



# Town of Franklin

## November 2002 Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 11

November 2002

### 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

#### **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.

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 at the Franklin Town Hall. The meetings are open to the public.

The next regular meeting will be held Monday, December 9, 2002, 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. ❖*

## 2003 BUDGET APPROVED

The Town of Franklin Town Board adopted its 2003 budget at the November regular board meeting. The budget adds up to approximately 7.19 percent increase over the 2002 budget.

The board began their work keeping in mind that the town's total assessed is down from last year, and revenues from interest will be almost 45 percent less than last year. On the positive side, because spending in 2002 stayed well within the budget, there is approximately \$125,000 to roll over into 2003.

All in all, estimates are that the increase will mean an ad-

ditional \$25.50 per \$50,000 assessment on the town's portion of taxpayers' bills.

Increases in the General Fund come to 7.8 percent, and include:

- Raises for board members, town clerk, highway superintendent and deputy superintendent, and town historian.
- Anticipated property insurance rate increases of 18 to 20 percent over last year.
- More money for operating expenses for the town

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## Rec Committee: No Ice Rink

Speaking for the Town Recreation Committee, Janet Ordway reported at the November regular board meeting that the committee has decided not to have a skating rink for the 2002-2003 season.

Committee members have talked with people in town and feel there isn't a lot support for the skating rink.

"The last two years, the weather was not good. Three years ago rink was good, but no one used it," Ordway said.

The committee had several reasons for its decision. The rink is too small because the water supply from the park well is inadequate. It is difficult to find people to set up the rink and maintain it. Hiring a supervisor for the rink is expensive, and volunteers are hard to find.

Bloomingtondale has a large rink, and Franklin kids can use that one, Ordway said.

With no skating rink, and with their current projects completed, the recreation committee has planned no meetings until next April.

"We'd like to thank the recreation committee for all they've done," said Town Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith, speaking for the town board.

Committee members include Ordway, Tim Goff, Derek Romeo, Dave Dekkers, and the Oliver family – Alan, Robin, Lauren, Brittany, and Taylor. ❖

## November Elections

News writers can say what they want about apathetic voters. In the Town of Franklin, 340 voters turned out at the Franklin Town Hall, and 123 at the Merrillville Town Hall for a total of 463 voters. With the total number of registered voters at approximately 650, that means a turnout of over 70 percent.

Official numbers are not yet available. The Department of Elections in Malone still is counting absentee ballots and double checking final numbers. However, overall, the town's winners matched the state-wide election totals. With the exception of Democrat Eliot Spitzer, Attorney General, all winners were Republicans.

Elizabeth O'C. Little received strong support in the Town of Franklin for the position of State Senator, the position that became available with the retirement as of the end of the year of long-time State Senator Ronald B. Stafford.

Stafford had always had strong backing in the town. In his years as the town's Senator, he had always been supportive of the town's needs.

Senator Little served the town well as its representative to the Assembly since 1995. "She has been very good to us." Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith said in praise of Little.

Past Supervisor Frank Karl also is pleased to have Little

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## Community Events

### November Town Tuesday

The rush is on to complete the renovations at the Vermontville Community Church of the Nazarene's Parsonage! To help raise funds for the parsonage, the Vermontville Community Church of the Nazarene will host the Town of Franklin's Town Tuesday by holding a Spaghetti Supper Tuesday, November 19, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., at the Franklin Town Hall in Vermontville.

The cost of the dinner will be by donation, and take-out/delivery (within the Town of Franklin) is also available by calling 891-2189 after 4:00 p.m.

The church has been without a pastor since the resignation of Reverend Betty Jean Goodwin in September, and the board decided to use the time to have some much-needed work done in the parsonage. Now, as recently as Sunday, November 10, the church board, along with the congregation, has accepted the application of Pastor David Drake, Sr., who will be relocating to Vermontville along with his wife, Kathy, and family.

The entire church was taken by surprise that the "call" for a pastor was answered in such a short time, leaving approximately four weeks to raise the necessary funds to complete the work on the parsonage.

