



Figure 1: Self Portrait, ca. 1910-1919, Arthur Austin, glass plate negative, H: 4 x W: 5 in. The Farmers' Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Museum Purchase, Plowline: Images of New York Collection, 783.1 002.

DOCUMENTING FRANKLIN: The Photography of Arthur Austin

By Christina Milliman

Arthur Austin was a professional, and likely self-taught, photographer of the early 20th Century who documented the people, scenery, homes, businesses, public buildings, street scenes and agricultural aspects of daily life in and around Franklin between circa 1900 and 1930. Not a lot is known about this man or his family. It can be suspected that he started out during the early camera craze, fueled by the Eastman Kodak Company (and a handful of other companies) who marketed cameras and negatives for the “every-day” person and professional, thus leading to “instant photography.” He also may have

See AUSTIN, continued on Page 15



The Rich Farmhouse on Main Street

Photo by M.B. Kellogg

FRANKLIN'S NEW COMMUNITY CENTER

Photos and facts on Page 3



FRANKLIN FISCAL FARCE

By Brian Brock

Would you like to know how the town board spent your property taxes last year?

You should be able to.

Under New York Town Law, each town is required to file an annual financial report. This Annual Update Document should be available from the Town Clerk, Dawn Ritz, or the Office of the State Comptroller within 60 days of the end of the year. (Nearly ninety-seven percent of towns speed the process by filing their AUDs electronically.) What is more, the town is required to publish notice of the availability of each AUD in the official newspaper.

Then how could you have missed these financial reports year after year? In 2013, an examination by

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COMMUNITY SHARED SOLAR POWER: coming soon to Franklin?

By Don Hebbard

Solar electrical energy generation, photovoltaic electric, has been available for many years. The initial solar installations were for powering off-grid applications. Since the 1960s, silicon-based solar cells have been used to power satellites and space stations. In the 1970s, technological advances greatly reduced the cost of solar cells and they became the norm for powering remote land-based applications such as railroad crossings, lighthouses, oil rigs, and water pumping. By the 1980s, residential solar systems were cost effective for cabins, second homes, and homes located away from the electrical grid. Since



Mike Sellitti shows off a one-pound Rainbow Trout

LOCAL FAMILY FARMS TROUT

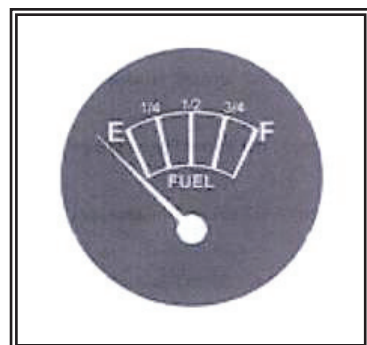
By Michael Sellitti

For over 40 years we have owned and lived on property in Sidney Center which our growing family continues to come back to regularly enjoy all that makes upstate NY a great place to be. As long as I can remember, we've been fond of swimming and fishing in our ponds. We spent countless hours as kids playing in the stream, catching crayfish and exploring new areas. This deep connection to our

land and water has led us to start a family business: Skytop Springs Fish Farm.

When the press first started reporting on the conditions in which com-

See FISH, con't on Page 8



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Your Neighbor's View...

February 16, 2017

To: The Sidney Center Improvement Group

I am writing this letter to encourage Sidney Center Improvement Group to retain as its core mission, at least in part, the goal of maintaining a healthy watershed. While this goal may not seem to be of value at first glance, I would suggest that your local watershed, with all its myriad springs and creeks and unseen flow in the subsurface, holds far greater value for you than you might think. Value, of course, is something we as humans assign to the material world, be it in monetary, moral, aesthetic or legal terms. I offer below some thoughts on why a watershed matters, and especially so to groups whose vision is the betterment of life in their community.

Clearly SCIG has taken on the challenge of learning about its watershed of Carrs Creek, of finding places where the creek threatens local infrastructure, of building a mosaic picture of what the watershed is and how it works. Those of us in other local watershed interest groups have admired SCIG as being the first in our part of NY to organize to the point where some of the challenges posed by stream flow could be successfully addressed. I suspect that since this work is largely concluded, you might feel the need to focus on other aspects of life in Sidney Center and environs. I ask, however, that you not turn your back on the good work you have accomplished thus far that is watershed related. The issues of good water and good air are always with us, and are worth retaining as some piece of the puzzle that

helps us make our local place—our home—a good place to live.

I submit that every organization that is place-based (be it for business or as a nonprofit) should have some inclination toward protecting the overall health of the local environment, if only for the humans within that organization. Clean air and fresh pure water are necessities for humans and for the multitude of life in the local ecosystems. Preserving and protecting water and air is in our own best interest, and thus in some way must come under the purview of any organization rooted in a local place, even if their primary organizational goals are focused on other issues. If the people in the organization are suffering from poor health because of low quality air and water, the organization itself will be weaker.

But caring about water and air quality is only partly for ourselves. What happens in the local watershed does not stay in the watershed. All watersheds are connected to larger ones, and what we put into local streams will find its way to our neighbors downstream. When we take care of our local watersheds, we are also being good neighbors, of the very best sort. Water is infinitely reusable and retains its high value so long as few pollutants are introduced. The water in the creek behind your house is yours, but only in passing. Downstream, it becomes your neighbor's.

In today's largely urban society, water and landscape are abstract concepts. Somehow the connection to real water in real landscapes gets lost. But in upstate New York, many of us still drink water that comes from the ground at our feet, with minimal pro-

cessing, except for what nature provides, such as natural filtration and nutrient recycling. For those of us dependent on local water, we are much closer to the natural setting for our water, and so we must understand where it comes from and where it goes; how it sustains us, and how it nurtures others. Many in Sidney Center are in the same situation. Your participation in watershed activities is definitely in the community's best interest, and what you learn about the watershed will serve the entire community well.

Are there other ways of valuing our local watershed? Yes! There is an aesthetic side which can add a great deal of joy and pleasure to one's life. I try to bring this perspective to the Butternut Valley Alliance, and into my classrooms as well. While an aesthetic is often too personal to commonly share, or to serve as a core mission of an entire organization, any organization that seeks to promote an appreciation for life in its local neighborhood is well advised to bring in the natural environment as a place of wonder, discovery, rest, and that intangible aesthetic of beauty. You will find water and a watershed at the core of that environment.

I urge you to consider retaining the goal of promoting the health of your watershed in your organization, as, in my view, you are fundamentally improving the health of your community when you do.

Best regards and respectfully yours,

Leslie E. Hasbargen

Associate Professor in Earth & Atmospheric Sciences at SUNY Oneonta, Coordinator for Catskill Headwaters research group, and board member of Butternut Valley Alliance

and Geranium with Lobelia. They will cost \$20 each. Flower orders will be available for pick-up on Saturday May 13, at the Rich Farm barn, 574 Main St., Franklin (next to the Franklin Railroad and Community Museum). Orders can be placed through any board member, through Franklin Central School Main Office, and at the Franklin Railroad and Community Museum. Pre-payment for orders is required.

The Franklin Community Education Foundation (FCEF) is dedicated to the academic and educational needs and endeavors of Franklin's youth. The FCEF's activities include payment for college level courses for high school students, scholar of the month program, providing school supplies to students in need, assistance with field trip expenses, and funding for pro-

grams like the Robotics Club.

Just as the business landscape of a community changes over time, so do boards and memberships of local organizations. A special thank you to former FCEF President John Campbell for his years of dedicated leadership.

Current Franklin Community Education Foundation board members are: Patricia Tyrell (President), Donald Hebbard (Vice President), Naomi Lima (Treasurer), Lorelle Dutcher (Secretary), Nancy Cloonan, Justin Ash, Penny Downin, and Donna Cox.

For more information about the Franklin Community Education Foundation or the Spring Flower Sale, please write info@franklincommunity.org, or call (607) 829-3492.

Thank you for your support!



The 2017 Franklin Farmers' Market poster, by Charles Bremer

WANTED:

VOLUNTEER HELPER(S) FOR FRANKLIN FARMERS' MARKET



Help is needed for the twenty Market Days, every Sunday from May 28th to October 8th.

Working hours are roughly 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Markets are held rain or shine, except during hurricanes and tornadoes.



If interested, please contact **Ellen Curtis** at 607-829-5631 or at ellen-curtis184@aol.com.



Responsibilities include:

- Assisting with set-up and break-down
- Staffing the market tent
- Answering customers' questions
- Selling market merchandise
- Collecting fees from vendors
- Settling disputes with/ between vendors

(With multiple helpers, the schedule can accommodate each person's availability.)

SPRING FLOWER SALE FOR A GOOD CAUSE

By Patricia Tyrell

On occasion, a community loss can become a unique opportunity. While local favorite Meadowbrook Farm has closed, folks will still be able to get their spring and Mother's Day flowers from a local option- and for a good cause! The Franklin Community Education Foundation will be selling advance orders for a variety of 10' hanging floral baskets all through the month of April, until May 1st.

Basket varieties to be offered include Fuchsia, Petunia, Ivy Geranium, Bacopa, Scavola,



FRANKLIN LOCAL

Local News
Local Events

Local Issues
Local Concerns



MARY ANN MAURER: A Franklin Icon at 100

By Carla Nordstrom

For many kids who grew up in Franklin during the 1950s and 1960s, Mary Ann Maurer was their first teacher at the Franklin Central School. Mrs. Maurer taught kindergarten and first grade for most of her career. As a petite, no nonsense, soft-spoken woman who could command the attention of forty young children, she was adored by her students. This past December, Mary Ann Maurer celebrated her 100th birthday with a few friends at her residence in Oneonta.

Mrs. Maurer moved to Franklin in 1938 to teach fourth grade at the Franklin Central School. According to her daughter Christie Marlette, she and two recent graduates from the State Teachers College of New Paltz were driven to Franklin for an interview. "All three were interviewed at the same time in the same room," Mrs. Marlette said, "and my mother got the job."

Mrs. Maurer grew up in New Paltz. At fourteen, her mother left her and she was sent to live and work on a farm with a fam-



L to R, around Mary Anne: Carol Jensen, Dolores Gross, Jean Paton, Mary Ann Pinney and Joyce Fairchild

ily of boys. According to Mrs. Marlette, "My mother never stayed anywhere she didn't want to be." Mary Ann appealed to her former next-door neighbors and moved in with them to finish high school.

Upon graduation, with one suitcase and a full academic scholarship, Mary Ann went to the Dean at the local college. She needed a place to live. The Dean found her a room in a boarding house, where she helped with chores while taking classes. She wanted to become a teacher.

Within a year of moving to Franklin, Mrs. Maurer met and married Paul Maurer, Franklin's barber. She left teaching to raise a family of four daughters and kept

See Maurer, continued on Page 17

FRANKLIN TOWN BOARD meetings: 2017

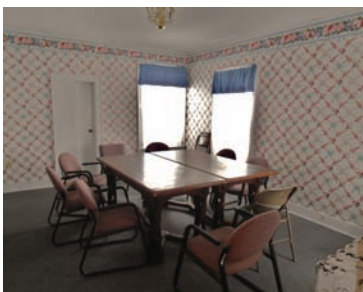
Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month, except for November, due to the conflict with election day.

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| Jan. 3, 2017 | Franklin Organizational |
| Feb. 7, 2017 | Franklin |
| Mar. 7, 2017 | Treadwell |
| Apr. 4, 2017 | Franklin |
| May 2, 2017 | Franklin |
| June 6, 2017 | Treadwell |
| July 11, 2017 | Franklin |
| Aug. 1, 2017 | Franklin |
| Sept. 5, 2017 | Treadwell |
| Oct. 3, 2017 | Franklin Budget Workshop |
| Nov. 8, 2017 | Franklin* Budget hearing |
| Dec. 5, 2017 | Treadwell |

*Wednesday

In Franklin, meetings are at the town garages.

In Treadwell, meetings are at the firehouse.



The small meeting room



The working kitchen and breakfast room

FRANKLIN HAS A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER

By John Campbell

(Photos by the Editor)

The Franklin Railroad and Community Museum has renovated the George and Doretta Rich home into a handsome and flexible Community Center. There are four rooms and a working kitchen that can facilitate meetings or gatherings. There are tables and chairs provided in the various rooms.

To use this facility, you need only fill out a use-of-facility form, which has a user's responsibilities sheet attached.

To get a form or if you have questions, call John Campbell at 607-829-2692, 829-5890 or at his cell number: 607-267-7931.

Or email John at : johncampbell8@gmail.com.



The large meeting room

NEW LIFE FOR TREADWELL SCHOOL

By Don Hebbard

Delaware County, and Franklin specifically, has maintained its rural environment and is a preferred residence location. This is evident in the number of second home owners and retirees in the area. A community also needs families with children to maintain the vitality that schools, churches, and community groups inherently produce. To raise a family here is

contingent upon earning a living, which has always been and continues to be, a major concern for young families in the area.

