village presentation, contact Linda Miller at Community Caregivers, 518-456-2898 or linda@communitycaregivers.org. For information on the national movement, visit the Village to Village Network website: www.vnetwork.org.



Volunteer Orientation Sessions

We cannot do what we do without YOU! If you are interested in learning more, please register and attend a one-hour orientation session. We recruit continually for all positions and there is something for everyone!

Tuesday, November 7th at 10 a.m.

Thursday, November 16th at noon

To register call 518-456-2898 or email volunteer@communitycaregivers.org. Our office is located at 2021 Western Ave., Suite 104, Albany, NY 12203.

Community Caregivers, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization that provides non-medical services, including transportation and caregiver support, at no charge. Our funding is derived in part from the Albany County Department for Aging, the New York State Office for the Aging and the U.S. Administration on Aging.



**Candlelight Tour of
Woodlawn Cemetery
Nov. 5th at 6:30 p.m.
Sponsored by the
Berne Historical Society**

**Holiday Celebration
at the Masonic Lodge
For children through 6th grade
Dec. 3rd at 2 p.m.**

**PJ Story Night at the
Berne Public Library
Dec. 27th at 6:30 p.m.**

A Tribute to Linda Hodges

The Helderberg Senior Services, the organization that sponsors the Senior Meal program, was saddened to lose their Chair and devoted volunteer, Linda Hodges, by her untimely death in August. Linda was a devoted member of the Board and worked tirelessly to provide healthy meals and socialization for our seniors. Not only did Linda strive to promote the program, she was there regularly to serve meals, set up tables, develop programming, and play games with the attendees after the meal. She also served as a driver - picking up and returning those seniors in need of transportation to the program.

It is a tribute to Linda that the program, as she shaped it, continues to operate successfully three days a week: Monday, Tuesday, and Fridays at noon at the Berne Community and Senior Services Center on Helderberg Trail. Any Hilltown senior is welcome to participate. Volunteers are also needed. Contact Karen Stark, 518-937-5963 for more information, to reserve a spot at any meal or to volunteer to help out.

Donations in Linda's name may be made to The Helderberg Senior Services, Inc., PO Box 12, Berne, New York 12023.



New Boat Launch at Thompson's Lake

The Town-owned boat launch at Thompson's Lake received a \$130k face-lift this summer thanks to the New York State Department of Conservation. Improved access to the lake will ensure that both residents and non-residents alike will continue to catch rainbow and brown trout which the DEC stocks every year. Before the season is over, the launch will be black-topped and new signage and a new kiosk will be added.



William J. Conboy II Great Room Dedication

On Saturday, October 7th 2017, family members, friends, co-workers and residents gathered in the great room of the Lodge up at Switzkill Farm to remember William J. Conboy II.

Mr. Conboy served as Berne's Town Attorney for 34 years, guiding decision making and unraveling legal matters with his well-known good humor, wisdom, integrity, fairness and professionalism. In addition to counseling the Town Board, Bill worked with the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, helped the Town through the difficult period of its first town-wide property revaluation and did pro-bono work for the Town when it was creating its sewer district.

Bill's incredible commitment to the Town of Berne and its residents clearly warrants heartfelt appreciation, gratitude and recognition. In honor of his decades of loyal and dedicated service as Town Counsel to the Town of Berne, the great room at Switzkill Farm shall now be known as the *William J. Conboy II Great Room*.



HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

The Berne Youth Council invites you to celebrate the Season with Mr. and Mrs. Claus at the Masonic Lodge on Sunday, Dec. 3 at 2 p.m.

-Light refreshments will be served-

From the Assessor's Office: Exemption renewals for the 2018

Assessment Roll will be mailed in mid-December. All exemption forms must be completed and returned to our office by March 1st. If you are currently receiving a Basic STAR exemption and will be turning 65 this year, you may qualify for a Senior Star exemption. Please contact our office for the form.

For seniors that have filed an Income Verification form with our office, we will be notified by NYS Tax and Finance if you qualify for the Basic or Senior exemption and we will not be mailing renewal forms to you. The seniors that have filed the Income Verification form **and** also apply for the Aged All exemption will still receive an Aged All renewal from our office.

Any **new** STAR credit applications are now handled directly by NY State. The number to apply is 518-457-2036.