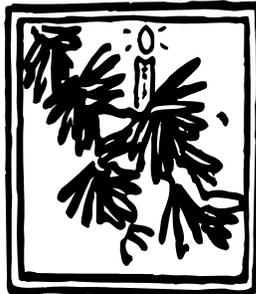
Anyone wishing to contribute is encouraged to make a yummy dessert or donate a gift basket for a Silent Auction to be held at the dinner. For more information please, contact Jeff or Lauren LeFebvre at 891-1046.❖

### December Town Tuesday

by Lauren LeFebvre

What's next for the Celebration Committee? Well, we're going to take it easy and enjoy the busy Holiday season.

The Town of Franklin will be hosting the next Town of Franklin Town Tuesday, along with the Celebration Committee. We will not be fundraising at this event but we're not saying you can't bring any-



thing! It will be a Potluck Supper, on Tuesday, December 17, at 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

I am trying to get Santa to stop in for a quick visit at 6:30 p.m., but the elves say I've been naughty. Imagine that! I'll start being more nice and maybe Santa and I can work out a deal.

There will be gifts for the kids.❖

## Wrapping Up Christmas Made Easy!

Also, for all you Moms and Dads who are sick of wrapping presents in your bedroom at 11:00 at night, I will be opening the Town Hall for wrapping parties every Wednesday in December

from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The tables are nice and long - a real back-saver. My friend Kathy and I wrap gifts there every Christmas. Bring your own supplies, I'll bring the Hot Chocolate!❖

### Thanksgiving Food Pantry

Mary Ellen Keith, director of the St. Paul's-Assumption Food Pantry, was pleased that the annual Election Day Pie Sale brought in close to \$500 in donations for the pantry's Thanksgiving and Christmas fund.

"The turnout for the election was just wonderful, both at the Franklin Town Hall and the Merrillville Town Hall, and then so many people donated," she said.

Although the annual sale is known as the "pie sale," other desserts also were available, including homemade donuts.

Keith thanks everyone who baked or donated. Purchases are being made to add to donated items for upcoming holiday pantry distribution dates.

The November pantry will be held from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, 2002, at the food pantry building at the back of the Franklin Town Hall.

The pantry serves residents of the Town of Franklin and the Town of St. Armand.❖

### Can Tabs Container on Bottle Box

Thanks to Frank Karl, a tab container will be added to the bottle and can box in the back of the Franklin Town Hall.

The Alan Oliver family maintains the box. In addition to collecting and turning in the bottles and cans for funds for projects at the Kate Mt. Park, they also take the time to take the tabs off the cans. The tabs are then donated to the Ronald McDonald House.

With the container, donors can help out by taking the tabs off their cans and putting them in the container when they put their cans and bottles in the box.❖

### Upcoming Dates At A Glance

Tuesday, November 19, 2002: Nazarene Church Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser, 4:00 to 7:00 p.m., Franklin Town Hall  
 Second and fourth Tuesdays every month: Over 55'ers meeting and gathering, 12:30 p.m., Franklin Town Hall  
 Tuesday, December 3, 2002: Building Committee meeting, 7:00 p.m., Franklin Town Hall  
 Wednesdays throughout December: Town Hall open for gift wrapping, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.  
 Sunday, December 8, 2002: Over 55'ers Holiday Party, 1:00 p.m., St. Paul's Church, Bloomingdale  
 Monday, December 9, 2002: Regular Town Board meeting, 7:00 p.m., Franklin Town Hall

# A THOUSAND THANK YOUS!

by Lauren LeFebvre

On behalf of everyone on the Celebration Committee I extend a HUGE THANK YOU to all those who helped make the Halloween Haunted House a success. Let me first start by saying I am horrible with names. Here's an example: There was a wonderful girl posing as the "witch's shadow" during the Haunted House. At one point I needed to get her attention. For the life of me, I just could not remember her name. More than once I was told, mind you, and two seconds later it eluded me. Her name was LAUREN! That being said I will not mention any more names. You all know who you are.