Attracting new businesses to Franklin, and maintaining existing businesses, is critical to the future of Franklin. The advent of the internet and the potential to do business remotely has helped provide employment in this area. Today all businesses rely on the internet and cell service as a means of supporting their operations. This trend will increase as access to cell service and high-speed internet comes

See GINSENG, continued on Page 11



Bird's eye view of the former Kellogg School in Treadwell

SIDNEY CENTER LIBRARY GETS GORGEOUS NEW SIGN

By Carol Behan

The hamlet of Sidney Center got just a bit brighter in early February with the installation of a

project that will give such a welcome boost to his hometown.

The installation ceremony took place on February 2nd with over thirty people coming for the late afternoon event. The unexpectedly mild and sunny weather made the twenty-minute ribbon cutting ceremony all the more enjoyable for everyone. Speakers included Mary Jane Plummer, representing the Sidney Memorial Library Board; Carol Behan, SCIG member who served on the sign committee; Jody Isaacson, a Sidney Center neighbor who helped design the sign; and Mike Sellitti, President of SCIG. Special guest Ty Steinbacher offered a few words about how much he enjoyed his part in the project and received warm applause from the crowd.

The new sign, prominently displayed near the sidewalk on County Route 23, replaces one that hung on the Library's porch. It



beautiful new sign for the Sidney Center Branch Library. It was the culmination of nearly a year's effort of the Sidney Center Improvement Group with both the fund-raising and the eventual design work. The sign itself is the work of Walton artist Ty Steinbacher, who grew up in Sidney Center. He was especially pleased to be involved in a

See SIGN, continued on Page 15

FRANKLIN'S FALLEN HERO

By John Campbell

On December 9, 2016, a stretch of State Route 357 was dedicated in honor of United States Marine Corps Corporal Nicholas Uzenski. Nick died in 2010 when his unit was ambushed in Afghanistan. He was twenty-one years old. The section of the highway that has been named the Corporal Nicholas K. Uzenski Memorial Highway follows Route 357 from the Ouleout Creek Golf Course in North Franklin to the town line by the East Sidney Dam.

When you drive this section of road, please look at the signs and remember that Nick died so each of us can enjoy our freedoms. There are thousands of young men and women across our country who have made the ultimate sacrifice as Nick did. Every day we should say thank you to a veteran.



a wonderful event honoring one of Franklin's heroes.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Senator James Seward and Assemblyman Clifford Crouch for making this possible. Senator Seward also presented Nick's mother Lisa Uzenski with the State Senate Liberty Medal in Nick's honor, which is the highest award given by New York State.

Nick's dress blue Marine Corps uniform, the American flag that was flown over the Capital in honor of Nick, plus other memorabilia to honor and remember him are housed and displayed in the Franklin Railroad and Commu-



The dedication ceremony on Rt. 357, with memorial sign

They put their lives on hold to serve in the military because they believe in our great country and want to preserve our freedom.

The dedication ceremony on December 9, 2016 at the Ouleout Creek Golf Course was very impressive. Law enforcement personnel, military, Freedom Riders, Legionaries, family and friends were present. This was a great turnout for

nity Museum.

Many of us had the privilege of knowing Nick, who lived in Franklin and graduated from Franklin Central School. We remember an outgoing, vibrant, good-natured young man who loved life and was very proud to serve in the Marine Corps. Nick will be missed by many and will never be forgotten for his sacrifice to keep us free!

GFCC ECONOMIC SURVEY RESULTS

By Lynne Kemen

In the Fall 2016 issue of the New Franklin Register, The Greater Franklin Chamber of Commerce released a Franklin Economic Survey for 2016. (The GFCC serves Franklin, Treadwell and surrounding areas).

Patricia Tyrell, a lifetime resident of Franklin and Secretary of the GFCC, worked closely on the development of the survey. Explaining the decision to poll the community, Tyrell said, "The survey got started in a discussion about tapping into the public's views, to see where they feel the economy should be going, to help align the chamber with business and buyer needs. I read several years ago about a shop local initiative with a survey as one prong of the effort. The survey could help illuminate who is actively shopping/utilizing local businesses, as well as who might, if the right business was available. Also offer a general sense of what people think about local business. Does what's cheap still count more than what's good? And the survey could be useful when working with local government, if/when the option of collaboration in economic development presents itself."

Inserted into each copy of the Fall issue of *The New Franklin Register* was a single-page survey to measure readers' feelings about and participation in the local economy. Editor Marjorie Kellogg estimates that approximately 900 copies of the survey were made available. Some people made copies of the survey so that spouses could each answer, some put joint names on the surveys. While questions about name, gender, age, education level, and residency status in Franklin were on the form, answering was not a requirement. Some filled in all of the information; others chose to be anonymous or to fill in only some of the information. In all, eighty-nine surveys were turned in, a ten percent response rate.


The survey used a Likert Scale format in which people rated their answers from 1-5 with 1 being not very likely, 2 slightly likely, 3 neutral, 4 somewhat likely and 5 highly likely. What emerged was a fairly wide range of interests and concerns.

Issues garnering the most agreement were the importance of emergency fire/ medical services (91% agreeing that this was very important); having a vibrant local economy (the second highest rating with 83% agreeing that this was very important). Third most-agreed-on issue was the importance of a beautiful downtown Franklin/Treadwell, with 71% voting that this was very important.

energy savings had a 62% agreeing that this was very important.

Trish Tyrell said that the next step would be for the Chamber of Commerce to share the survey results with the town and village boards of Franklin.

Tyrell agrees with the survey's respondents that having a family-friendly, safe and attractive community is vital. She noted that, in Franklin, most of those qualities are made pos-


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Agreement that self-sufficient communities are more capable of supporting themselves in emergencies was the fourth ranked issue, with 71% saying it was very important.

The next two issues of wanting more stores in town/village and the importance of locally-made goods ties with 65% saying this was very important.

The likelihood of shopping at a new local store was the sixth rated issue with 64% agreeing it was very important. Lastly, the importance of renewable

sible by the work of volunteers. But, she said, for anyone concerned about the commitment of time, "volunteering even one day a year makes a difference!"

Survey Raffle:

The prizes:
Two \$25 Gift Certificates to Wise Guys Pizza

The winners:

Elzbieta P. and Bonnie S.

Thanks to Wise Guys Pizza and Cronauer/Brower Plumbing & Electric for sponsoring the raffle!

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OUR VILLAGE PARK IN WINTER

Photographs by
John Fitzpatrick



GREENBANKSGARDENING

With Deborah Banks

Gardening is a sport. Not like a whim or a pastime. Gardening is like baseball, with intense, passionate fans and participants. We gardeners have our garden heroes, garden competitions and our stadiums, I mean, arboretums. And of course we have spring training, where we review nursery catalogs, attend flower shows and start seeds in the basement. Smart gardeners are lifting weights and doing stretches. We're all counting the weeks until "opening day" when we can return to our gardens.

In January, I picture

can say horticulture, I'd be roped into helping to clean out the barn or to rake the mounds of gravel left by the township snowplow off the lawn and back into the road.

Back to my opening day stroll. The ground is either frozen or too muddy for digging. I start by cutting the old foliage off semi-evergreen perennials, like hellebores and epimediums. This job needs to be done before the new growth starts. It is too early to remove the spruce branches that I piled on a newly planted bed last fall to protect the young plants,

need to focus, to ensure this is a winning season for our team, that is, garden. Is this the year to put in a pond in that wet area below the house? What plants should I pull out or move because they looked miserable last summer? Are there plants taking up prime real estate that I'm tired of, or maybe never really liked? Yes, you can cut plants from your team for no better reason than that. No need to wait until you manage to kill them. Maybe you can trade them for something new and exciting from your neighbor's garden.

All that sounds productive, but this is more of a scouting trip. What I'm doing outside on these cold sunny days is looking for evidence that the season is starting. Looking for the large rose-pink catkins on Salix 'Mt Aso', my favorite pussy willow. The green knobs of Petasites bloom appearing in the marshy front yard. The snowdrops at the edge of the woods. The neon yellow carpet of winter aconite blooming under the apple trees. The pink, burgundy and white buds emerging in the center of the hellebores. The bright fringed petals of gold or tangerine or amethyst on the witch hazel shrubs. The fragrant magenta flowers on the daphnes. Has it started yet?

Next will come the dark red stems of the peonies pushing up out of the ground, as beautiful in their way as the later flowers. The carpet of chionodoxa and Siberian squill in the shrub border. The waves of azure and purple-blue muscari amid the emerging greens of perennials. Striped squill and pale yellow 'City of Haarlem' hyacinths on the hill. Yellow and red double primroses flowering near the barn. And the first of the daffodils, with names like February Gold, Little Gem and Barrett Browning.

After that, the garden becomes the scene of feverish activity, with the shade garden's spring flowers racing to bloom before the trees leaf out, perennials growing measurably taller overnight, and more song birds arriving each day.

So much to anticipate. And it all begins with opening day.



opening day as a mild sunny morning with a soft breeze. Red-winged blackbirds are calling from the spruce trees, and my shovel slides easily into a garden bed as I prepare to plant seedlings. In reality, it's hard to wait for that beautiful day. If the sun is out and the temperature is in the forties, I'm probably wandering around outside looking for something to do, with my knit hat pulled down over my ears and my coat zipped to my neck. I wander cautiously. I don't want my husband to catch me looking idle. Before you

although I check to make sure the branches aren't preventing any early bulbs from coming up. I also check that the wire cages are still up around a few treasured plants outside our deer fence. Sometimes they blow over, pinning the little tree or shrub into a contorted shape and exposing it to deer and rabbit damage anyway.

Pruning spring blooming shrubs now would remove the flowers, so this is not a good time to shape up lilacs and rhododendrons. And I may have waited a little too late to limb up young trees or to thin the branches in the old apple trees. However, I can prune shrubs like *Hydrangea paniculata*, removing crowded or crossing branches. Also, I want to cut branches of forsythia and flowering quince to bring inside for forcing into early bloom.

Now is a great time to plan for the coming garden season. Are there perennials that need dividing? Is there a bed I should reorganize or a path I need to widen? The usual answer is all of them, but that's not helpful. We gardener athletes

TREE PEONY "BOTAN" REACHES FRANKLIN

By Jack Siman

Thanks to the Franklin Rotary, Franklin has joined a chain of communities who are creating the Botan Road, a path of tree peonies that will stretch from San Francisco to Boston. The Franklin Rotary has contributed two plants, to be placed near the Memorial area in the Village Park.

With a zone hardiness of 4-9, they will do well here in Franklin. Tree peonies are listed as deer resistant, which really means tree peonies are not the deer's first choice, but they'll eat them if they're hungry. So winter protection, not against the cold but against deer, is important.

Tree peonies arrived in Japan from China in the 8th century CE. Japanese know tree peonies as "botan", hence "Botan Road." Botans produce large 8" to 12" flowers and are noted for their particularly bright colors. They will mature at a height of four feet and, if happy, will live over 100 years. Our peonies are arriving in April from the village of Daikonjima, Shimane, one of the four major peony producing areas in Japan.

Expect to see our first flowers within a year or two of planting!



FINANCIAL EXPERTISE



Wayne Bank

Member FDIC

Debra Renwick Franklin Community Office Manager

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FRANKLIN LAND: VALUE VS. PRICE

By Brian Brock

The New Franklin Register has been chronicling the sale of real property in Franklin for almost a decade, totaling over 350 sales. We have compiled all these by year and posted them on the Franklin Local website: franklinlocal.org/local/property/. This database allows us to look back at the recent history of real estate in our town.

In a typical year, there are forty or so free-market sales – averaging less than one a week. Of the 2,180 parcels in Franklin, that is a two percent turnover annually. Also, there are as many transfers and adjustments, for which no money changes hands. Generally, we do not publish those, to save space. In addition, every month there are a few sales between relatives or of foreclosed parcels, which usually do not yield a free-

market price. While we publish those, they are not included in this analysis.

The market for real property was unusually active in 2013 and 2014, with over sixty sales each year. Back then, the market was recovered from the bursting of the housing bubble, and the economy was recovering from the resulting great recession.

In Franklin, most of those sales were for less than \$100,000 and almost all were for less than \$150,000. In any year, four or fewer sales were for over \$200,000.

Since late 2008, we have been publishing the assessed values as well. The accompanying graphs show how assessed values compare to sales prices in some recent years. The thin black line up the middle is where value equals price, the ideal situation for assessments, at least according to ORPS.

The New York State Office of Real Property Services estimates how closely a town's assessments come

to this ideal. Their estimation is called the equalization rate (ER) because it is used to equalize property tax rates between towns. When value equals price, the rate is 100 percent. The more undervalued the properties are, the lower the percentage is and the farther away the sales will plot from the ideal line.

Above this line, prices were higher than values, and the farther above, the more those properties were under-assessed or oversold. Nice for the landowners when they are either paying lower taxes

value. For the rest, values diverge from prices to a much greater degree than in Franklin. Half have ERs below thirty-three percent,

board) that determines the amount collected. More important, because Franklin pioneered annual re-assessments in Delaware

County, this increased our share of the county tax bill. The ER for Franklin was allowed to decline during the next few years down to seventy-seven percent by 2009. With the end of annual reassessments to 100 percent, Franklin was no longer paid the ORPS incentive.

