

The Bluff Point Association (BPA)

March 2012

2012-1

Chairman's Report

We may have had light winter weather, but it has been active on the Bluff and in our Town.

For those of us who do not winter on the Bluff, several new faces have appeared on the Town of Jerusalem Board. New members include Patrick Killen and Michael Steppe. Additionally, Ray Stewart, who did not run for reelection, was appointed by reelected Supervisor Daryl Jones to be deputy supervisor. Why not consider attending one of the Board meetings? Our presence at meetings does make a difference.

Our Branchport Modeste Bedient Library has purchased the vacant building next door and has demolished the building to make space for a playground. A huge thank you is in order to get the much needed playground and also be rid of the eye sore.

Progress on the Penn Yan Liberty Street bridge is ahead of schedule and should be finished by the May target date.

Separate articles are included as follows:

- Partnership between the BPA and the Finger Lakes Land Trust
- Hydrofracking in the Keuka Lake Watershed
- Budget progress with the Penn Yan Central School District
- Finger Lakes Museum Progress

We have included a summary of the budget status with our school district elsewhere. Nevertheless, I feel compelled to comment. Shortly before the first of the year, Doug Tomandl, assistant superintendent for finance, resigned to take a similar assignment much closer to his home in Auburn. I was very sorry to see Doug leave since the BPA had developed such a good relationship and he was very creative in finding ways to minimize our tax bill. His last presentation on December 7th indicated that a funding gap of 3.3 million dollars would exist if programs remain unchanged from last year. However, the district remains in good hands as Rodger Lewis rejoined us on a temporary basis to help with the new budget. Rodger has helped us in the past during the major construction phase of our school remodeling. He presented a budget workshop at the February 1st board meeting. Increasing expenses and decreasing income remain a problem. In addition to the

budget workshops, our district is working with consultants to identify areas that may save money by sharing services with the Dundee and Marcus Whitman districts. Joint services also may permit us to use services supplied by BOCES more efficiently.

Finally, I want to suggest again that you attend local meetings that may of interest to you. These may include the School Board, TOJ board, zoning or planning meetings, and workshops about development in Branchport or along the 54A corridor. Your presence will make a difference.

Save the date for our annual meeting to be held Saturday July 21, 2012.

See you in the spring.
Art Adams, President

Hydrofracking Update

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) closed its comment period relating to hydrofracking for natural gas on January 12, 2012. The DEC has indicated that it will postpone releasing its final Supplemental Generic Environmental Impact Statement (SGEIS) until late 2012 or beyond.

The current science behind hydrofracking does not protect Keuka Lake Watershed from the risk of an environmental accident that could damage the quality of Keuka Lake and the water sources for its residents—both public and individual. Significant increases in heavy truck traffic, noise pollution and air pollution resulting from hydrofracking will have negative impact on our quality of life, tourism, winery businesses and property values.

The Yates County Legislature has unanimously passed two resolutions asking the DEC to treat Keuka and Finger Lakes Watersheds like the sources of water for New York City and Syracuse. In the latest proposed draft, the DEC is now prohibiting all hydrofracking within 4000 feet of the water sources for New York City and Syracuse.

The Town of Jerusalem is being proactive as well, continue reading TOJ – Votes No on Hydrofracking.

TOJ – Votes No on Hydrofracking

On February 15 the Town of Jerusalem became the first of ten townships in the Keuka Lake watershed to prohibit high volume, slick water hydraulic fracture drilling by use of a comprehensive zoning ordinance. The decision of the board culminates an 11 month intensive review process conducted by a committee of volunteer residents which began in March of 2011 with a moratorium of natural gas drilling in this New York Finger Lakes municipality.

In a statement read prior to the vote, Town Supervisor Daryl Jones said...

“Most important to me was the research and analysis that presented facts that fracking as it is currently done is not safe. It is not safe for the waters we drink. It is not safe for the crops we grow and the produce we eat. It is not safe for the livestock we raise. And it is not safe for the waters of Keuka Lake in which our children and grandchildren swim, fish and play.”

Research proved without a doubt that property values, agriculture and tourism would suffer if fracking came to our town. The idyllic image of Mennonite wagons would be replaced with massive truck traffic of 18 wheelers loaded with waters that contain chemicals that threaten our well-being.”

Similar action to Jerusalem’s is currently in progress in eight of the remaining nine townships in the watershed of Keuka Lake.

Home Rule

In addition, on February 15, the Town of Jerusalem Board passed resolution #12 which approved becoming an *amius curiae* in actions involving municipal home rule pending before New York State appellate courts. The board determined that it is in the public best interest to support municipal home rule.

Since 1894 the Constitution of New York State has granted broad home rule powers to local governments and placed corresponding restrictions on the state Legislature to preserve these powers.

Bills resulting in current local regulations being superseded by state control are in motion. Towns must be diligent in protecting municipal home rule and the actions by the Town of Jerusalem Board passing the resolution are exactly the type of leadership we need.

We must all be vigilant and take the time to write to our congressional representatives to remain steadfast in support of home rule in our state.