Thank you to the Witch at the front door who stood out in the cold reading "The Legend of the Missing Children" over and over again. Thank you to my Gypsy sister who helped me gauge the fright level of the people coming in and giving me time to "tip off" the rest of the group.

Thank you to the spooky faces behind the picture frames. I know you guys changed places a lot and that freaked me out sometimes! Thank you to the Lab Kids. I hear your voices were as shot as mine the next day. Remember, I had to talk over your screams.

Thank you to the Kitchen Ghouls. What can I say about you all? I have no idea what went on in there after I pushed the people to you through the black plastic, but from the glimpse I got, you looked like you were really playing the part!

Thank you to the Graveyard People. I have no idea what you did, either, but I know it was cold and I know you hung in there and scared the life out of everyone who crossed your path.

Thank you to all those at St. Paul's Food Pantry for providing the food and warmth to the screaming masses that ended up on your doorstep.

Most importantly, to me anyway, thank you to all the adults and kids who took the time to help set up the

Haunted House for an event that only took a mere two hours, and then stayed around to take it all down.

I think we adults will all stand up and say THANK YOU MARK AND NANETTE WINTER FOR THE BLACK PLASTIC! Really couldn't have pulled this off without that. Of all the donations we had - and believe me

we had plenty (thanks to those who dropped off all that cool stuff) - black plastic RULES!

Of course, thanks must go to all those who braved the cold that night to come to the Haunted House. It really would have been disappointing for us to wait around all ghouled-up for nobody. ❖

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## Scout Project Update

Boy Scout Bryon Tuthill reports that with the help of the town Highway Department to install the stone slab, his Eagle Scout project at the Union Cemetery, on Rt. 3, is "coming along quite nicely."

Tuthill updated the Franklin Town Board at their November meeting.

"We should be done within the month or so. The sign is being made and should be done within a week or two and ready to be set on and bolted in," he says.

The project also will include a bench that will be placed by the sign on a stone walkway. ❖

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## Grievance Day Date Change

At the October regular Town Board Meeting, the board was told that due to conflicts, the town's annual Grievance Day date needed to be changed due to conflicts.

At the November meeting, the board announced that the new date will be the

first Tuesday in June.

Because Town Assessor Douglas Tichenor serves as assessor for three towns and can't be at all three Grievance Day hearings, the Town of Franklin can pass a local law to designate an alternate date. ❖

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## Snowmobilers Ask for Support for Trail Grant

The Town of Franklin Board was asked by the Franklin Snowmobilers, Inc., for a resolution in support of their organization. They are applying for a grant for snowmobile trail grooming. Most of their trails are on Niagara Mohawk rights-of-way, on which they pay the insurance costs.

The request brought up discussion at the November regular town board meeting about the problem in the Town of Franklin with snowmobilers trespassing on private land. Board members and residents at the meeting complained that there are too many snowmobiles.

Reports were given of riders coming off Oregon Pond, up onto private property, riding over water lines, and down residents' driveways. A complaint was

made that they are "nasty to cross country skiers."

Frank Karl reported having problems on his property in the past, but said that he took his issues up with members of the Franklin Snowmobilers.

"I found the association responsive to complaints, and they made efforts to improve the situation," he said.

In the end, the board decided to support the association with a resolution, hoping that snowmobilers will be less likely to trespass on private land if they have groomed trails. However, with the resolution they will add a letter specifying the complaints they heard at the meeting and asking their help in resolving the problems. ❖

# Highway Superintendent Monthly Report

by Donald Vorrath

This has been a time of transition both with weather and highway responsibilities.

1. Highway personnel finished roadside work for the season on Merrill Road. Still, much is needed to be accomplished, and, hopefully, with a decent grader we can do much more next year.

2. The Kate Mt. Recreation Park sign was reinstalled after a damaging auto accident.

3. The Highway Department assisted with personnel and equipment with the installation of the stone slab for the Eagle Scout project at the Union Cemetery in Vermontville.

