



# TOWN OF BERGEN NEWSLETTER

## JUNE, JULY, AUGUST 2020



Editor: Michele Smith

### ***Town News ... From the Desk of Town Supervisor Ernie Haywood***

Our world has changed since the last Town of Bergen newsletter was issued. Our thoughts and prayers go out to all those who have become ill with COVID-19. We are also thinking of those who have been affected by COVID-19 in other ways: mental health issues, the loss of a job, closure of a business, separation from family and friends.

We have taken a leadership position to help our community during this time of crises. Working in collaboration the Town and Village has worked to assure for meals for the seniors and we coordinated a mask and sanitizer distributions. A special thank you to the Mayor for her and the Village crews' work with the establishment and operation of the meal program for senior citizens. We have tried to keep helpful information flowing on our town website and Facebook. We have also delivered essential services while keeping the public and employees safe.

While the Bergen Town Board has adopted a position of "we are all in this together," we have been dealt a potentially devastating financial blow by Genesee County. Nearly a quarter of the Town of Bergen's \$2.5 million annual budgeted is funded by revenue that was previously provided by the county the county uses revenue from the sales tax to provide this revenue to the town. On May 15, 2020, the Genesee County Legislature rescinded the revenue sharing plan that distributes this revenue across all towns, villages and schools in the county.

In light of this, the Bergen Town Board has undertaken a line-by-line review of the budget and have asked all departments to come up with a plan to reduce their budgets. We began this process with a special meeting of the board and department heads on May 16. We will move into the 2021 budget process earlier than normal this summer knowing that we will have to reduce expenditures proportionately to the reduction in the loss of county revenue as well as potential reductions in various forms of state aid.

The renovation of the library was completed just as the pandemic shutdown was beginning. The library project included the remodeling of restrooms and kitchenette; new carpeting; new electric and fire alarm system; accessible doors; new entryway; new circulation desk; new lighting; and the renovation of offices, multi-purpose and storage rooms. We had to cancel the April 25<sup>th</sup> ribbon-cutting ceremony, and although the library remains closed, we look forward to the day when the public can again partake in library services at this beautifully remodeled facility.

Residents may be wondering if the Town is continuing with the new water district. The answer is yes, as this funding is secure. The engineer is finalizing the plans for bidding and we are preparing to complete the necessary paperwork for financing. The plan remains to bid the work in the fall and start later this year with a completion of the entire system by the spring of 2022.

I would like to encourage all residents who have not already done so to fill out the 2020 Census. If you have misplaced your Census Form or need help, you can call the Census hotline at 844-33-2020. You can complete the census from the safety of your home. Some of our State Aid is tied to the census – it is important for you to be counted as a resident of Bergen! I encourage all to continue to practice social distancing and wear mask. Together as a community we all depend upon each other and together we will get through this. Be Safe- Be Well

**Hunting Licenses** will be going on sale August 10<sup>th</sup>, DMP's are on a lottery first come first serve basis as in the past \$10 for 2. Fishing Licenses now run a year from the date of purchase and are available for \$25.

**Dog License News:** I hate to "hound" you, but if your dog's license renewal is due or past due, please take care of it so we don't have to send you a reminder notice or eventually a court appearance ticket. If new to the area please transfer your dog with the Town of Bergen. If there is a problem getting an appointment for a rabies vaccination, etc., please call me 494-1121 x 21; if after hours leave a message on my voicemail anytime day or night.

**ANTI-RABIES CLINICS:** Dog, Cat and Ferret Vaccinations are free to Genesee County residents. A \$5.00 voluntary donation per dog, cat or ferret, is requested to offset expenses. Non-County residents must pay a mandatory \$5.00 fee for each dog, cat and ferret immunized. Each animal must be accompanied by someone who can control it.