If your mailing address has changed, please contact our office so that we may update our files. Our normal office hours are Wednesday evenings from 5:30-7:00pm. Our office is located at 1763 Helderberg Trail in the rear of the library, opposite the BKW elementary school. Our email address is: assess-clerk@yahoo.com.

-Brian, Melanie & Chris

Species Identification at Switzkill

Most of us are awed by the natural world that is revealed to us on television or on social media. But in Berne we have the opportunity to observe many wonders of the natural world right in our backyard. On June 10th a dozen or so citizen-scientists and scientist-citizens gathered at Switzkill Farm for the first ever Berne BioBlitz. We identified more than 200 species of animals, birds, plants, fungi and lichens. At the Lodge we ate lunch and compared notes. It was a wonderful day and the Conservation Board hopes to organize another BioBlitz next year! *Below: Steve Young shares his photo of blue flag iris weevils (*Mononychis vulpeculus*).*

-Kathy Moore, Conservation Board Chair



Highway News

Well, we are close to finishing up another paving year. We did the balance of Filkins Hill and also part of Bradt Hollow. Thanks to the Towns of Knox, Westerlo, Rensselaerville, Wright and Guilderland for their help for the five days. Thanks to all the residents for their understanding and who worked with us while the work was being done.

Also, we worked with Albany County Soil and Water to hydro-seed around the salt shed and also the front of the Highway Building. They will be coming back to also hydro-seed ditches with us. We have eight more miles scheduled to do.

As you know, the wonderful wintertime is coming and we will be ordering our sanding material and getting trucks ready. As always, please feel free to call with questions and concerns. My phone is always on: 518-573-3002 or email bashwingerhwy@gmail.com. Also, feel free to stop at the shop and see what we have done for changes in the shop and see the equipment.

*-Berne Highway Superintendent
Randy Bashwinger*

Berne Public Library—Read All About It

Do you know that the following can be found in Berne?

Book Store: Take home a newly released book by a popular author, a classic novel or picture book. Cost is free.

Video Store: Ability to take home a recently released movie or an old favorite on DVD or Blu-ray. There are also television series. Cost is free.

Newsstand: Pick up your favorite magazine or read *The Altamont Enterprise*. Cost is free.

Copy Center: Print or copy for \$.15 per page for B/W and \$.50 per page for color copies.

Fax Center: Receive or send a fax. Cost is \$1.00 for the first page and \$.50 for each additional page.

Wi-Fi Hot Spot and Computer Access: Wi-Fi available 24/7. Use computers to investigate Ancestry.com, learn a new language with Mango Languages or check your email. Cost is free.

Early Childhood Education Center:

Storytime at 10:30 a.m. on Tuesdays. Cost is free.

Continuing Education Center: Request a one-on-one lesson on computers, tablets and smart phones. Attend programs on history, medical issues, gardening, etc. Cost is free.

Art and Craft Classes: Cost may include a material fee.

Entertainment Venue and Place to Explore Hobbies: Look for free offerings on our website:

www.BernePublicLibrary.org.

E-books and E-magazines: Download e-books and e-magazines from Overdrive. Cost is free.

Museum Passes: Passes for the USS Slater, Clark Art Institute and MiSci may be borrowed for 7 days. Cost is free. Get \$2 off admission to VIA Aquarium with your library card.

Meeting Room: Reserve a room for meetings of non-profit groups. Cost is free.

LIBRARY HOURS

Open on these days:

Monday: 4 to 8 p.m.
 Tuesday: 10 a.m. to 8
 Wednesday: 12 to 8 p.m.
 Thursday: 2 to 8 p.m.
 Saturday: 10 a.m. to 2

Where are all these things? They are at the Berne Public Library. Come in for a calming experience away from the chaos of life, for a listening ear or for a place to meet with other families. Stay tuned for upcoming events by checking out our website or sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.