4. Six (6) pieces of equipment, including the refurbished trailer, are winterized and stored at the Merrillville garage. These items include two tractors, sweeper, and chipper. Also stored are extra bales of mulch hay used on

roadsides.

5. All plow trucks are "dressed" and ready for winter operations. On average, this activity takes about two weeks to get ready with the necessary adjustments. We are still working on fine-tuning. Our steel (blades, noses, shoes, etc.) have been delivered and stocked.

6. A D6 dozer was borrowed from the county and was used to mixed 600 tons of salt with 12,000 tons of sand. This operation is successful only because of the dozer so we could mound the pile.

7. In-house cleaning is ongoing and essential so we can store the "dressed" trucks with slusher and wing plows.

8. We delivered 150 gallons of used oils to Franklin County Highway Garage for their heater. They appreciate this extra bonus just as we appreciate all they do for us.

9. All dirt roads were raked one

final time.

10. Additional road signs were installed.

11. We helped DEC haul gravel from the Town of Duane Highway Garage to repair a washout in the Debar Preserve; however, our department still hasn't received the permits to widen two plow turn-arounds from the DEC.

12. Because of the on-going arbitration involving a terminated employee, Robert Place, of Onchiota, has been hired as an MEO per-diem employee. Bob has worked for the town on previous occasions, has his CDL, and is a Teamster Union member. Now that winter is upon us, it is essential to have a full and experienced department.

And finally,

*"If everyone is thinking the same –  
no one is thinking."*

- General George Patton ❖

## Elections Results

(Continued from page 1)

as State Senator. Speaking of having worked with her in the past, he said, "She was very responsive to our problems. Either she or her office always returned calls and followed up whenever we needed her."

On January 1, the Town of Franklin will fall into the redrawn district represented in the Assembly by Chris Ortloff. Ortloff easily won reelection. Although the town is "new" to his district because of redistricting resulting from the 2000 Census, it's actually returning, since the Town of Franklin was in Ortloff's district when he was a new member 16 years ago.

Town of Franklin voters also helped the following candidates to win their seats: George Pataki, Governor; Mary O. Donohue, Lt. Governor; John Faso, Comptroller; John McHugh, Representative in Congress; and locally, Jack Pelkey, Sheriff, and Ron Keough, County Coroner. ❖

## CFSWA TONNAGE INCREASE APPROVED

by Frank Karl

The Franklin County Solid Waste Board voted at the October meeting to allow the executive director to petition the Department of Environmental Conservation to increase the permitted tonnage per year to 100,000 tons. The motion was amended to provide that any actual increase in tonnage by any amount would require approval by the board above the current level of 43,500 tons.

We have requested a meeting with the appropriate members of the DEC and our full board to get some answers as to what is doable, what is required from us (i.e., a long range operations plan, an approved Comprehensive Recycling Analysis, etc.) before we expend any additional funds on expansions, etc.

Our next meeting is Thursday, November 21, at 4:00 p.m. at the Malone Court House. ❖

## \$25,000 for Merrillville Town Hall

Mary Ellen Keith announced that the Town of Franklin's grant to the 2002 Adirondack North County Community Enhancement Program was successful. The \$25,000 grant will be used to improve Merrillville Town Hall. The Building Committee will administer the grant.

Plans involve drilling a well, putting in a septic system, and installing bathroom facilities. The electric heating system will be replaced by a fuel furnace. Work will have to be within the guidelines of an historic site.

The Merrillville Town Hall currently is used as a polling site and for storage. By updating the facilities, the building will be usable for community events and as an emergency center for the Loon Lake area. ❖

## Adelphia Options: Serve More Residents?

Town Attorney Ed Murphy held up a map at the November board meeting to show the board members the section of the town currently being served by Adelphia Cable.

“Actually, it’s a small area,” he noted.

Frank Karl, Mary Ellen Keith, and Murphy make up the committee that will negotiate the renewal of the contract with Adelphia which expires in 2005. They met with Adelphia’s Al Sutphen. According to Murphy, one major point to address is expanding Adelphia’s service area in the town.

