

*Celebrating Our 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
1860-2010*

**VILLAGE OF GROTON, NY**

143 Cortland Street  
PO Box 100  
Groton, NY 13073-0100  
607-898-3966  
Fax: 607-898-4177  
e-mail: grotonvil@grotonny.org

**e-VILLAGE NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2010**

Village Board Meetings - Meetings of the Village Board of Trustees are held on the third Monday of each month at 7 pm. Any individual who wishes to address the Board on any issue is asked to contact the Village Clerk no later than 4:30 pm on the proceeding Friday to be placed on the agenda. Persons with a disability who wish to attend a meeting of the Village Board should contact the Village Clerk (898-3966) at least seven days in advance so your particular needs can be accommodated.

Seasonal Items – No parking of any type of vehicle is allowed on village streets between the hours of 2 am and 6 am from Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup>. Operation of snowmobiles or ATV's on village streets, as well as all village property, is prohibited. Hunting is not allowed in the Village or within 500 feet of a village boundary, or on any Village property outside the Village.

Property owners who have sidewalks that abut their property must clear them of ice and snow by 10 am , when necessary. **This is especially important for the safety of school children.**

Village Elections – The general village elections will be held on Tuesday, March 16, 2010. Voting will take place at the Groton Village Office, 143 Cortland St. from 12 noon to 9 pm that day. Offices to be voted upon are for two trustees positions (currently held by Mike Molino and Chris Neville) for two-year terms. At the Republican Caucus, Mike Molino and Jean Morey were nominated to run for the two vacant seats. Chris Neville decided not to seek re-election. We thank Chris for his fourteen years of dedicated service on the Village Board.

Snowplowing – When snow and ice comes, we try to respond as quickly as possible. The hills are done first, followed by the rest of the streets. We have 10.75 miles of streets, so it takes a fair amount of time to plow and cinder them. From time to time, we observe people either shoveling, snowblowing or plowing snow back into the street. We ask that you refrain from this activity because it can create hazardous conditions. It is illegal under the State Vehicle and Traffic law and it also interferes with our efforts to clear the roads. When opening up your driveway, it is best to shovel the snow to the side in the direction of travel so the plows can take it down the road and not put it in your driveway. The Village of Groton has always been and continues to be firmly committed to the safety of Village motorists and pedestrians.

**CONGRATULATIONS – LOUIE HOWELL!**

Harold (Louie) Howell, office clerk in the Police Dept., retired from Village service on Dec. 26, 2009. Louie started in the Police Dept. part-time in 1990 and was given full-time status in 1996. The good news is that he will not be completely leaving us, since he will be staying on part-time. We congratulate him on his dedication to the Village and Police Dept. In his retirement, we hope he'll work in some fishing at the lake!

Sesquicentennial – 2010 will mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Village. The Village was incorporated on June 11, 1860. Special activities are being planned for the weekend of June 11-13 to commemorate this event. There also will be other events throughout the year to celebrate this important milestone. The numbers "150" are displayed in the windows at the Village Office, that will be lighted and change from white to blue to represent a countdown to June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Donations will be accepted to help fund the event, checks payable to the Village of Groton (please mark "150 Celebration" in the memo). All donations over \$10 will be listed in a commemorative brochure that will be distributed at the time of the June 11<sup>th</sup> celebration. We also have limited-edition books that have been donated to us, titled "Great Possibilities-150 Verne Morton Photographs" as a fund-raiser for the event. They are available at the Village Office for a donation of \$45.

We are planning a special parade on Sat., June 12<sup>th</sup>, which we would like to feature floats representing various organizations, businesses, neighborhoods, school groups, the best of what the community has to offer. We hope we will see some great floats, so get your group together for this historic Village event!

2010 Census – In March you will be receiving your 2010 Census form. Since Federal and State aid is shrinking, this count becomes very important for the Village's possible eligibility for these funds. Please take the time to respond, it only takes about 10 minutes, and it can be beneficial to all of us.