August 13<sup>th</sup> – Genesee County Fairgrounds 5031 E. Main St., Batavia 4:00 – 7:00 pm

### **Office Closing**

Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup> - Monday, July 6<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day Holiday

### **Office Hours**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday  
8:00 am – Noon & 1:00 – 4:00

Saturday 9:00 am - Noon

Closed on Thursday



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### **Historian News by *Thomas Tiefel***

Well, here we are at the half-way point of 2020. It all seems surreal and like we are living a bad dream. COVID-19 has had a devastating effect not just on our nation as a whole, but on our community historical agencies as well. As some of you may or may not know, I hold a seat on the Holland Land Office Museum's Board of Directors in Batavia. We have been working tirelessly to "staunch the bleeding" of our economic crisis that has hit "small town America" due to this pandemic. All museums across the country are scrambling as the budget cuts are being announced. In recent years, we historians have been challenged with a decline in an interest in history. Many factors contribute to this. As they say, "the times are a changin'" and we have to change with those times. Now we are faced with a new invisible threat. A threat that has people fearful of leaving their homes, let alone visiting museums. Historians are looking at alternative outlets to continue to engage the public through remote access. As your historian, I feel that it's my duty to investigate these alternatives to continue to educate and promote our local history. The expansion of social media and a digital platform are currently being looked at. This will also benefit our school students who may not be allowed to partake in actual field trips to the Harford Museum in the coming months. The exploration of "virtual tours" is also being looked at. The museum is patiently waiting for the green light to open this year. When this happens, we will follow the mandates the state has set forth to keep everyone safe. We do understand that some residents and visitors will be extra cautious and choose not to visit us in 2020. I will do my absolute best to still include and assist these people with the same opportunities to explore and enjoy our town's history. I wish to thank each and every one of you that support our town's museum. Stay safe and Godspeed for this crisis to fade into the pages of history. As always, the historian's office is located at [15 S. Lake Ave](#) in the village of Bergen. If you would like to contact me for any reason, feel free to call [585-494-0080](tel:585-494-0080) and we will be happy to assist you!



Wow! What crazy times we are in.... this is a very different newsletter than I have written in the past. Missing patrons before all this pandemic happened because of our renovations- and now I am really hoping you all come back to visit as soon as we open again! Since life changes from week to week – the best way to find out information on our Library is following us on FaceBook at <https://www.facebook.com/ByronBergenLibrary/> or on our website at [www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org](http://www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org).

We plan on having curbside pickup starting June 2<sup>nd</sup> then in a couple of weeks open up by appointment. We will see how it goes as timing is decided by the governor’s decisions. Call the Library at 585-494-1120 to order books or email to [byrbgn@nioga.org](mailto:byrbgn@nioga.org) with a list of books that you would like. The catalog will tell you if we own the material but you can’t place holds on them just yet.

Check our Pre-K Storytime with Miss Michelle on Facebook on Fridays at 10:30am. If you miss it- no worries it is on our account for your listening pleasure. There’s magic in every book!

There have been a lot of changes at in the Library! With the support of the Bergen Town Board and NY State Construction grant money, we have updated the Library circulation desk, carpet and created the Ethel Miller Children’s Room also the entrance doors are all handicapped accessible as are the bathrooms. We look forward to opening up and serving the community.

This summer our reading program is Imagine your story! **Our Kick off virtual interactive program will be on June 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm with Science Tellers’ program “Dragons- Return of the Ice Sorceress”- A long time ago, in a faraway land, two brave villagers go on a daring journey to release the dragons and save the kingdom from an evil Ice Sorceress. When things don’t go as planned, however, the kids might need to look to themselves — and to science! — for the answer. Don’t miss this fun fantasy adventure featuring awesome dry ice experiments as special effects! Go to [www.Byron-BergenPublicLibrary.org](http://www.Byron-BergenPublicLibrary.org) and click on the link. If you miss the program – we will have a link for you to watch when you have time. We hope to have summer reading bags to pick up with all the online programs and other fun activities to enjoy.**



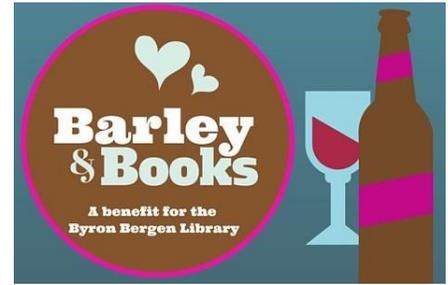
Check us out on the web at [www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org](http://www.byron-bergenpubliclibrary.org)! On our website you can find out what is happening at the Library, look at different resources like TumbleBooks and check on your Library account. The Library offers Hoopla, OverDrive/Libby, RB Digital for music, EBooks, downloadable Audio books, movies and magazines are available to use with a valid Library card. If you need a digital Library card call us 585-494-1120 or email [byrbgn@nioga.org](mailto:byrbgn@nioga.org)