In the current contract, Adelphia is required to run service down roads where residences average 25 potential cable customers per mile. As a first step in negotiations to renew the Town of Franklin’s contract, Adelphia will

supply committee with an up-to-date map of entire town of Franklin residences to identify what new locations qualify for cable.

After the initial installation of cable in the town, expansion has been slow in coming.

Several years ago, it looked as though cable service would be run through the town on Route 3. Adelphia had planned to connect with Falcon Cable TV in Plattsburgh to run cable optic up to Plattsburgh, which would have made it feasible to consider running cable to Onchiota and Loon Lake. However, Falcon was purchased, and

the new owner didn’t want to pursue the project. For now, small dish is the only real competition to cable.

Cable services, which include the Internet, will reflect the wishes of the residents of the town – if they make them known to the committee – from what channels they get to the customer service they receive from Adelphia.

Murphy expects to set up the first public meeting on the contract sometime in December. The new contract will run for ten years. Murphy urges residents to make their wishes known now. They will be living with the contract until 2015. ❖

### Building Committee To Meet December 3

The next Building Committee meeting will be December 3 at 7:00 p.m. at the Franklin Town Hall.

Frank Karl, who serves on the committee, invites everyone in the town with an interest in the subject of bringing the town’s properties up to date to attend the meetings.

“We’re very concerned about getting public input on the direction they would like to see us go with this,” he said.

Karl is referring the options of adding on to the current town hall, building a new town hall, or building a new recreation center.

“People have heard about it and they are asking me about it,” Lauren LeFebvre, Town Clerk, said. “They want to know, ‘What’s it gonna cost?’”

Karl hopes those people come to the meeting.

Residents who can’t come to meetings are urged to talk with committee members, who will share the comments and opinions with the rest of the committee.

The other members of the committee are Roger Symonds, Jean Baltzly, Walt Kretser, and Janet Ordway. ❖

## About the Newsletter

The Town of Franklin Newsletter is provided to you by the Town Board to keep you up to date on the month-to-month issues facing the town.

You have every right to be proud of the 70 percent voter turnout in the Town of Franklin. The board believes that a town whose voters are as concerned and conscientious as this one deserves to know what their town government is up to.

Recognizing that most people don’t have the time to go to board meetings, the newsletter carries lengthy summaries of business conducted at each of the board meetings and of the on-going work of board committees. The newsletter also keeps you up to date on community events.

Whether or not the town board’s work is always of interest to you, it is important to you. It’s your taxes, your services, your town laws, your quality of life.

At all turns, everyone working on Town of Franklin business recognizes that they are working as your representatives, and they are directly available to you. All their decisions may not go your way, but they can’t consider your opinion if they don’t know what it is. Talk with one of them. Write a letter (P.O. Box 205, Vermontville, NY 12989). Call and leave a message (891-2189). Send an e-mail

(tofl@northnet.com). Attend a meeting.

You also are invited to contribute to the newsletter. New ideas and opinions are welcome. The newsletter is not a newspaper concerned with “news that sells”. Its goal is to give you thorough information on issues and directions before as well as after decisions are made or actions taken, keeping you informed, and encouraging your participation.

Beyond town business, the newsletter is available to you to announce news about any item you would like to share. (Is anyone interested in taking up a social and personal town news feature? It would make a wonderful addition.)

The newsletter is put together by Lorrie Rumble, who is available through the above address and e-mail. If she is not immediately available at the phone number, leave a message.

In way of explanation and history, although this year’s newsletters say “Volume I”, the newsletters, in fact, have been around for a long time. Vince Pagano began them during his term as Town Supervisor in the early 1990’s, and they continued through both of Frank Karl’s Town Supervisor terms. Frank Karl still contributes regularly to the current newsletter. ❖

# Budget Hearings Concluded; Budget Adopted

*(Continued from page 1)*

clerk and codes officer to cover expanding operating expenses and the need to update some equipment.