Electric – The Board of Light Commissioners has approved another offering under the Energy Efficiency Program. It will involve a 0% loan program for those who wish to add attic insulation. Details will be forthcoming in the near future. We will be applying for a grant from NYSSERDA that will provide customers with free energy audits. Remember, we still have the rebate program for persons who replace their hot water heaters with newer, energy efficient models. We still are offering the Marathon hot water heaters to our customers at cost.

Purchased Power Adjustment – We are often asked what this charge is on your electric bill. The Village is billed each month for the kwh sold, demand, and wheeling and transmission charges (the cost of delivering power to the Village). The Village receives its power from two sources. The first source is hydroelectric power from the New York Power Authority's Niagara Project, which is one of the lowest cost sources of power in the country. We have a maximum demand of 4,494 KW that we can receive from this source. If we exceed this demand, we have to purchase the balance (the second source, which we call incremental power) through a joint action agency that the Village participates with other municipal electric systems, the New York Municipal Power Agency. This source of power is three times more expensive than the hydropower. The Village usually exceeds the hydro demand during the months of November thru April.

Your base rate basically covers a portion of the cost of hydropower and all other costs that are needed to run the Dept., which is what we consider the base cost of power. Once we exceed this base cost, the remainder is billed through the PPA. This obviously is much greater during the months of November thru April, since we have to purchase power through the more expensive source.

In addition, two significant charges to the Village have taken place within the last six months. The first is the Public Service Commission's "Temporary" Assessment Charge, which is almost \$15,000 (or three times) higher than it was. Second, the Village has purchased special contracts, called TCC's, that will mitigate excessive charges that the New York Independent System Operator can assess the Village when congestion in the grid occurs. Since these charges were not incorporated into the base rate in our last rate relief application, these charges are added as riders to the Purchase Power Adjustment.

Building Permits – To help clarify many questions we receive in regards to building permits, the following items generally need a building permit: swimming pools over 24 inches in depth, fences over 6 feet in height, wood stoves, sheds over 80 square feet in area, any structure that requires a roof, with or without trusses, permanent signs, electrical changes that update capacity or rewiring of a building, the physical relocation of a building, alterations and repairs that effect the structure of a building, and, in some cases, when there is a change in occupancy. Please call George Senter, Code Enforcement Officer, at the Village Office if you have any questions when you wish to build.

Police Dept – Tim Williams was appointed as Officer in Charge in July. Tim was previously a detective with the City of Ithaca Police Dept., from which he retired. He replaces Scott Ferris, who resigned. We thank Scott for his dedication during his tenure as the Dept. head. James Landon and Douglas Bowman were added to the Dept. staff in 2009 as part-time officers. Full-time officer Ryan Slocum left to take a position with the Tompkins County Sheriff's Dept. Jeremy Vann has been appointed to full-time police officer. If you are going on vacation, please stop by the Dept. and let us know so we can perform a regular property check while you are away. The Dept. again was very involved in the Cops, Kids and Toys Program, distributing toys to children in our area.

Gazebo - The Village Board has a policy in regards to the reservation and use of the gazebo

on Conger Blvd. Please contact the Village Office for further details.

Community Development – The Village applied for funding for village-wide housing rehab under the State's HOME Program. Unfortunately, this grant was not funded. We intend to reapply in the spring. Community Development loans during the year were approved for Jody Metcalf (Bun Appetite), Brian Jackson (Jackson Automotive) and Dale Dickey (Main St. Pizzeria).

Committee Vacancies – The Village has one vacancy on the Planning Board for an Alternate and one vacancy on the Zoning Board of Appeals. We also need representatives on the Groton Youth Commission and the County Youth Board. If anyone is interested in these committees, please contact the Village Office (898-3966).

Dept. of Public Works - This past summer we paved West Cortland St. (Main St. to Conger Blvd.), upper Lincoln Ave., Elm St. (Main St. to Williams St.). Parts of Elm St., South Main St. and McKinley Ave. were patched. With the high price of oil, blacktop prices have soared, making it tough to do a complete mile of streets each year. We attempt to do the best we can with the money we have available to work with.

We thank Rick Case, Town of Groton Highway Supt. and the Town employees for their help and equipment to complete our paving projects efficiently. We also thank the Town of Dryden Highway Dept., the Village of Dryden, the Town of Caroline for providing trucks to haul material to the jobsite.