Since 2009, the rate has been gradually climbing and reached ninety-nine percent this year. All the sales data that we have published come from this time period.

Because equalization rates are calculated from



less than one third of market value. In the southwestern corner of the county, three towns are assessed at or below ten percent.

Twenty years ago, the equalization rate in Franklin had fallen to thirty-two percent. A town-wide reassessment brought the ER up to 100 percent, and annual reassessments held it there for nearly a decade. Since 1999, ORPS has paid towns an incentive to keep their ER up, including Franklin.

By 2005, the combination of the high ER and the housing bubble resulted in markedly higher assessments. Many property owners felt that this was inflating their property taxes, even though it is the tax levy (set by the town

See **VALUE**, continued on Page 18



or selling for more. (However buyers can use a low assessment to negotiate a lower price.) Not surprisingly, most properties are assessed above this line.

This is true for most towns in Delaware County. ORPS estimated that last year only six of the nineteen Delaware County towns assessed their properties at 100 percent of market



previous sales, they reflect the assessments of one or more years ago. For example, the rate of ninety-six



IN THE KITCHEN

With Sue Avery

BAKED CHILES RELLENOS

3 4-oz. cans of green chilies
2 lbs. Monterey Jack Cheese,
sliced
1 cup milk
1/2 cup flour
3 eggs

Grease a 9" by 13" baking dish. Seed and flatten the canned chiles. Layer in the pan alternating with slices of cheese.

Beat milk, flour and eggs. Pour over chiles and cheese.

Bake, tightly covered, at 350° for about one hour. Serves four to six.

A GILBERTSVILLE SAGA AND ITS HEROINE

By Norm Farwell

We live outside the village of Gilbertsville, and my wife and daughter and I like to walk around town. Gilbertsville has more than its share of well maintained historic buildings, a great little grocery store, and friendly people, so it's a nice place to walk. One summer morning in 2009, we stopped to look at a construction project along the Dunderberg Creek, which runs under a bridge in the center of town.

The flood of 2006 had done significant damage to the bridge, washed out the banks, and undermined several buildings, including the Post Office and the grocery. A huge crane barely fit in the parking lot and there were excavators, loaders, piles of material, prefabricated concrete walls along the creek bank, and stacks of veneer stone. Where did the several million dollars to pay for this come from?

When I looked at the work of the masons who were veneering the creek banks, I had trouble containing my outrage--there were no steel ties attaching the veneer stone to the concrete, and the stones themselves were slapped up willy-nilly, no attention to coursing, the basic "one over two over one" rule that masons use to knit stones. I am not a mason, but even non-masons know this kind of thing. My wife suggested I talk to the mayor, and we kept walking.

By 2013, the stone veneer was already falling off in sheets. I pointed this out to my wife, who pointed out that I had never called the mayor. In 2015, wonder of wonders, I saw the work was being redone, this time with proper tie straps.

I heard the rest of this story from our town's historian, Leigh Eckmair. As it turned out, the post-flood construction project was a bit of a boondoggle, and it was followed by a lawsuit over the incompetent engineering and masonry, which the town won. The walls were rebuilt properly.

In this little adventure, as in many previous chapters, Gilbertsville is one lucky little village. Cats have fewer lives than Gilbertsville does. The other moral to the story is that at critical moments, an energetic and experienced town historian can be a priceless asset, not only in protecting the past but in creating the future of a community.

The village of Gilbertsville today has its beautiful main street and many historic buildings, plus a handsome stone bridge and creek culvert to match partly because it was able to sue a large civil engi-

neering company and force it to fix substandard work that had defaced one of the town's most important features. The town was able to do this because a conscientious citizen had regularly taken pictures of the work in order to document the reconstruction for the town's historical record. Those photos became important evidence in court.

Going back to the original reconstruction project of 2006, the village had the advantage of being able to tap into several state and federal funds for reconstruction support because its status as a National Register Historic Site (the first designated historic district in Otsego County) qualified it for additional disaster assistance.

Immediately after the 2006 flood, Leigh Eckmair began phoning various state and federal agencies to line up help. Within three days, FEMA's Office of Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation had sent representatives to survey the damage and to begin the grant process. The Governor's office was also helpful. Village government was in transition at the time, so it fell to Leigh to be the liaison on behalf of the town.

A labor of love, it became a full time job for the next three years. There was lots of paperwork, there were several state and federal agencies involved, and contractors frequently didn't understand what

"historic restoration" was supposed to look like. People in charge had to be persuaded that a vinyl sheet of faux stone did not a historic restoration make. At one point a crew showed up with sledge hammers and began to demolish the stone bridge. Leigh's version is typically colorful: "I was not very nice. I told

them they had to stop. We were promised restoration, and this was not restoration." After she showed them how, workers disassembled the bridge stone by stone, labeled each one, and stacked them in order on pallets for later reconstruction. Somehow the original bronze plaque from 1905 disappeared, was later found in a ditch in Otego, and was then returned and reinstalled.

Leigh was the perfect person for this role, partly by nature, but also by experience. She had worked with most of the relevant people at various agencies for many years. In fact, this was not the first time the village was threatened by flood. For many decades, starting in the early nineteen hundreds, the Army Corp of Engineers had pushed proposals for dam building throughout

See ECKMAIR, con't on Page 17



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FISH, con't from Page 1

mercial seafood is grown and harvested in other countries, we were disgusted and bewildered. Why in a country with so much space and an abundance of healthy natural resources would we outsource our seafood? Furthermore, why should we accept the conditions in which our food is being grown, or sacrifice our health due to what we are consuming? These were driving factors behind deciding to start a freshwater fish farm on our property.

We began by identifying our resources and learning how to best utilize them without adversely affecting or altering the natural way of things. Because we have several springs which run year-around plus already established ponds, it was a no-brainer that raising fish would at the very least provide our family with a healthy, sustainable source of protein. But perhaps there might be the potential to start a small business to provide a healthy source of fish for others.

After doing some research, we identified two local resources that could offer us perspective and insight: SUNY Morrisville and SUNY Cobleskill both have fish hatchery programs and their directors were very receptive when we visited to ask questions and take tours of their facilities. After several visits, we not only learned about the potential but got to see first hand the forward think-

ing, progressive practices that are being used in an educational environment with real world application. With their focus on sustainable and responsible farming, these state universities proved to be an invaluable resource, helping us to focus our business and get started.

We were ready to get serious about getting our operation off the ground. We identified the springs on our property and tapped one spring that allowed us to gravity feed the water to a central location. This spring would supplement our water usage without the need to pump it from the ground, saving on en-



ergy costs as well as water usage. We then identified a location to support future expansion to additional ponds and infrastructure. With the necessary pieces in place, we now needed to decide on what type of fish to raise. We have always stocked our ponds with rainbow trout which we have enjoyed fishing and eating, so it was a natural choice to start with.

Rainbow trout are native to streams and rivers where the water is running continuously. They require clean, cold water to survive, unlike other more resilient species that can be raised in moderate to poor water quality. This is a major selling point for trout

being great to eat. Rainbow trout have many health benefits which make them appealing for the food market. They are a healthy source of protein, omega 3 fatty acids, and essential vitamins and minerals that we all need regularly. Trout also have a mild, nutty flavor which appeals to a wide range of palates, even those who might not like that "seafood taste."

For those who have never seen a rainbow trout in the flesh, you would be struck by their beauty. As their name denotes, they have a rainbow color and are beautiful when caught in just the right light.

Currently we have several thousand rainbow trout in different stages of growth and are just about ready for our first harvest. We hope this business can grow into something that also has an educational element. We would love

our operation to be an example of what responsible and sustainable fish farming can and should be. At a time when supporting the upstate New York economy is so important, for agriculture in particular, we are excited to be part of this community and to add to the potential that we know this part of the State possesses. Producing a sustainable and healthy source of food not only is a good idea but it's becoming more and more of a necessity. Clean water is an element essential to sustaining life. It is something we are all connected to, so having a food source that is also tied to it is clearly a benefit to all.

We will have fresh and smoked trout available for sale by May 2017. You may also purchase our fish directly on our website (www.SkytopSprings.com) or at local restaurants, such as Franklin's The Tulip & The Rose [where it was recently prepared with a delectable pomegranate and cranberry salsa - the Editors], and area grocery stores.

Please check our website for updates on available sizes and quantities.



THE BARE TRUTH

By Robert Lamb

(Photos by the author)

In March of 1968, the largest oil field in America at the time was discovered by Atlantic Richfield and the Humble oil companies on the North Arctic slope of Alaska. In order to bring this bounty to market they needed two things: a pipeline and a road to haul supplies to the oil fields. The road was built by a private company, Alyeska Pipeline Company. Construction started in 1975 and was finished in 1977. From Prudhoe Bay to the ice free port of Valdez, the Trans Alaska pipeline stretched seven hundred and eighty nine miles. The pipeline was the biggest private construction project in history. At eight billion dollars, it was also the most expensive. At its peak, the forty-eight inch pipeline moved 1.8 million barrels of oil a day from the oil fields to the massive holding tanks at Valdez.

Alyeska also built the James W. Dalton Highway from the Yukon River to Prudhoe. The four hundred fourteen mile road cost one hundred fifty million to build. At mile 353, the State of Alaska and Alyeska built 2295 feet of bridge over the mighty Yukon River.

The mighty Yukon was our destination for the day. Starting from Fairbanks in an

older Ford pickup, my father George, best friend Chas, brother Chuck, and I headed north. At the town of Fox, we took the Elliott Highway. A few miles into our journey we found ourselves at the HILLTOP truck stop. Here is the last chance to fill up on gas and food. The trucker's breakfast is to die for. A platter heaped with pancakes as big as your face with three eggs, bacon, sausage, grits and coffee for less than ten bucks a head. With gas tanks and bellies full, we again headed north.

The term "highway" is a bit misleading. Most of the haul road is dirt and gravel. Many stream crossing are single lane bridges and the "highway" is mostly washboard. We soon learned that any speed faster than ten or fifteen miles an hour bounced our truck into a sideways skid. At the first stream crossing, there was a sedge meadow and we sighted our first of many moose. Seeing such a large



and majestic animal foraging in the misty early morning light was like watching a living documentary unfold before our eyes.

As the sun burned away the fog, we could see across the flatlands for miles. The tundra was covered in a moving hazy fog that seemed to contract, then dissipate. Intrigued by this, we decided to stop and take pictures. We piled out of the truck and in seconds realized our mistake. The hazy fog was alive and began to feast on us. The Alaska mosquitoes were so thick, I could hardly keep my eyes open. Swearing and clambering over each other we jumped back into the safety of the truck cab. I have never seen such vicious biters. See TRUTH, con't on Page 16

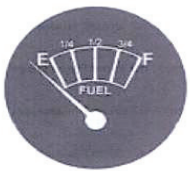
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FOCUS ON ENERGY

GEOHERMAL OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS (AGAIN)

By Stuart Anderson

Photos by the author

Stop Googling “move to Canada” and start preparing for the long haul!

The New York State Public Service Commission's Department of Public Service recently held a technical conference on geothermal energy systems, and the news from DPS is good. Their plans now include an incentive for homeowners who install geothermal heating and cooling in their homes, and the proposed plan is a big step up from the recently expired Federal investment tax credit. Help for NY geothermal is on the way, and frankly, it's about time.

The new support is a direct up-front subsidy (about \$6000 for an average home) which makes it especially useful to homeowners who don't have lots of cash on hand. Compared to the old tax rebate program, the new subsidy is much more useful to owners who pay little in taxes and therefore benefit little or at least

slowly from tax rebates.

Geothermal heating is an old technology made new again: think about that warm spot on the kitchen floor in front of the refrigerator: heat from inside the refrigerator (an already cold place) is pumped out into the room (an already warm place). Geothermal heat pumps do the same thing, pumping heat from outside (in the ground or your pond) into the house - the ground gets colder, and the house gets warmer. In the summer, with the flick of a switch, the pro-



The boiler in the basement



The backyard pond under construction with pipe heat exchanger

cess is reversed and you get air conditioning indoors and disperse the excess heat outdoors. The technology is so well developed that a geothermal heat pump can deliver several times more energy into your house than the amount of electricity needed to run the pump. Stated another way, the heat pump multiplies the value of the electricity it consumes.

Let's look at a concrete example. After twenty-five years of burning oil for heat and hot water, I installed a geothermal heat pump in my home. I replaced the oil-fired hot water heater with an electric water heater. In my last year on

oil (2013), I burned about 900 gallons of fuel oil that cost roughly \$3000, and I used 13,299 kw-hours of electricity (costing \$1493) and had no air conditioning; total energy cost: nearly \$4500 in 2013.