Penn Yan Central School District

We and the school district are going to have a challenging year. The recent budget presentation by Rodger Lewis, Interim Ass't Superintendent for Business, indicated that without cuts and program changes the proposed expense budget will go up by about \$1.3 million or 4.3%. According to Rodger, run away increases in health insurance and retirement contributions are “placing school districts across the state in a situation that is not sustainable.” These increases will be tougher to absorb due in part to a freeze in Foundation Aid (largest portion of State Aid) and the loss of \$1.9 million the State’s GAP Elimination “take away”. Additionally, decreases in revenues from P.I.L.O.T. (payments in lieu of taxes), Federal Jobs money, and Federal Title I are complicating the revenue side of the budget.. The District is funded by State Aid (about 40%), Federal Aid and Property Taxes. At this time no one knows what the final State Aid figures will be, making it difficult to determine the impact on our tax levy. Our presence at meetings to keep informed, ask questions and provide suggestions is more important than in the last few years. We all want a great and also efficient school system.

Conservation News – Finger Lakes Land Trust Partnership

With the stroke of a pen, the clasp of a handshake, and the welcome receipt of a \$5,000 contribution, the Land Trust and the Bluff Point Association (BPA) recently launched an innovative partnership aimed at promoting voluntary land conservation on lands that are vital to the future of Keuka Lake.

During the past two years, the Land Trust has launched outreach efforts at the Bluff, to educate land owners about conservation easements and other options for conserving their land. To support these efforts, the BPA has agreed to help the Land Trust connect with landowners and local officials and has also generously committed funds to defray transaction and stewardship costs associated with easement donations at the Bluff.

“We live on a particularly sensitive and beautiful natural resource,” says BPA Director Lisa Saether. “This partnership with the Land Trust will give us the tools

that we need to help landowners conserve and protect their lands.”

“We need to tap grassroots local support if we are succeed in conserving Bluff Point and other places like it,” says Land Trust Executive Director Andrew Zepp. “We’re grateful to the Bluff Point Association – both for their generous support and their strong commitment to conservation.”

We will be getting together with interested landowners to explain how conservation easements can work to preserve their land, looking into erosion control methods to help with gully erosion on the hills and affecting Keuka Lake. We also talked about ways to raise money from private individuals, grant and foundation monies, that will go toward paying for easements and other projects that will conserve the land and water.

Please contact us if you’d like to get involved!

You may make contributions to the Bluff Point Conservation Fund through the Finger Lakes Land Trust.

Bluff Point Fund and sent to FLLT 202 East Court Street Ithaca, NY 14850 All contributions are tax deductible.

Finger Lakes Museum

Progress continues on the proposed Finger Lakes Museum. The recent Founders Campaign topped its goal of raising over 1 million dollars. This money will be used in part to provide matching funds for over 2 million dollars in NYS Grants. Most of the grant money will go toward renovating the Branchport Campus (former Branchport Elementary School). The intent is to allow the museum to work with the lead designer BCJ (Bohlin Cywinski Jackson) and develop some elements of the museum ahead of a schedule that could be implemented at the Keuka Lake State Park Site. Anyone interested in working with the several museum committees should visit the website (www.fingerlakesmuseum.org) and then contact Natalie Payne at npayne@fingerlakesmuseum.org.

Membership Renewal

We are pleased to provide you with this issue of the Bluff Point Association Newsletter. To continue receiving future news and to support our many efforts affecting the Bluff, we invite you to renew or, if you have not already done so, join the many other Bluff residents who support the BPA with their annual membership gift of \$15.

Bluff Point Association, Membership Form, 2011-2012

View the reverse side for your membership expiration date.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address 1

Address 2

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

Street: _____

Street: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Telephone: _____

Bluff Point Address: _____

Renewal New membership Annual **Membership** Fee is \$15. Make checks payable to **Bluff Point Association**.

Send checks to: Bluff Point Association, PO Box 72, Bluff Point, NY 14478

Please check here if you would prefer to receive newsletters electronically.

Key Contacts

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Federal

29th District House of Representatives

Rep. Thomas Reed
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ph (Washington, DC) 202-225-3161
ph (Corning, NY) 607-654-7566

New York State

Assemblyman Phil Palmesano
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ph (Bath) 607-776-9691

Senator Tom O'Mara
ph (Bath) 607-776-3201

Yates County Legislators

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Daryl Jones, Supervisor
Mike Folts, Town Board
Max Parsons, Town Board
Mike Steppe, Town Board
Pat Killen, Town Board
Sheila McMichael, Town Clerk
Vernon Brand, Town Assessor
John Phillips, Town Code Enforcement Officer
Bob Payne, Highway Superintendent

Community Meeting Dates

At Yates County Office Building

County Legislature: 1pm, 2nd Monday of month
County Planning Board: 7pm, 4th Thursday of month

At Town of Jerusalem Offices

Planning Board: 7pm, 1st Thursday of month
Zoning Bd. Appeals: 7pm, 2nd Thursday of month
Town Board: 7pm, 3rd Wednesday of month

Penn Yan Central School Board:

7pm, 1st and 3rd Wed. of month at Penn Yan Academy

The Bluff Point Association

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