This summer we have tentative plans to pave Walpole Road and Church Street.

Pavilion at Memorial Park – We are now accepting reservations for the use of the pavilion at Memorial Park. For Village and Town of Groton residents, there is a \$25 rental fee plus a refundable \$25 deposit (to ensure the area has been picked up). You must reserve the pavilion if you want it on a certain date, otherwise it is first come, first served. All other persons are asked to yield to people who have made the proper reservation for the facility. It is also worthy to note that a reservation for the pavilion does not guarantee that the swimming facility will be available, due to staffing or weather conditions.

Dogs at Large – Please take notice that it is a violation of the Village Code to have your dog unleashed when not on your property. Further, it is the owner's responsibility to see that his or her dog does not bark or howl excessively. Also, from time to time, people who walk their dogs

allow them to excrete on other people's sidewalks or property. We receive many complaints in the course of the year on these issues, and we ask that dog owners please make every attempt to mitigate these actions that may be potentially bothersome to your neighbors. As you may be aware, the Town of Groton has contracted with a firm to enforce dog control. Dog complaints should be directed to Country Acres Animal Services. Contact numbers are Paul Burhans (749-2734) or Lindsey Andersen (423-2888). Do not call the SPCA, as they will no longer respond with the Town and Village of Groton.

Joint Recreation Committee – The Joint Recreation Dept. provided its eighth summer of activities. The Committee held Winterfest on Saturday, Jan. 30. In spite of the lack of snow, there was a good turnout and a record number of recycled toboggans. If you have ideas for programs you would like to see implemented, please contact Viola Fitzgerald at 898-5803, Ext. 430.

Memorial Park – The municipal park and pool were very busy this past summer. Swim lessons were very well attended and the staff did a great job with the kids. We attempt to make the pool rules friendly, but we find that safety and maintenance issues, along with Health Dept. and insurance regulations, create a challenge to find neutral ground. The kiddie pool seems to be the where the most complaints on the rules come from – mostly over the bathing suit issue. We can understand the frustration with this rule, but the children's safety is the number one concern. We will continue to explore ways to make this work for everyone's safety and pleasure. We remind residents who use the Robison tennis courts on Peru Rd. in the evening hours to turn off the lights when you are finished.

Tax Burden – When the State of New York passes costs and revenue shortfalls onto smaller units of local governments, this is defined as tax shift. When this happens, in most cases, the burden must be absorbed by the regressive property tax. The New York Conference of Mayors has produced a web site that addresses this issue and was specifically designed to provide the public with information about tax shift. Please visit [www.StopTheTaxShift.org](http://www.StopTheTaxShift.org).

Water – In January a motor on Well #3 on Conger Blvd. failed and we had to replace it. We also replaced the pump and pipe. The cost of this repair was paid for with reserve funds. During the year, we also replaced our telephone telemetry system with a radio system. This is used to communicate between the pumps on

Conger Blvd., the water plants and tank on Clark St., and the tank on Elm St. The old system was 27 years old and it was difficult to find parts to repair it.

Dirty water calls are our largest complaint. Contrary to popular belief this is a problem with every water system. There are many things that can cause this problem such as turbidity from heavy rainfall, open & closing of valves in the system for repairs, opening of fire hydrants, buildup of material in deadened lines, well pumps running excessively and the reaction of the disinfectant with Iron & Manganese creating discoloration. We flush hydrants twice a year to flush the system and we introduced a sequestering agent to take iron out of suspension at the source. Even with these efforts obviously we are unable to totally control discoloration in the water. Our water is sampled and tested monthly and even though it may be discolored it is safe to drink. Even with the efforts we attempt, rust scale will build on the inside of the pipe and when the water gets stirred up, a rust fog develops and circulates through the system. The only option is to wait for it to settle or open a fire hydrant part way to attempt to draw the fog out of the system.

Wastewater Treatment Plant - Please refer to the January 16, 2010 letter that was delivered to all residents who have sewer service. The Village Board adopted the rate increase on January 25<sup>th</sup>, following a public hearing. Construction of the improvements should begin in the early spring.