In 2016, with my geothermal system in place, I used 15,407 kw-hours of electricity, enjoyed AC all summer, and burned NO OIL. That amount of electricity would have cost \$1730, so my total energy bill dropped from \$4500 to \$1730, thanks to my new heating system. In fact, I also installed 10kw of solar panels on my south-facing roof in 2014. The solar panels captured 11,838 kw-hours of electricity in 2016, so my actual electric bill was just \$510, for a year of cozy seventy-five degree heat, AC and hot water. With about \$4000 in annual savings, my investment in home energy improvements will cover all my costs in about seven years.

So the economics of geothermal look promising, but will it work for you? The big variable to consider is how you'll tap into the reservoir of heat in the ground around your house.

A pond (about ten feet deep and a half acre in size) offers the best operating efficiency, as the temperature at the bottom of a pond in our region stays at about thirty-nine degrees all winter. Heat can also be harvested by burying plastic pipes underground; lots of digging and filling, but once the grass grows back, the system is invisible. As a third alternative, if your

See GEOTHERMAL, continued on Page 16

SOLAR, continued from Page 1

unusable. The 2016 answer is NYS Community Shared Solar (CSS). Here, the solar array is located on appropriate land somewhere in the community, not on your house or in your backyard.

A CSS is a solar farm that provides cost savings to the community, versus a commercial solar farm generating electricity directly into the grid for company profits. The electricity you contract to use from CSS is produced at the solar farm and credited to your account. Residents, businesses, community groups, not-for-profits, governments, schools, or anyone having an account with the utility can participate.

Franklin's proposed CSS is in the investigative stage. This will be a multiple-year process as we go from feasibility studies, site planning, and construction of a solar farm. We will face many steps and hurdles as we go forward with this project.

The preferred solar farm site is on a 12 acre parcel owned by the Town of Franklin in Bartlett Hollow, bordering the old town landfill closed in the 1990s. The town has

agreed to consider allowing the use of this site for the solar farm, pending the outcome of a feasibility study. Working with the Railroad and Community Museum and Southern Tier Solar Works (STSW), we have applied for a grant from the NYS DEC Environmental Justice Program. This grant would be used to help finance the cost of the research, engineering studies, design, and approvals required by the feasibility study. The study will determine if this project is economically and environmentally viable for Franklin. If CSS is deemed feasible, there will be an opportunity for anyone in Franklin with a utility account to investigate joining the CSS.

The starting size of the solar farm will be determined by the number of interested participants and their historical electric usage. Initially, five acres of the site would be developed. Up to another five acres would be available for future expansion as needed to meet demand. The goal for the CSS is to provide lower cost electricity to the Franklin Central School and Town of Franklin offices, thus lowering the tax burden, as well as savings on annual electric usage costs to residents, businesses, and not-for-profits.

So stay tuned! We are waiting for the grant approval to move forward with the feasibility study.

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PIPELINE & ROUNDABOUT

Compiled by Brian Brock

November 16th: **US Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit** panel of three judges hears oral arguments in the case of CPC v. Seggos (Acting Commissioner NYSDEC) filed May 16th, 2016 (16-1568) concerning the denial of a Water Quality Certificate for the Constitution Pipeline Project by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. Their decision is expected in late spring or early summer.

November 22nd: **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC)** denies request by New York Attorney General Schneiderman for a rehearing on his allegations of unauthorized tree cutting and other activities along the right-of-way for the Constitution Pipeline in New York.

February 3rd: **Norman Bay** resigns as a commissioner of FERC after President Trump replaces him as chairman. With only two commissioners remaining, the five-member commission lacks a quorum and therefore can take no action until at least one new commissioner is first nominated by the president and then approved by the senate, which could take months.

February 3rd: **Norman Bay** appends to one of his last actions as commissioner a statement that questions the use by FERC of private profitability as a substitute for public necessity when certifying pipeline projects. The precedent agreement for the Constitution Pipeline, which should list the consumers of gas that is to be shipped, has never been made public. Beneficiaries of the lower-priced gas from this pipeline are largely unknown.

February 24th: **Cabot Oil & Gas Corp.** President Dan Dinges concedes, in the fourth quarter 2016 earnings conference call, that Constitution Pipeline may not begin service until early 2019, which would require a start of construction in early 2018. When proposed in February 2012, this pipeline was to be in service in late 2015.

March 16th: **US District Court, Northern District of New York** judge Normand R. Mordue orders in CPC v NYSDEC, Basil Seggos (Acting Commissioner), and John Ferguson (Chief Permit Administrator) filed May 16th, 2016 (1:16-CV-568), concerning National Gas Act preemption of pending New York State SPDES permit and certain permits from the USACE/NYSDEC Joint Application:

- Grant of defendants’ motion (NYSDEC et al) to dismiss the amend complaint for lack of subject-matter jurisdiction and grant dismissal of case without prejudice
 - Denial of plaintiff’s motion (Constitution Pipeline Company) for discovery without prejudice
 - Denial of intervenors’ motion (Delaware Riverkeeper Network and Maya van Rossem) to intervene and leave to dismiss case without prejudice.
- Therefore, this lawsuit by CPC is dismissed, but the company may refile their suit if the NYSDEC eventually denies these permits.

March 31st: **US Fish and Wildlife Service** again closes period for wide-spread tree clearing along 100 miles of pipeline right-of-way in New York until September. The 24 miles of ROW in Pennsylvania was cleared in 2016.

COMPRESSOR FREE FRANKLIN IS ALIVE AND WELL

By Don Hebbard

Compressor Free Franklin [CFF] was formed to address construction of the Northeast Energy Direct Pipeline [NED], the proposed compressor station planned for Otego Road, and the Constitution Pipeline. Currently both of these pipelines and the compressor station are on hold. CFF is still viable and actively addressing other issues related to increased fossil fuel consumption. Numerous projects are planned for New York State and the Northeast that will expand the transportation and consumption of hydro-fracked natural gas from Pennsylvania. CFF continues to resist this infrastructure expansion, and supports other like-minded groups throughout the Northeast to protect their communities.

CFF also is committed to encouraging renewable energy alternatives to fossil fuel consumption. Just opposing an issue is never enough; providing other options and solutions to the issue is the proper response. Renewable energy is one option for reducing fossil fuel use. Energy

use conservation, and a personal decision to use less energy in your home or business, are also choices for reducing fossil fuel consumption. In a separate article in this issue I have described one renewable energy project CFF supports: Community Shared Solar for Franklin.

CFF is grateful for the support we have received from individuals and groups in Franklin. Your contributions and presence at functions have enabled CFF to continue our mission. On the topic of support for CFF, I invite you to attend a concert on May 13, 2017 that will benefit CFF. It will be held at the Unitarian Universalist Society Church at 12 Ford Avenue in Oneonta. The concert will be from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. Refreshments will be available for sale. Admission will be by donation at the door.

The Unitarian Universalist Society Social Action Committee will be co-hosting the event. The concert features John O’Connor, an acclaimed folksinger, song writer, and recording artist. It will also feature local performers, including singer and songwriter, Jason Starr.

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YOUR EYES AND UV RAYS

By Johanna VanDeusen

Most of us think about ultra-violet (UV) protection for our skin, but what about our eyes? Our eyes are exposed to more than just UV rays. That’s why knowing what you can do to protect your eyes is so valuable.

UVA and UVB rays can have long-term and short-term negative effects on your vision and your eyes. Photokeratitis, also called “sunburn of the eye” or “snow blindness,” can occur if you spend excessive amounts of time exposed to UV rays in a short period

of time. This is a painful, but temporary loss of vision. And much like a sunburn, we don’t notice the symptoms until we have already been in the sun for too long. Snow and sand are highly reflective, one of the reasons that sun protection is crucial at the beach or on the ski slopes. Longer term exposure increases the risk of developing cataracts or macular degeneration later in life. Children especially need protection for their eyes, as they tend to spend more time outdoors, for longer periods of time.

How can you protect your eyes? Always wear sunglasses when you are going to be outdoors. Polarized lenses, both prescription and non-prescription, give you full protection from the UV rays. If you aren’t sure what type of lenses you have, ask your eye-care professional! We are happy to give you that information! Transitions lenses are another option: they auto-darken as they are exposed to UV rays. Transitions lenses also give full UV protection without the need for a second pair of glasses.

High energy visible radiation (HEV) or blue light can also be harmful to your eyes. The sun naturally emits blue light. That’s what makes a cloudless sky look blue. Blue light can be beneficial to our bodies, regulating our natural sleep cycle and boosting

See **EYES**, con’t on Page 18

Exciting things are happening...



...behind the scenes at The Franklin Stage Company.

Stay tuned for our full 2017 season announcement coming soon!

GINSENG, con't from Pg. 3

more available. But it will never totally replace the need for local brick-and-mortar facilities and hands-on employment. Small retail businesses, tradesmen, agricultural business diversification, and light industry all are necessary to provide employment and business ownership opportunities for this area.

A new light industry has just been established in the Hamlet of Treadwell. American Ginseng Pharm [the Pharm] already has several employees at other locations in New York State. The Pharm is a combination of agricultural diversity, light industry, laborers, and business professionals. Production operation is expected to begin during the month of March, employing five full-time employees. Additional positions may be added as production increases.

The Pharm will establish their New York headquarters in the former Treadwell elementary school building. Built in 1995, the elementary school was closed in 2007 when students were consolidated to Delaware Academy in Delhi. The Pharm purchased the

building and five and one-half acres in November, 2016. They were granted a special use permit at the February Town of Franklin Planning Board meeting, allowing agricultural cultivation, processing, drying and packaging, as well research and educational programs at the Treadwell facility. The permit allows them to begin minor changes to the interior of the building and prepare for operations.

The proposed uses of the building will be to grow specific mushroom cultures under controlled environmental conditions and process various agricultural products for human consumption, many in the form of herbal teas. Ginseng, herbs, and plants will be grown and harvested on leased land in Delaware and Greene counties. They also expect to purchase ginseng that is harvested locally during the season. While ginseng and mushrooms are the primary focus for the company, the facility will process a wide variety of herbs and plants for distribution to wholesale outlets. As the name "Pharm" implies, their products are designed for

the herbal-supplement industry and will be marketed world-wide, but primarily in Asia, as "made in the USA" products.

Native or wild ginseng, can be grown in many areas of the world. New York State and specifically the Catskill Mountains region, have growing conditions that are ideal for wild ginseng. Wild American ginseng is proclaimed to be the best in the world. Wild ginseng has been a protected species since threatened with extinction in 1975 due to a growing international market. In 1987 regulations were adopted that established practices for the harvest and sale of American ginseng in New York State ([6 NYCRR 193.4-193.8](#)).

These regulations established conservation practices, including a wild ginseng harvest season and requirements for harvesting only mature plants. Wild ginseng may be collected only between September 1st and November 30th of any year, and only if they are a minimum of five years old. The age of the plant is determined by counting the number of stem scars on the rhi-

zome (also known as root neck) of the plant. A five-year-old ginseng plant will have four stem scars on the rhizome.

Regulators also created a dealer permitting system and certification procedures. In 1988 the Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) approved the NYS American Ginseng Program. A USFWS permit is required for the exportation of ginseng.

Ginseng that is grown commercially, rather than harvested in the wild, is called "wild-simulated" ginseng. The Pharm has been growing wild-simulated ginseng on leased

land near Prattville and Grand Gorge in Delaware County, and near Windham in Greene County for several years. They have purchased 120 acres near Roxbury to expand the operation, and are exploring lease or purchase opportunities for continued expansion.

We welcome our new neighbors to the area and invite them to become part of our community. The investment and resources the Pharm has brought to Treadwell are a good example of revitalizing the Franklin area.

We wish them all success in their new venture.

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LYNNE KEMEN
REVIEWS NEW BOOKS



A GREAT RECKONING By Louise Penny

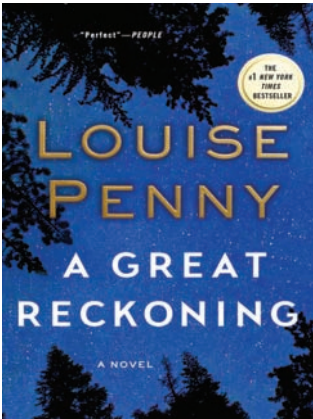
This is the twelfth book in a series featuring Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Penny is a Canadian author who sets her series in both Montreal and in a fictional small town called Three Pines.

From her first novel, *Still Life*, I have felt that Three Pines and Delaware County, share a sense of beauty, of townsfolk who deeply care for their community and its history, and a similar mix of new residents and those who have always lived there.

Armand Gamache has been lured out of retirement to take over the running of the Police Academy, after a series of scandals in the previous administration. He feels that profound changes are essential in the training of the cadets.

Reviewing the list of students for the coming semester, Gamache makes some radical changes in the initial selections, particularly a young angry woman with a dark past. He also invites his former best friend to teach, despite a long history of friendship and betrayal that makes his choice a challenge for both of them.