Happy Reading--  
Nancy Bailey



From the Byron-Bergen Public Library Board:

The Board has decided to cancel the Barley and Books Library Fundraiser due to the Covid19 virus pandemic. We want to thank everyone for their continued support and hope to be back in 2021!



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**From the Desk of County Legislator *Christian Wunker***



Happy Spring! As the weather warms up and Spring finally arrives it gives us all a sense of optimism. We are all trying to remain positive and look for opportunities to weather this new reality of life with Covid-19. Just as life has changed for all of us at home it has also changed for every level of government. The reality is that we will all need to find ways to provide essential services to our community with less dollars. We need to have a thoughtful and creative approach to governing while providing services and infrastructure maintenance and improvements without pushing the burden on the backs of taxpayers.

We have all been hearing some of the challenges New York State is going to have for the next several years because of the economic impact this event has had. The Governor is currently contending with a budget deficit in excess of \$13 billion. The State is indicating that without federal support to help replace lost revenues, state aid to localities may have to be cut 20-50%. This will undoubtedly have a trickle-down effect to municipalities and potentially taxpayers if we do not reimagine how we govern.

Counties are facing several threats to their financial resiliency. The first is declining revenues, especially sales tax, but also hotel occupancy taxes, mortgage recording taxes, and gaming revenues among others. Second, higher spending necessary to respond to this health emergency. Third, the likely loss of State reimbursement. And finally, the potential significant losses for small businesses on our main streets and rural areas that could threaten jobs and our property tax base long term.

Genesee County management has taken a proactive approach by looking for cost cutting measures immediately. The County has furloughed 49 employees, implemented a hiring freeze, stopped all capital projects, suspended all equipment purchases, suspended the jail project, and are taking a hard look at all outside agency spending, just to name a few.

These are unprecedented times that have impacted every aspect of our society, government and economy that no one could have predicted. So where is the good news?! Our region was among the first in the State to reopen. We will slowly see people go back to work and businesses get back on their feet. Our residents have done an exceptional job of following protocols and keeping our region relatively healthy. The response of all those essential employees, government workers, emergency management personnel, healthcare workers, grocery store clerks, etc, has been unbelievable. We have incredibly resilient people in Western New York and we all should be confident that we can weather this storm. We have a strong management team and leadership in the County as you all do with your leadership team in the Town and Village of Bergen. We look forward to partnering together to get through this and continue to provide all the services and protection a community needs.



## Transfer Station Hours

Saturdays 9:00 am – 3:00 pm

The transfer station will be open July 4<sup>th</sup> 9:00 - 3:00

**Due to budget constraints Wednesday Summer hours have been cancelled**

**DUE TO BUDGET CONSTRAINTS ON THE TOWN CLERK'S BUDGET THE OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED JUNE 26<sup>TH</sup> – JULY 6<sup>TH</sup>. PLEASE PURCHASE BAGS OR TAGS FOR THE TRANSFER STATION BEFORE JUNE 24<sup>TH</sup>, INDIVIDUAL BAGS WILL BE AVAILABLE AT THE TRANSFER STATION WITH EXACT CHANGE FOR \$5.00.**

**THE TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE WILL BE OPEN REGULAR HOURS STARTING JUNE 8<sup>TH</sup> BUT WITH RESTRICTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS NECESSARY. THE OFFICE IS TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED TO BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC ON JULY 7<sup>TH</sup> WITH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS IN PLACE. PLEASE CALL 494-1121 X21 FOR MORE INFORMATION.**

**SORRY FOR AN INCONVIENCE THIS MAY BE THE "NEW NORMAL" FOR A WHILE**

**TOWN OF BERGEN  
10 HUNTER STREET  
BERGEN, NY 14416  
[bergenny.org](http://bergenny.org)**