Skate Park - Local Law No. 1 of 2004 provides for the use and regulations of the Groton Freestyle Sports Facility, located next to the tennis courts on Peru Road. All skate park users must have a day use or an annual pass to use the facility. Further, all skate park users must have a current year liability waiver form on file with the Village, which must be signed by the parent/guardian if the park user is under 18 years of age. Annual passes are issued once the waiver forms have been filed. There is no cost for Village or Town residents to obtain the annual pass. In order to use the park, **helmets** must be worn and elbow and kneepads are highly recommended.

Sidewalks - We receive many complaints regarding snow removal from sidewalks. Please remember that property owners are responsible to clear snow and ice by 10 am.

The Village has a sidewalk repair program. If a property owner wants to replace the sidewalk in front of the property, you must fill out a repair/replacement application and schedule the

removal with DPW. The Village will remove and discard old sidewalk and provide stone for grading. Your contractor will form and pour new sidewalk. Bring your paid receipt to Village Clerk and receive 10% payment.

Utility Payments At First National Bank - As a means of convenience to our utility paying customers, Village electric, water and sewer payments may be paid at the First National Bank of Groton during its usual business hours. Payments may also be made at the Village Office (143 Cortland St.) during usual business hours, in the drop box on the pole at the front of the driveway at the Village Office during non-business hours, or by mail.

Electrical Inspections -An electrical inspection by the Village Electrical Inspector is required for any new or expanded service and major rewiring of structures. The Village electrical inspector, Floyd Ferris, can be contacted at 592-5829 if you have any questions in regards to wiring/service issues.

Fire Department - 2009 was again a very busy year for the Department. The Dept. responded to 710 ambulance calls and 164 fire and other emergency incidents. Fire Chiefs for 2010 are: Scott Metcalf-Chief, Jeff Lucas-Deputy Chief, Dale Muncey-1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Chief, Joel Wheeler-2<sup>nd</sup> Assistant Chief and Lee Tracy-3<sup>rd</sup> Assistant Chief. The Dept. is continuing to evaluate its building space needs and how to best serve our residents with ambulance service.

Village employee - state wide president - In September, Clerk-Treasurer/Administrator Chuck Rankin was elected president of the New York State Society of Municipal Finance Officers. The election took place at the annual meeting of the society in Albany. Mayor Jeff Evener was on hand to administer the oath of office to Chuck and the other officers of the Society. We congratulate Chuck and wish him good luck during his year as president. Other officers include: 1<sup>st</sup> vice pres.-Dave Smollet, Village of Lawrence, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice pres.-Andy SanFilippo, City of Buffalo, 3<sup>rd</sup> vice pres.-Ronda Winn, Village of Hamilton and secretary-treasurer-Debbie Coad, City of Oswego.

Mulch available - The Village stockpiles the mulch from trees that we trim during the year at the sewer plant on Cayuga St. When spring arrives, please feel free to help yourselves to this mulch for your plants and bushes.

Summer Concerts - This year we were able to offer eight concerts for our residents. We have received a grant from the Community Arts Partnership in the amount of \$700 for the 2010 concert series. We are planning to have a

minimum of seven concerts this year. The tentative schedule will be announced in May. Most concerts are held at the gazebo on Conger Blvd. We try to offer a variety of music, so that there will be something for everyone's taste.

Legislation Adopted – **Local Law No. 1 of 2009** amended the Code in relation to fees charged to peddlers and transient merchants. **Local Law No. 2 of 2009** increased the income limits for eligibility for the senior citizen property tax exemption. **Local Law No. 1 of 2010** increased the rates charged for sewer service.

Weekend Emergency Numbers – If an emergency arises during the weekend, call the numbers listed below. Please use these numbers for emergencies only.

Water, sewer, and all other	<b>898-3345</b>
Electric	<b>898-3001</b>

**FOR FIRE, AMBULANCE & POLICE EMERGENCIES, CALL 911.**

*Please remember to support our military serving our County at home and overseas!*

*We wish all of our residents the Best in the New Year!*