Louise Penny writes well and her books are always about people and the challenges they face. Characters are often struggling with addiction. The author has been very open about her own issues with drinking, and her survival through Alcoholics Anonymous. She's never preachy, but the dynamic of struggle, forgiveness, and redemption is vital to the fabric of this series.



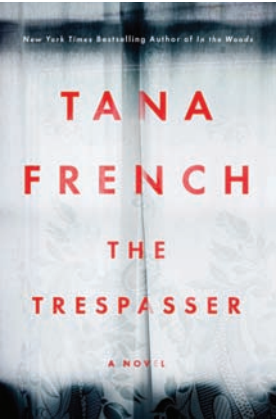
THE TRESPASSER By Tana French

This novel also has a major character. French is a Ireland. Her series is about in Dublin. Like Penny, French which closely examine the

Being on the murder squad toinette Conway dreamed it less cases, vicious pranks, tough, but she's getting close

Only her partner seems to participate in the relentless hazing that is wearing her down. The case they catch seems pretty obvious, but as we know, murder mysteries are never what they seem. Between trying to solve the case and the atmosphere in the murder squad, Antoinette feels that she is being played, set-up and lied to. She is not wrong.

Both novels feature smart, tough, damaged women who are struggling to survive in a world that doesn't want or appreciate them. They wear their damage externally with tattoos, piercing and behavior that distances them from the very world they want to be part of. Corruption and deceit lurk everywhere. The resolution and the growth of both women is what makes both of these novels interesting and worth reading.



young, rebellious misfit as a U.S.-born writer who lives in members of the murder squad writes psychological murders life of her characters. is nothing like Detective Anwould be: a stream of thank-and harassment. Antoinette is to the breaking point.

accept her. He doesn't partici-

LEADERSHIP TRANSITION AT FRANKLIN STAGE

PRESS RELEASE:

Franklin Stage Company, Delaware County's renowned classical summer theater, announced the departure of longtime Executive Artistic Director, Carmela Marner. Ms. Marner, whose parents, Gene and Carole Marner, were among the original founders of FSC in 1997, notified supporters of her decision in a recent letter stating:

"For eleven of those twenty years it has been my great honor to steer FSC and fulfill its dual mission to provide innovative professional theater here in Franklin



and to restore and maintain our extraordinary home, Chapel Hall. I am deeply grateful for the opportunity I have had to nurture young people in this precious environment, to collaborate with extraordinary artists, and to grow our far-reaching community."

Board president and founding FSC member, Tom Butts, paid tribute to the former leader: "The board is deeply grateful to Carmela for her many years of hard work and accomplished artistry. She set the bar for a standard of excellence Franklin Stage

See FSC, continued on Page 19

BRANCH: HEADINGS

—to the memory of Gunnar, a dog

I. CALIFORNIA

The dog and I, canny as bones, rambled the Pacific woods. A night branch found us. I carried the gift home and lashed it to a golden wall. Turning to the window, I heard the branch talk; studied how to hoard the yellow wind; the redwood, sequoia. The willow I planted listened, too; it escaped the peaked roof; the alder's crown prospected our failed bedroom. Roots hungered for the cellar. The silkgrass embankment waved me away.

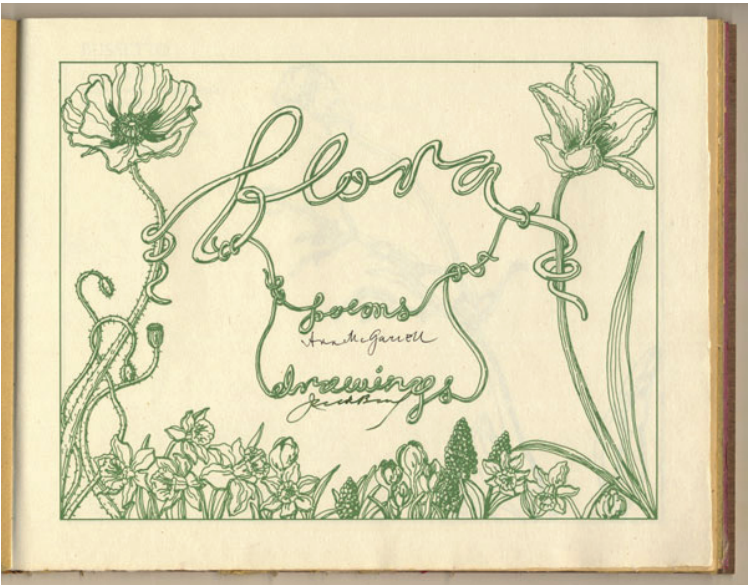
II NEW YORK CITY

The city's sidewalks were blue, mountains scored and sliced as easily as bread. Structures more ambitious than trees ate faces but were left wanting. Again I pinioned my branch to a wall, this one as red as hunger. The talking floor rose to greet its descendant. Crowded into trivial rooms, pressed into heat, my face glitter-stiff, I faltered. The dog halted his bark, pointed to the door. The freed windows flushed light, air.

III THE CATSKILLS, NEW YORK

I name the wizened stick *Gunnarstwig*; this final mountain receives the cracked diviner. Here, stars chart deer, bobcats, bear. Coydogs sing descant at the hunter moon. Ghosts loop the black night, morning's white rime. The pond tightens—a singular, purple hour for flocked crows, migrant geese. I have outlasted my good companion, I have outlived direction. Yesterday, O yesterday, my shoes wore leaves all day long.

—Bertha Rogers



FLORA AT BRIGHT HILL

By Lynne Kemen

Lovers of art, poetry, and books will have a unique opportunity to enjoy it all in a Bright Hill Literary Center exhibit entitled *Flora*, which will include works by Sondra Freckelton and her late husband, Jack Beal. It will also feature the presentation to Bright Hill of a rare book of poems by Ann McGarrell, also called *Flora*, illustrated by Jack Beal and printed by Walter Hamady, artist, book designer, papermaker, poet, and teacher.

The exhibition opens May 7 and runs until May 26. Freckelton will give a brief talk on opening day, speaking about the book, the poems, the drawings,

and the related works that were inspired by a particular adventure in Europe. All three artists were successful and prolific in their individual careers, but the blending of their work produced an exquisite book that represents the best of each.

The poetry and drawings were created during the summer of 1973 when the -Freckelton-Beals were traveling in Europe, celebrating a show of Jack's at the Galarie Claude Bernard in Paris. They met up with their friends Jim and Ann McGarrell, then living in Italy. Artist Jim McGarrell was represented by Allan Frumkin, as was Jack Beal. Together, they spent two months touring Italy

See FLORA, continued on Page 14

UPSTATE ARTS

with Charlie Bremer

Paintbox: Mineral, Animal, Plant

As artists working in this age of instant touch screen awareness, we sometimes find ourselves face to face with complex moral and ethical controversies of a global dimension, coming right out of the paintbox in our studio.

Recently I have been working on a re-interpretation of Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescos that depict the ancient Sibyl women and their Books of the Future, to my mind a rather important topic here in the 21st century. Having asked my models to cover their bodies with clay as a symbol of the vital role that environmental awareness plays in the future of human consciousness, I wanted to paint these images with a hue of blue like that found in the arctic ice so rapidly disappearing from the dome of our planet. For my pigment, I selected lapis lazuli, a remarkably beautiful mineral that has been continuously extracted for the last 6500 years from mines in northern Afghanistan.

Lapis blue was originally known as "ultramarine," meaning "from beyond the sea." European artists knew this incredible color only from traders arriving from the Orient. A quick Google check finds that in 2016, Global Witness (globalwitness.org) asked that lapis be declared a "conflict mineral." It seems that the Taliban has established itself in the remote region of the River Oxus where the lapis mines are located, and recently some 300 trucks loaded with illegally extracted ore were seen

in Badakhshan, the regional capital. Almost all of this illegal lapis finds its way to Chinese markets. In other words, don't buy lapis lazuli coming from Asia, or you will likely be adding to the great sadness and nightmare still unfolding in Afghanistan. Lapis is also available from smaller mines in Chile, Canada and Italy, and even Russia, but that may now be another whole can of worms.

Continuing with my sibyls of the new millennium, I wanted these women to stand upon "the ecstatic skin of the earth," a phrase from the title of William Bryant Logan's remarkable book about dirt, where he reminds us that our soil is nothing more than the entire sum of all life that has gone before. The perfect color for this task was cochineal.

I was recently given a small linen bag filled with unprocessed cochineal, which in the 16th century would have been worth a king's ransom. This mysterious pigment arrived in Europe 500 years ago via Spanish explorers, who found it in an Aztec marketplace. But nobody knew or could quite figure out what it was. The Dutch, French, English and Italians all spent the next 300 years trying to crack the enigma of this beautiful red color. It turns out that cochineal is an insect that propagates in huge numbers on cactus in the arid regions of Central America. Prized by the Aztecs and revered by the aristocracy of the old world, cochineal red conquered the art scene of Renaissance Europe and beyond. No small task for an insect.

But in the 21st century, I have to ask: do we still need to reap genocide on another creature so we can luxuriate in the beauty of a color? Controversy can sometimes reign in the studio.

Finally, for my "books of the future" I needed a color with moral integrity, something that would not seep chemicals, exterminate animals or finance horrible wars. I chose saffron. Probably the most expensive spice on this planet, it is a color pigment of sacred importance. It is derived from the crimson-colored stigmas of the *crocus sativas* flower, aka the saffron crocus. Each flower has only three of these tiny filaments and the gathering must be done entirely by hand. Saffron is an exquisite color of yellow hue with tinges of orange and ochre. It is the color of Buddhist robes and representative of the Hindu quest for light and salvation, and for centuries a color used for clothing in Ireland. The 2005 installation of "The Gates" by Christo and Jeanne Claude in New York's Central Park had fabric that looked like a giant saffron snake moving through the park. A difficult quality about this spice-dye color is that it is fugitive, meaning it will fade with exposure to sunlight. The only true remedy I have found to hold saffron strong into the future is to saturate it in beeswax, a process that is as archival as it is fragrant. For honeybees, wax is the building block of their cities, flexible yet inert, important and vital for their future and ours.

For now, a most spectacular palette of color is arriving outdoors courtesy of our "ecstatic skin of the earth." It's spring, and the fluid capillary system of the landscape is awake. A sublime haze of violet-purple has emerged on the tree top canopy like a quiet harmonic tone at the start of a symphony. Cochineal colored fingers of life reach upward into the ocean of air, sheltered by a lapis sky.

MUSIC HERE AT HOME

By Jason Starr

One good thing about music/ When it hits you, you feel no pain.

- Bob Marley



musicians at the Chili Bowl in Oneonta this past February. The response was energizing. People's feelings were palpable in the air as they sang along with us. It was also fun answering the question: "What's the name of that song?"

Legend has it that Stills said to Ahmet Ertegun, who was signing Buffalo Springfield to ATCO records: "I have this song here, for what it's worth, if you want it." Mr. Ertegun is given credit for the subtitle of the single, "*Stop, Hey, What's That Sound?*"

By the way, I would like to invite everyone to the next John O'Connor concert, a benefit for Compressor Free Franklin. The event will be Saturday, May 13th, 7-10 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Society Church, 12 Ford Ave, in Oneonta.

And now, back to our playlist---

Aura Lee by W. W. Fosdick (lyrics) and George R. Poulton (music). This Civil War-era tune came into my home thanks to the Delaware Academy 5th Grade Band. Once my daughter's clarinet practice had achieved a measure of fluency, I recognized it as the tune to Love Me Tender, sung by Elvis Presley, lyrics by Ken Darby. I thought "Ah-ha! Here is a song my daughter and I can play together. And it'll be cool! I'll play guitar, she'll play clarinet, and it'll be great." By the time we had some time together, the clarinet was staying at school. No problem, I said, she can pick out the melody on the piano. She warned me that she liked to play it fast. "OK by me," I said. "I like bluegrass."

After a few run-throughs getting the timing of my chords with her melody together, my tween-ager indulged me with a one-more-time, and then the daddy-daughter musical moment was over.

I'm not sure what she got out of it. For me, it was worth the struggle.

Let me share my playlist from the past few months, the music here at my home. Not every song I've played is on the list. It's just a short list of songs that have continually played in my head and in my ears, songs I've repeatedly played on an electronic device, my car stereo, or musical instrument.

Have You Seen Her? by the Chi-Lites. Fantastic vocal harmonies from one of the great soul groups. The yearning for lost love is the emotional attraction. The slow groove and the catchy chorus are undeniable. The spoken word sections give you that good feeling of listening to a story worth your undivided attention.

Quite Early Morning by Pete Seeger. This song was first published in 1969. I came across it in December of 2016, watching a video of Pete's sister Peggy performing it at a tribute to Pete after his passing in 2014. Notating the years is amusing but pointless, because this song is truly timeless. I guess we will never live in a world/country/state/city/town/village/hamlet/community completely without strife or struggle of some sort. This song will give anyone who hears it the strength to carry on, to endure and be steadfast in front of the forces they find themselves up against.