Visit our website for more info
www.BernePublicLibrary.org



Lasagna Dinner and Cake Walk Saturday, Nov. 4 at 5:30 At the Berne Community & Senior Center

Once again, the Friends of the Berne Library will be serving homemade lasagna (meat, vegetarian and gluten-free varieties), salad, bread, beverages and make-your-own sundaes courtesy of Stewart's Shops. There is only one sitting. Pre-paid tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the library. Tickets at the door will be \$12 and children 12 and under are \$8. The Cake Walk is a special feature of our dinner. You can enter a drawing to win a "baked

from scratch" cake by purchasing 10 tickets for \$10. Place your tickets in front of your favorite cake and if you are lucky, you will be taking that cake home with you! Held at the Berne Community & Senior Center, Helderberg Trail, Berne.

In other news, the Friends plan to have a revolving display of community artwork featured in the community room. If you have artwork that you would like to display, please let us know.

The 3rd Juried Photo Exhibit at the Berne Public Library is coming up, so keep that camera handy! Photos must be submitted by the end of January 2018 and will be on display in the community room throughout the month of February. The categories are: Hilltown Charm, Pets, Self-Portrait (Selfies) and Colors & Shapes. The photos will be judged on their artistic merit, composition and relevance to the category. We encourage students as well as adults to enter photos in the exhibit.

The Friends meet on the first Wednesday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Berne Library. Consider becoming a member for \$15. Your membership gives you a voice in the extra programs and projects undertaken by the Berne Library.

-Donna Gwin, Pres.,
 Friends of the Berne Library

REGULARLY SCHEDULED EVENTS

Storytime - preliteracy program for babies to 5 years -
 Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.

Teen Action Group (TAG)- teen second Friday of the month at 6:30 p.m.

Book Club - adult book discussion - first Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Knit Wits - adult knitting and crocheting - third Sunday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Library Trustees Meeting - 2nd Thursday of the month

Friends of the Library Meeting - 1st Wednesday of the month





Town of Berne
 PO Box 57
 Berne, NY 12023

Visit our website:
www.berneny.org

TOWN DIRECTORY:

TOWN of BERNE—ALL DEPARTMENTS PHONE _____ 518-872-1448
 TOWN HALL FAX _____ 518-872-9303
 TOWN OF BERNE LIBRARY— PHONE _____ 518-872-1246
 FAX _____ 518-872-9024
 HIGHWAY GARAGE PHONE _____ 518-872-1448. EXT 108
 FAX _____ 518-872-9563
 SUPERVISOR Kevin Crosier
 TOWN BOARD MEMBERS: Joe Golden, James Cooke,
 Dawn Jordan, Karen Schimmer
 TOWN CLERK Anita Clayton
 HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT Randy Bashwinger
 TOWN JUSTICE Albert E. Raymond
 TOWN JUSTICE Alan P. Zuk
 COURT CLERK Stacy Loucks
 PLANNING BOARD CHAIR Rick Rapp
 ZONING BOARD CHAIR Ron Jordan
 CONSERVATION BOARD CHAIR Kathleen Moore
 ASSESSOR Brian Crawford
 YOUTH COUNCIL CHAIR Trudy Horl
 YOUTH DIRECTOR Kathy Wank
 SEWER DISTRICT ISSUES/EMERGENCIES Kevin Crosier 518-424-3446
 BUILDING & ZONING Tim Lippert 518-339-6030
 DOG CONTROL OFFICER Cheryl Baitsholts 518-728-8082
 TAX COLLECTOR Gerald O'Malley 518-872-0331
 TOWN HISTORIAN Kathleen Putzig 585-752-5822
 BERNE POST OFFICE 518-872-0424
 EAST BERNE POST OFFICE 518-872-1244

TOWN CLERK

Monday-Wednesday 8 AM-3 PM
 Thursday 8 AM- 2 PM
 Saturday 9 AM-noon
 Evenings by appointment

BUILDING INSPECTOR

Thursday 7-9 PM
 Saturday 9 AM-noon

TOWN BOARD

2nd Wednesday 7:30 PM

PLANNING BOARD

1st and 2nd Thursday (as needed) 7 PM

TOWN COURT CLERK HOURS

Tuesday 9 AM TO 1 PM

TOWN COURT

Tuesday 5 PM

ASSESSOR

Wednesday 5:30 to 7 PM
 Located at Town Library Building

TRANSFER STATION

Monday 4 PM to 8 PM
 Wednesday Noon to 8 PM
 Saturday 8 AM to 4 PM

Closed Holidays

Permit required—obtain from Town Clerk