The board also agreed put \$10,000 into the Capital Projects Fund. No funds went into this category last year, but the board felt that not building up the fund now would cost the town more in the future.

Even though the contingency fund was not used in 2002, the 2003 contingency was raised to \$20,000 on Budget Officer Richard Meagher's advice.

"The new budget is tight. You might want to have something set aside in case the unexpected comes up," he told the board.

The budget also reflects an increase in fire protection costs.

The Highway Fund budget rose 5.2 percent. Increases include raised costs of employee benefits, highway repairs planned for next year, and snowplowing. Extra money also was put in to allow the superintendent to look into replacing the town's grader.

Budget areas that decreased were in the justice department and in payments to services such as the Adirondack Regional Airport and Veterans Service. There also were decreases in money to Industrial Development (money used to secure HUD grants) and Planning.

The town also expects to see some savings in the town employees' health insurance costs.

The board held three budget workshops throughout October, going through the budget line-item by line-item with Meagher. Supervisor Mary Ellen Keith started the process by reminding the board that they "are working for the taxpayers," and that they needed to create a budget acceptable to the taxpayers.

Although only one town resident, Frank Karl, attended any of the meetings, board members reminded each other throughout the process of the im-

portance of keeping the increases to a minimum.

After listening to explanations about their figures, Karl concluded that the board had done a good job. "There were problems with last year's budget," he said, adding that he had been expecting a much larger increase.

## 2002 Total Assessed Value Down

The board was joined by Meagher and Town Assessor Doug Tichenor at the public hearing on November 6. No residents attended, and the board used the session to question Tichenor at length about the town's total assessed value.

While most years the value of the town increases from between one million to five million dollars, this year the town's value decreased by approximately a quarter million dollars.

"I have two ways of making changes, quantity changes and equalization changes," Tichenor said. "Quantity changes refer to new construction or removal. Equalization changes are made to bring things in line with market value.

"Quantity changes that caused the town's assessment value to go down included a fire on the Thompson property in Rainbow Lake, grievances, buildings that came off the rolls, the settlement of a lawsuit, and the consolidation of some properties. There was also a decrease in utility property rates, which are out of Tichenor's hands, and the loss of a Niagara Mohawk-owned camp no longer on the rolls.

Tichenor expects the drop to be a one-year event. "It's not an usual thing for assessments to go down, but it does happen . . . in some cases dramatically," he said.

Looking ahead, Tichenor sees several things that will affect next year's figures. He is now in the process of a town-wide update of assessments which will be completed March 1, 2003, the state "tax status" date.

(Assessments are based on the status of a property as of this date. "If a new building goes up March 15, it's not included. Also, if a building goes down after March 1—a trailer moved, or by fire—the property stays on the list until next year," Tichenor explained.)

There is a great deal of new construction going on in the town that will be added the rolls. He warns that the most significant changes in the town at this point are current purchases of waterfront property.

"Most prices are staying tight in Franklin right now except for waterfront," Tichenor said. While homeowners' assessment values are staying constant, waterfront property prices are spiking.

"Waterfront property owners might see severe, dramatic changes" in their assessments, he said. Recent sales include \$180,000 for a waterfront property assessed at \$72,000 in 1997. Another property recently sold for \$90,000, resold for \$140,000, and is now on sale for \$265,000.

"I have to include these sale prices in my assessments," Tichenor said. "The state monitors what I do through equalization rates." The New York State's equalization rates are used to compare towns' assessments, and recent sale prices are used in their calculations of a town's value. "If they feel my assessments are out of line with sale prices, it could negatively affect our equalization rate," he added.

The town's budget is only one part of residents' tax bills. County and school taxes, which are completely out of the board's hands, may make up a considerable portion of any tax increases. Lauren LeFebvre, who is the town's tax collector, wants to remind people that while she is very sympathetic, she collects, not sets, taxes, thank you.

If this year's tax bills set you off, the board looks forward to seeing you next October at the budget workshops for your advice and input. ❖