For What It's Worth by Stephen Stills. Not sure why this song popped into my head. Oh, that's right: a minority of Americans voted a narcissistic greed-virus into office who wants to Make America Hate Again. No thank you, Mr. President. I played this song with a group of



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UPCOMING EXHIBITIONS:

On-going: Chelsea Gibson, solo exhibition, artist talk: April 29, 2 p.m., Roxbury Arts Group, thru May 26
April 7, 5-8 p.m. opening: Kate Shannon, Brent Delanoy, exhibition, CANO, Oneonta, NY, thru April 23
April 13, 5-7 p.m. opening: Lisa Rodewald & Fabric of Life, Cooperstown Art Association, 22 Main St. thru May 17
May 5, 5-8 p.m. opening: Carrie Mae Smith, Suzanne Schireson, Nancy Gossett, Mayumi Sarai group exhibition, CANO, Oneonta, NY, thru May 21
May 6 - July 2 exhibition: Aliko Potiris & Susan Rochmis, MURAL on Main Gallery, Hobart, NY
May 15, 5-7 p.m. opening: Abstraction, group exhibition, Smithy Gallery, Cooperstown, NY thru June 18
May 26, 5-7 p.m. opening: Essential Art, group exhibition, Cooperstown Art Association, thru June 29
June 2, 5-8 p.m. opening: Mansion Show, group exhibition, CANO, Oneonta, NY, thru June 18
July 1st & 2nd: Stagecoach Run Arts Festival - Treadwell, NY, details visit www.stagecoachrun.com

Spring & Summer 2017

Bright Hill's 25th Anniversary Season!

Word Thursdays, 2nd & 4th Thursdays, 7 pm

Featured Poets & Writers from Everywhere! + Open
Special Women's History Month Reading, March 23, 7 pm

The Word & Image Gallery Exhibit Openings

First Sundays of each Month, April - November - 3 - 5 pm
Annual Stagecoach Run Exhibit & Auction, July + Closing Party July 29

National Poetry Month Readings, April 13 & 27, 7 pm

Great American Poets Day, April 22, noon - 5 pm

Celebrating Elizabeth Bishop

Bright Kids Book Club, March 25; April 8 & 22; May 6 & 20; June 10 & 24

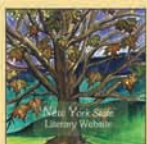
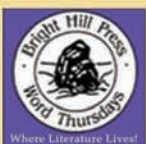
Reading great books for kids, chosen by kids

Annual History/Nonfiction Day, July 15, 9 am - Noon

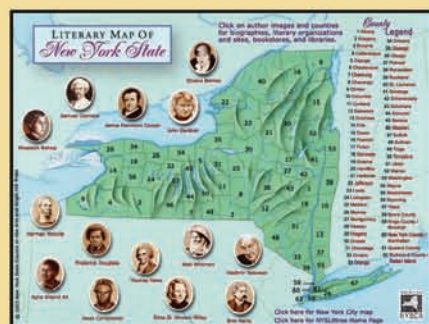
24th Annual Bright Hill Summer Literary Workshops for Kids Program (Ages 6 - 18)

1. Summer 1: Kids, Ages 6 - 14: June 22-30; (Mon. - Fri.) - "Bugs" How to Love Them!"
Includes Visit to Cornell's Insect Collection, Ithaca
2. Summer 2: Teens, High-School, Ages 13-18 (7 participants), July 17-21 (Mon. - Fri.):
"Poems & Stories in Three Dimensions" - Creating and building and printing characters with 3-d Printer
3. Summer 3: Kids, Ages 6 - 14: July 24 - 28 (Mon. - Fri.) - "The Talking Trees: How Do They Speak?"
Includes Visit to the New York State Museum's Fossil Forest, Albany
4. Summer 4: Middle-School, Ages 12-14 (7 participants), August 7-11 (Mon. - Fri.):
"Poems & Stories in Three Dimensions, Creating & building & printing with 3-d Printer"
5. Summer 5: Kids, Ages 6 - 14, August 14-18 (Tues. - Sat.): "One Thousand & One Nights:
Traveling in the Mind & Hands to the Ancient Near East"

Call 607-829-5055 or email wordthur@stny.rr.com for details and to register



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FLORA, con't from Page 12

and France, eating in four and five-star restaurants. As Sondra explains, "We were all workaholics, and Ann and Jack were documenting their culinary and artistic discoveries, each producing at least one piece of art a day."

In 1983, when the Freckelton-Beals did an Artists in Residency program at the University of Wisconsin, they reconnected with Walter Hamady, who was on the faculty there, and the idea of a book was born. The creation of the book was a "labor of love," with many letters exchanged between the three creators. The book was published in 1990.

In a review for *Bookways* (July 1992), Kay Amert

calls special attention to Hamady's masterful page design. "The poems are surrounded by, enfolded in, or reflected through the outlines of flowers; there is a spaciousness that is never dull but compels the reader/viewer to continue turning pages. Hamady, who believes the book is a multiple and sequential picture plane, makes believers of readers with this book. There isn't much color, but the texture and earth tones of the paper and the inks combine so beautifully to give one a feel of the earth's richness that any more would be redundant. A masterful creation, redolent of the pleasures of life."

Discussing her decision to show this work and to give a copy of *Flora* to

Bright Hill, Freckelton says, "It is so wonderful to have this [arts center] in a small town. I love the way Bertha Rogers has put it all together, and I really admire what she has done."



Jack Beal and Sondra Freckelton

er, and I really admire what she has done."

Flora is a book of collaboration and Freckelton felt it would have a perfect home in an organization that is also about the collaboration of written and visual art. The book will be kept at Bright Hill's Ernest Fishman Library with a collection of art and poetry books unique in Delaware County and the state.

Freckelton has selected ten works of her own as well as ten of Beal's. All are from around the time of the trip, and all represent flora in various forms. Also shown will be poetry from the book and framed cop-

ies of some of its pages. "I had a difficult time putting together a small exhibition representing myself and these three very prolific

ing the experience as they would if creating any work of art. The result is a friendly, rambling home that includes living and studio space. Walking through the house, you see many of the vases and props that appear in both painters' still life works. Many scenes depicted in their art are directly from their property.

As we talked, Freckelton gazed out the window to the stream and the land across the water. "Even in the winter, at its most drab, it is so beautiful here!"

TAX DEDUCTION, ANYONE?

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AUSTIN, continued from Page 1

learned his photography skills from a friend or family member.

Austin documented most of his shots on glass plate negatives, a plate of cut and beveled glass coated with a solution of silver particles suspended in gelatin. The negative was then exposed in a camera and later developed. These negatives ranged in size from 3 by 5 to 20 by 24 inches and were manufactured by various companies at the time. This method, though cumbersome, resulted in beautiful photographic images, as seen from the prints and scans of these and other early negatives.

Austin may have started out as a hobbyist, later making a partial or full career from his honed craft by printing and publishing his images during the postcard fad between 1904 into the late 1920s. A majority of early postcard images of Franklin are Austin shots! During his adult life he may have also been the town butcher, as documented by another potential self-portrait. Austin likely also lived in a home on Center Street with his wife, Louise and daughter, Merle.

In 2015, The Farmers' Museum acquired a

collection of Austin's negatives from Franklin's own Blue Farm Antiques & Letterpress Printing. The negatives were further organized and sorted by content. All images pertaining to the Museum's mission and collecting scope were retained and accessioned into the *Plowline: Images of Rural New York* agricultural photography collection. These images can be found only at this web address: plowline.farmersmuseum.org, search "Arthur Austin".



Figure 2: Franklin, NY Residence, 1906, Arthur Austin, glass plate negative, H: 4 3/8 x W: 6 3/8 in. The Farmers' Museum, Cooperstown, New York, Museum Purchase, Plowline: Images of Rural New York Collection, F0020.2015(46).

The remainder of the collection will be transferred to the Delaware County Historical Association (DCHA), keeping the collection in the local area. The *Plowline* collection, compiled over the last seven years, has grown to nearly 15,000 photographic objects. Please visit the *Plowline* website at plowline.farmersmuseum.org to view additional images documenting the life of New York State farmers and farm families past and present.

If you recognize any of the homes or locations documented by Arthur Austin now on the *Plowline* website and can provide more detailed information, please email or call Christina Milliman, Curator of Photography at images@nysha.org or 607-547-1442. Please share the title of the image, object ID number and/or web link. Thank you for your help, and we hope you enjoy this wonderful and early collection.

Special thanks to Phil Warish of Blue Farm Antiques for his time and enthusiasm in discussing the Arthur Austin Collection.

Christina Milliman is the Curator of Photography, The Farmers' Museum, Cooperstown, NY.

SIDNEY CENTER, continued from Page 3

was easy to drive by without even seeing it or being able to read what it said, but no more. The handsome new sign stands over eight



feet. The library entrance high with brilliant gold-leaf lettering on deep hunter green announcing the Library's open days and hours. Above is a row of books with a Hemingway quote beneath, carefully chosen by the design committee: "There is no friend as loyal as a book."

Mike Sellitti also expressed SCIG's thanks to Jess F. Howes Building Supplies for their donation of materials to build the sign and its sturdy wooden supports. He noted that, as with so many Sidney Cen-

ter improvement projects, "They're always happy to be of help."

Following the ribbon cutting, everyone went inside to enjoy refreshments and share their enthusiasm about this notable day in Sidney Center. The library's three rooms were bustling with conversation and happy people. Ann Birdsall, manager and librarian, was all smiles, calling it "a nice little turnout."

When you're next traveling through Sidney Center, the Library sign is certain to catch your eye. And if it's an open day, please stop in to say hello to Ann and her staff and enjoy some time in this Sidney Center treasure.

Sidney Center Library hours are: Monday, 1 to 5; Tuesday, 3:30 to 8; Wednesday, 10 to 2; Thursday, 3:30 to 8; Friday, 1 to 5; Saturday, 10 to 2.

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Cutting the ribbon in Sidney Center: from left to right, Carol Behan, Ty Steinbacher, Mary Jane Plummer, Ann Birdsall, Mike Sellitti

REASONS TO LOVE YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY!

DVDs are now available at the Franklin Free Library!

They may be signed out for a week, with a limit of three at a time.

Beyond the collection in Franklin, you can also order DVDs through the Four County Libraries System:

https://fcls.ent.sirsi.net/client/en_US/default/search/s?qu=dvd+collection&te=

YOUR FFL LIBRARIANS' LATEST BOOK PICKS

NUTSHELL By Ian McEwan

A new and different take on Shakespeare's tragic play, *Hamlet*.

From the book jacket:

"Told from a perspective unlike any other, *Nutshell* is a classic tale of murder and deceit from one of the world's master storytellers."

THE LIFE-CHANGING MAGIC OF TIDYING UP: *The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* By Marie Kondo

From the book jacket:

"This #1 *New York Times* best-selling guide to decluttering your home from Japanese cleaning consultant Marie Kondo takes readers step-by-step through her revolutionary KonMari Method for simplifying, organizing, and storing."

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FARCE, continued from Page 1

the OSC of *Town of Franklin Financial Operations* found that our town has not been filing these required AUDs since the one for 2008. Even that one is available only from Albany.

And how did you miss the report of this audit, Report 2014M-32? The report was in the Town Hall but until recently buried in the files and unavailable. The Town did publish the required notice in the back of the Walton Reporter in May 21, 2014.

An annual report is a reasonable requirement. A town's financial year should be book-ended by two documents. Before each year begins, a town is required to pass a budget, planning what services it will provide and how it will pay for them. After each year ends, a town is required to prepare a report on how that money was spent. For eight years in a row now, our government has not. The supervisor has the legal responsibility for the timely filing of this report. Supervisor Taggart was first appointed in 2012 and elected in 2013, but he has never fulfilled this responsibility. Supervisor Smith was responsible for the filings of years 2009, 2010, and 2011, which were his final years in office. Of the other eighteen towns in Delaware County, only one does not submit ADUs. In addition, Franklin regularly submitted ADUs until 2009.

In response to the preliminary draft of this OSC

audit, Supervisor Taggart acknowledged the findings and promised to "take measures to implement the suggestions made." After the final draft was released in May 2014, Supervisor Taggart filed the required Corrective Action Plan in which he outlined the actions to be taken by the town board for each of the recommendations.

In this CAP, our supervisor states: "The Town Supervisor will file an annual report with the OSC and the Town Clerk, within ninety [sic] days after the close of the fiscal year, or 120 days after the close of the fiscal year if an exemption is granted." He has not. In July when he filed his CAP, the financial report for 2013 was already three months past due. Like for the four years before it, the 2013 report was never filed.

Our town government claimed to have begun work on the financial report for the next year, 2014, but the report was not completed by the deadline of March 2015. Last fall, in response to an inquiry, the Supervisor said that the financial report would be completed in December. As of March 2017, this report had yet to be filed with the town clerk or the OSC. Our government has yet to even start reports for the following years, 2015 and 2016, and thereby the supervisor remains in violation of the law and his own Corrective Action Plan.

Concerning the submission of annual financial reports, NY General Municipal Law, Section 30(5) states: "It shall be the duty of the incumbent officer at the time such reports are required to be filed with the comptroller to file such report. The refusal or willful [sic] neglect of such officer to file a report as herein prescribed shall be a misdemeanor and subject the financial officer so refusing

for multiple years and for multiple reports. However, fines are at the discretion of Comptroller DiNapoli.

This failure to file annual financial reports was not the only failure of fiscal oversight cited by the OSC. There are two others.

Supervisor Taggart, the appointed financial officer of Franklin, was not supervising the deputy financial officer, Paul Warner, who does the actual bookkeeping. Taggart explained to the OSC that he was not familiar with basic bookkeeping practices. Every year, OSC staff hold several sessions of a two-and-a-half-day schools on basic accounting and one-day seminars. These are held in locations around the state including SUNY Oneonta. Webinars are available to learn from home.

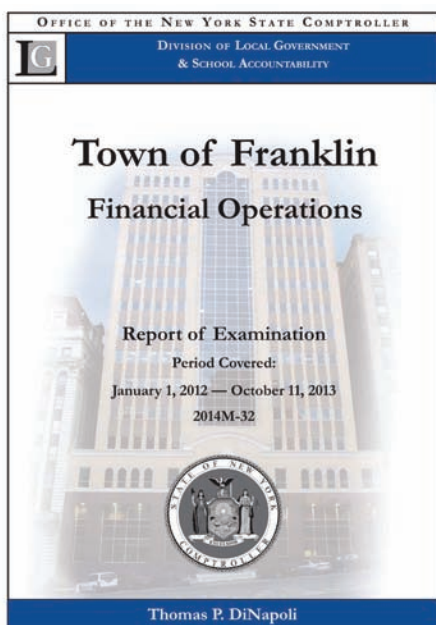
More importantly, as part of the system of checks and balances, the supervisor must annually submit his books and records to the town council within twenty days of their closing on December 31st – as must any officer or employee who receives or dispenses money. Then the four councilmen are required to audit these records within these twenty days. If the councilmen themselves cannot perform the audit, then they may hire an accountant. Required statements that are submit-

ted must be entered into the minutes of the meeting for this annual accounting.

According to the OSC, "Board oversight becomes particularly important in smaller operations which may not have an adequate system of controls because employees are required to perform duties that should optimally be segregated," *Fiscal Oversight Responsibilities of the Governing Boards (2014)*. This Local Government Management Guide is available on the Franklin Local website, as are others.

The OSC had to extend its review of financial operations for 2012 back to 2008 to find the last annual financial report, but could not find a single audit during that time. Going back further, the town clerk knows of no audits in the files. Because town audits do not have to be filed with the OSC, we do not know when the town books were last audited by the council.

Our supervisor has not managed to produce a single annual financial report. Our councilmen have not managed a single annual audit. This despite the exposure of these failing by the Office of the State Comptroller and the subsequent commitment to follow the law by our town board. Citizens of the Town of Franklin have the expectation that – at the very least – its government would do the legally required minimum to safeguard their tax dollars.



<http://osc.state.ny.us/localgov/audits/towns/2014/franklin.htm>

or neglecting to a penalty of five dollars per day for each day's delay beyond the sixty days to be paid on demand of the comptroller." Not filing timely reports after the OSC examination and the supervisor's CAP is arguably "refusal or willful neglect." Five dollars per day adds-up to roughly \$1,800 per year for each report. In the case of Supervisor Taggart, this penalty could be applied

GEOHERMAL, con't from Page 9

house sits over a porous aquifer, you can get two wells drilled a few yards apart and circulate groundwater up and back. Of course there are lots of variations on all these approaches.

The first step towards going geothermal is getting a free or reduced-cost home energy assessment. The New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA) engages local contractors to evaluate your home's energy performance and advise you where your energy investments will be most effective at reducing your energy costs. You can apply for an energy evaluation online or by printing out and sending a paper application.

Some of NYSERDA's energy efficiency contractors are familiar with geothermal systems, but many are not. The NY Geothermal Energy Organization has a searchable map of contractors across the state; if you don't see one near you, give them a call at 518-313-6GEO.

Don't dawdle! Those \$6000 rebate checks will go fast.

Links:

NYSERDA:

<https://www.nysenda.ny.gov/Residents-and-Homeowners>

Energy audit online application:

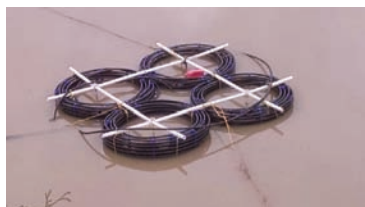
<https://nysenda.energysavvy.com/start-your-project/>

hpwes-express-audit/?s=contact

NY Geothermal Organization: <http://ny-geo.org/>

Geothermal contractors map:

<http://ny-geo.org/pages/ny-geo-members-map>



Detail of heat exchanger

TRUTH, con't from Page 8

We spent the next half hour squashing and swearing at the ones that invaded the cab.

Not to be deterred, we continued onward. Climbing, we entered the Yukon-Tanana Uplands. Soon the thick black spruce forest opened onto a wide treeless plain. There were mountains to the east and mountains to the west. From the northern horizon, severe dark blue banks of cloud rushed toward us. The world took on a green hue as the clouds unleashed their fury. Rain

drops as big as pigeon eggs splattered the dry dusty roadway. In an instant, the deluge cut all visibility outside the truck's cab. Fearful of running off the road and even more fearful a big rig would run us over, I slowed to a crawl. Thankfully the squall blew over in a matter of minutes.

As bad as bouncing along at ten to fifteen miles an hour had been, the road was now as slippery as wet ice. The rain had turned the smooth clay packed roadway into a slip-and-slide. There was very little trac-


tion for the next half hour. According to my speedometer, we had traveled thirty-five miles. According to our map and the milepost signs, we traveled twenty. We were bouncing along when there was a very loud bang followed by a terrible racket. We had busted a shock absorber. This was a trip ender. We had tools with us, so we removed the offending part and limped back toward Fairbanks at an even slower speed.

On the way, we witnessed hundreds of caribou wandering the tundra. Some were trotting along the road - we could hear their hooves clicking as they ran. Later, my father spotted a grizzly that appeared to be feeding on a carcass.

As the clouds cleared, there appeared in the sky three rainbows, tens of miles apart.

I knew then we were going to be alright.

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MAURER, continued from Page 3

busy with homemaking activities. Paul tended a large garden and in the fall the sweet scent of tomatoes would fill the house as Mary Ann canned and pickled the harvest.

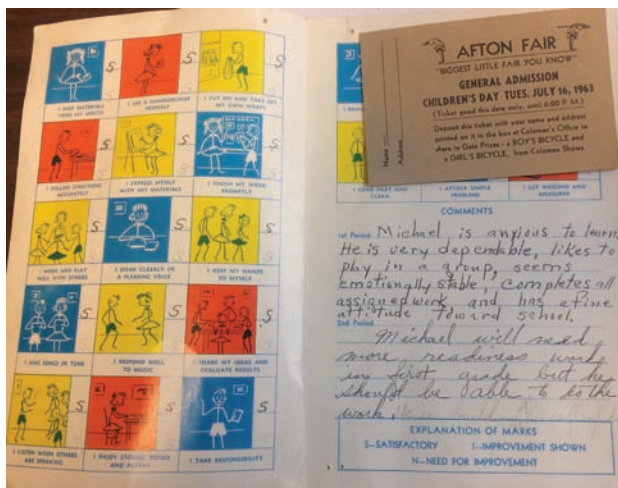
She had a life outside of her family as an active member of the Methodist Church. Mary Ann also enjoyed the Monday evening meetings of the Washington Reading Circle, a Franklin book group that has existed for over 100 years.

Mrs. Maurer substituted at the school as her children grew and returned to teach full time in 1956. During her first year back, she was an aide in Mrs. Stanford's kindergarten class where her twin daughters Christie and Corinne were students. Christie Marlette remembers one of her classmate saying, "She can't be your mother. She's the teacher. You have to call her Mrs. Maurer."

A year later, Mrs. Maurer became the kindergarten teacher with a classroom of her own in Old Stone Hall. She was one of the first teachers in Franklin to join Delta Kappa Gamma, a professional organization for women educators. Former colleagues and students describe her as a wonderful teacher.

Joan Cronauer taught in the room next door when they were moved into mobile classrooms. Her daughter, Robin, wouldn't take naps until

she joined Mrs. Maurer's kindergarten class. Mike Hyzer, Supervisor of Buildings at the Franklin school, remembers he would carry his uncle's watch, take it out during nap time and click it. Mrs. Maurer warned that he better put the watch away. She may have wanted quiet for the kids who had just discovered the pleasure of napping.



Mike Hyzer's kindergarten report card

Mrs. Maurer made a habit of taking kids under her wing. Suzanne Patrick (nee Furgerson) began volunteering in Mrs. Maurer's class when she was in the sixth grade and helped out until graduation. She assisted the students with

math using a large abacus counting frame. "I find it very interesting," Mrs. Patrick wrote in an e-mail, "that the new Common Core math has students using a 'ten frame' to do the same things that Mary Ann was doing back in the 70s." When Suzanne was in the 11th grade, Mrs. Maurer suggested that she consider teaching as a career. Mrs. Patrick is now a middle school teacher at Franklin Central School.

My first encounter with Mary Ann Maurer was unexpected. Driving along Main Street one summer afternoon, perhaps 25 years ago, I looked to my left as I passed the post office. A car was slowly coming straight for me. Mary Ann, the driver, looked up in horror just as the cars made contact. There wasn't a crash or bang just the soft tap of gray and white metal connecting. A bit shaken but with no harm done, we introduced ourselves to each other.

On a recent Sunday I stopped by to visit Mary Ann in Oneonta. I brought her yellow tulips, which seemed apt for a mild sunny day. She addressed me curtly but when she realized the flowers were for her, softened with appreciation.

Mary Ann Maurer taught at Franklin Central School full time or as a substitute for over sixty years.



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FSC, continued from Page 12

Company has become known for, and her commitment to admission-free theater has ensured that all are indeed welcome."

In light of Ms. Marner's decision, the FSC Board has decided that the show will

tion as Interim Artistic Directors. The rest of the FSC Board including Jack Siman, Jennifer Mileski, Nick Butts, Louise Hebbard, Tom Spychalski, and Tom Butts will collectively support the effort to make the 21st season a success.

said Ms. Buckley. "We're also looking forward to bringing an exciting and diverse mix of theater to Franklin."

The season will open with a gallery exhibit of the paintings of David Byrd, a Delaware County resident whose iconic drawings, sculptures, and watercolors have been exhibited in galleries across the US. Further details on the season will be announced shortly. The Franklin Stage Company season will run this year from July 1 through September 3.

In her letter to Franklin Stage Company's friends and loyal audience, Ms. Marner also wrote:

"For twenty seasons, there was nothing like looking down from the upstairs dressing room to see you all gathering below on the lawn and porch."

"We're indebted to Carmela for her stewardship and honored to have the Board's support as we navigate this transition,"



go on. Effective March 1st, Board member and long-time FSC actor Patricia Buckley, along with recent FSC show director Leslie Noble, will helm the transi-

ECKMAIR, con't from Page 7

the upper Susquehanna region, and one proposed dam site was in the lower Butternut Creek. It would have created a lake three miles long and submerged Gilbertsville completely.

The town fought this threat repeatedly over decades, arguing in favor of its uniqueness and historical importance. In the nineteen sixties, as the Army Corp again made plans and sought funding for projects, several dozen highly motivated citizens began fighting to get the whole village listed on the National Register of Historic Sites, which would give the village federal protection by one agency from the threat posed by another. This process of documenting 196 buildings took eleven years and thousands of hours and was ultimately successful. In this project the village gained a measure of protection from both man-made and natural disasters, as well as a strong sense of identity.

But looking back, it's possible to see village's hard won bureaucratic victory as another instance of a stubborn resilience that goes back much further.

In 1895, the village nearly burned to the ground when eight buildings in the central part of the village caught fire on a winter night so cold that the fire hoses froze solid, and volunteers were reduced to throwing buckets of snow and water from the creek. The Stag's Head Inn, the largest building in the village, was a total loss.

The locally famous Major's Inn was built after the fire--of stone and with a slate roof. The enormous Stag's Head Inn was not rebuilt, but a well-known landscape architect was engaged to convert the site into a park, complete with fountain.

So yes, visitors always comment on what a quaint picturesque village Gilbertsville is. But looking back, that's not at all an accident, or because somehow time stopped here. It's because our village has a stubborn sense of its own identity and has never stopped rebuilding itself.

Photos are from the local history collection of the Gilbertsville Free Library.



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VALUE, con't from Page 6

percent in 2016 is calculated from the sales in 2014. The higher the ER, the closer the trend line (gray line) for the data comes to the ideal line of 1:1, which is what we see in the four graphs.

New York Real Property Law requires that all properties in a town be assessed at the same percentage of market value, although not necessarily 100 percent. If so, then all sales would graph on a single line. But assessments are an estimate, and sales scatter about a line. Even when a town is assessed at an ER of 100 percent, assessments are an imprecise measure of sales price.

Just how imprecise is shown in the graph for the year 2014. There dashed lines show that most sales prices fell between two thirds and one and one half the assessed values.

For each town, individual assessments should

aim to equably value each property so that each owner pays his or her fair share of property taxes. The greater the scatter of sales about the trend line,



the greater the inequity in taxes paid.

Two recent sales of under-assessed properties stand out and have been excluded from our analysis.

The Quickway gas station and convenience store was sold by J. Mirabito & Sons, Inc. to SCF Capital LLC. (This sale was covered in our fall issue, *Mirabito Sells but Stays*.) The assessed value was \$260,000, but last August the sale price was \$1,313,605, an underassessment of five times. This assessment was

based on the value of the real property alone, separate from the value of the business.

The vacant Kellogg school building was sold by OSP Capital LLC to American Ginseng Pharm Regional Center LLC. The assessed value was \$150,000, but last November the sale price was \$975,000, an under-assessment of six and a half times. This assessment was based on the prior use of the property.

Given the small number of comparable sales in Franklin and the surrounding towns, the precision in assessing individual sales is about as good as can be reasonably expected. There is room to discuss other topics such as the exemptions from property taxes. The New Franklin Register will continue to provide the data to inform the discussion.

EYES, con't from Page 10

our moods. Artificial sources of blue light come from: computers, tablets, smartphones, LED TV's, fluorescent and LED lighting. These sources of blue light can have negative impacts on our eyes and vision, as our exposure to them is typically prolonged. Have your eyes ever felt extremely tired after being on the computer for a long period of time? Much of that strain came from the blue light. Blue light causes eyestrain and eye fatigue, and longer term exposure increases your risk of age-related macular degeneration. When we think of how much we are exposed to the artificial sources of blue light, we see how much we need protection from it.

There are screen protectors for your electronic devices, but that doesn't offer protection from the lighting and televisions. Plus, you would typically need several screen protectors for all of your devices. So, there are lenses designed specifically to filter the blue light, and many of the non-glare or anti-reflective processes also filter the blue light. Non-glare, in addition to filtering the blue light, also decreases the star burst effect while driving at night and relaxes your focusing system. There are many forms of eye protection from radiation. Make sure to talk to your eye-care professional about the best options for you. Even if you don't require prescription lenses, you can still benefit from these options.

Franklin Eyewear LLC is located in the historic village of Franklin, a stop on the Catskill Turnpike. On your next trip through, stroll through our historic village and have a bite to eat at The Tulip and The Rose Café or at Wise Guys Pizza, then stop into one of our antique shops! Parking for Franklin Eyewear LLC is conveniently centered in the village at The Franklin Railroad and Community Museum and Community Center.

And even though the market needs a new manager or two or three, here we are again with...

MURDER AT THE FARMERS' MARKET

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door.

A slender hooded figure standing in the darkness of my back porch shifting from foot to foot. Little Red Riding Hood without the red.

She said her name was Marcy. Marcy Pan. Peter's sister?

And that she came with a warning.

I invited her in and got out my best china. Three different-sized Mason jars, one Bell jar, and an old coke bottle. We sat down at the table.

Wilson's dog lifted his head, snarfed, and settled back to sleep.

She said something to him in canine and his ears went straight up in the air like a rabbit. He got up stiffly, walked over to her and leaned his whole weight against her thigh. A few feathers fell to the floor as she scratched between his ears.

Interesting dog, she said. You have no idea, said I.

After two sensational encore performances, the local symphony met backstage with their conductor who congratulated them and reminded them that rehearsals would resume the following Thursday. Someone spoke up to inform the musicians that NASA had just released an announcement that an asteroid was headed toward Earth, possibly on a collision course, due to arrive later in the week. If a pin had dropped, everyone would have heard it.

The conductor suggested in that case perhaps it might be best to rehearse on Tuesday instead.

Everyone agreed that Trooper Cooper was a dedicated civil ser-

vant always ready to help by responding at any hour of the day or night and regularly offering clever helpful suggestions for making life easier for everyone.

But it was the kind of kindness that one must be careful of. As in the time he helped Ms. Seward hang her kitchen paper towel dispenser over the toaster oven.

Almost burned her house down.

It was a great night when the new ownership of the Chinese restaurant announced all-you-can eat for \$10.00.

We got it to go. Glad I had my pickup truck. Lasted a week, give or take.

Xanax College where you get a degree but you can't remember what for.

After the purchase of six or so old beater used cars that invariably ended up in one ditch or another, Willie finally bought a tow truck so he'd be ready the next time. Sure enough the tow truck ended up in the ditch but somehow he was unable to tow himself out. Good thinking Willie!

Tractor Warehouse Magazine #34. June 2016. ISBN 0-587-49289-7 Survivalist manual: Fingerprint identification obscurity.

Place fingers lightly on the edge of hot woodstove until pain becomes unbearable. Wait five minutes. Repeat.

Guaranteed to thwart all NSA/ICE investigations.

They're planning to drain the swamp and build a housing development, Marcy said as she poured some beer into one of the Mason jars.

For all the people moving out

of the area? I said as I tried to pour beer into the old coke bottle. It foamed over forming a puddle that started to run to the edge of the table. Wilson's dog moved to the spot and set his pursed lips to the very edge and began noisily sucking the spill.

Marcy stared. There's big bucks available for job creation, she said, doesn't matter what for. Anyway I think it's not about the jobs. They're selling rights to the water to pay for subsidies to build the housing.

Here we go, I said, the last great and most valuable resource sold to the highest bidder.

What are you going to do when they come for your pond? She said. Hide it behind the garage, I said. Maybe load it up with some endangered blue-footed Boobies or something.

Catskill life: where you learn more about drainage than you ever wanted to know.

Sometime after Marcy staggered off for who knows where, I began to seriously worry about the contents of my pond should parties unknown decide to drain it.

When the number of bones found exceeds the number of murders, something's amiss. We certainly had enough bones to qualify. Nobody appreciates a murder going unsolved for lack of a

body. Well, that got me going on local myths, stories, legends, and rumors, some of which had been whispered when I bought the place.

Kangaroo courts by any other name are not (and never were) Australian.

There was the missing counterfeit printing press that disappeared during the trial.

There was the missing getaway car from the area's most infamous bank robbery; money included.

Mermaids sighted by retired sailors.

Loch Ness of the New World. The charred remains of Viking burial ships.

Skydiving parachutes that never had a chance since the airplane tailpiece was still visible above the surface of the water.

I found myself searching the internet for the purchase of a Kraken (there were two available). Shipping is a little expensive. I'm not sure what or how much they eat but there's plenty of migrating geese stopping by. Canadian fast food.

Just as long as they get along with Wilson's dog.



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Mullen Gallery
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Arts in the Parlor,
Walton NY: <http://waltontheatre.org/arts-in-the-parlor/>
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edith NY: <http://westkcc.org/events/category/exhibitions/>

**The NEW
Franklin Register.**

The Newsletter of the Franklin Citizens Commission on Peak Oil
Editorial Board
Ellen Curtis Carole Satrina Marner
Eugene Marner Hank Stahler
Associate Editor: Brian Brock

Editor
Marjorie Bradley Kellogg

HAVE AN OPINION? WRITE TO US!
At: The New Franklin Register
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What are we about?

The Franklin Citizens' Commission on Peak Oil was au-
thorized on December 6th, 2005 by a Town Board Resolu-
tion. Our purpose was to assess the needs and resources
of the Town of Franklin in the face of Peak Oil, and to re-
port back to the Town Board and to the people of Franklin.
Renamed as Franklin Local Ltd., we are a not-for-
profit corporation made up of Franklin residents. We
meet once a month, at 7 P.M. at the Franklin Free Library.
All are welcome, to offer questions and help us answer
them, to share thoughts and ideas.

We have a number of projects that we hope to move
from idea to action:

- Local food production network
- Skills and services exchange
- Goods exchange
- Ride sharing bulletin board and/or website
- Farm to School Program for school lunches
- Community Greenhouses
- Community Energy Production
- Community Health Network

In a nutshell, we propose to imagine a more energy ef-
ficient, healthier habit of living, and to put it to work here
in Franklin, for a brighter, more sustainable future.

PLEASE JOIN US!

**For meeting times, location and
directions,as well as lots of other informa-
tion about our town, check our website:**

franklinlocal.org

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| DATE | LOCATION | AC. | TYPE | ASSESS | SALE | SELLER | BUYER |
|------------|------------------------|-------|--------------|--------|--------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 8/13/2016 | Main St [park] | 2.80 | Vac farmland | 13000 | 0 | Walter G.Rich | Village of Franklin |
| 9/15/2016 | Cty Hwy 16 (NW) | 69.20 | Rural vac>10 | 111000 | 90000 | Wall, Kempson | Navojosky, Francis |
| 9/22/2016 | Otego Rd | 4.45 | Rural vac<10 | 15000 | 14000 | Louie, Shung Mon | Leddy, David A |
| 9/28/2016 | 21 Bennett Hollow Rd | 0.40 | 1 Family Res | 42000 | 7500 | County of Delaware | Boyles, Leon C |
| 9/28/2016 | Ed Klug Rd | 10.10 | Rural vac>10 | 26000 | 4600 | County of Delaware | Taggart, Patricia A |
| 9/28/2016 | Ed Klug Rd | 10.10 | Rural vac>10 | 26000 | 5000 | County of Delaware | Taggart, Patricia A |
| 9/28/2016 | Otego Rd | 0.26 | Rural vac<10 | 1000 | 200 | County of Delaware | Bonker, Gary |
| 9/28/2016 | 832 Main St (2) | 0.36 | 1 Family Res | 73000 | 3000 | County of Delaware | Macek, Nicholas G |
| 9/28/2016 | 7000 St Hwy 357 | 0.75 | 1 Family Res | 71000 | 16000 | County of Delaware | Scarimbolo, Michael |
| 10/7/2016 | 4124 Cty Hwy 14 | 8.00 | 1 Family Res | 85000 | 80000 | Thomas, David A | Potrzeba, Luke |
| 10/17/2016 | 143 Main St | | 1 Family Res | 142000 | 100000 | Suozzo, Kathleen | Booker, Rossco M |
| 10/17/2016 | 10525 St Hwy 357 | 1.71 | 2 Family Res | 134000 | 77000 | Reynolds, Amy | Shaw, Jonathan S |
| 10/27/2016 | Freer Hollow Rd | 8.79 | Rural vac<10 | 23000 | 23500 | Malinowski, Paul M | Keenan, Kevin |
| 11/3/2016 | Snake Hill Rd | 55.10 | Rural vac>10 | 85001 | 70000 | Carey, Michael T | Snake Hill Realty |
| 11/4/2016 | 3445 Merrickville Rd | 3.00 | 1 Family Res | 85000 | 91000 | Martanis, John G | Calabro, Lewis M |
| 11/8/2016 | Water St (2) | 0.38 | Mini-mart | 260000 | 0 | SCF Realty Capital LLC | SCF RC Funding II LLC |
| 11/14/2016 | 138 Church St | 5.48 | School | 150000 | 975000 | OSP Capital LLC, | AG Pharm ... LLC |
| 12/9/2016 | Tara Ln | 13.70 | Rural vac>10 | 26000 | 17500 | Lavery, Patrick | Barranco, John |
| 12/13/2016 | 5180 Cty Hwy 14 | 9.60 | Rural res | 85000 | 50000 | Knapp, Patricia | Matthews, Ian P |
| 12/14/2016 | 10479 St Hwy 357 | 1.20 | 1 Family Res | 195000 | 161000 | Yerdon, Kevin | Williams, Heather |
| 12/16/2016 | 3726 Cty Hwy 14 (NW,2) | 7.90 | 1 Family Res | 145000 | 75000 | Chazen(Est), | Jeffrey Clark, Briggs |
| 1/4/2017 | 812 Rich Rd | 3.00 | 1 Family Res | 150000 | 30000 | Finch, Ralph | Finch, Ralph |
| 1/6/2017 | 1340 Post Rd | 22.30 | Rural res | 144000 | 140000 | Walter, Kenneth G | Owen, Richard L |
| 1/13/2017 | 2500 Palmer Hill Rd | 0.25 | 1 Family Res | 69000 | 500 | Rubera, Tracie S | Prof-2013-S3 ... Trust |
| 1/17/2017 | 219 Snake Hill Rd | 6.17 | 1 Family Res | 134000 | 125500 | Kyriacou, Peter | Patin, Paul J |
| 1/18/2017 | Poet Hill Rd | 12.19 | Rural vac>10 | 29000 | 41160 | Keown, Stephen A | Vicole, Frank |
| 1/25/2017 | 4084.4086 Case Hill Rd | 36.17 | Rural res | 200000 | 155000 | Blydenburgh, James F | Blydenburgh, James F Jr |

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