

# Benson Bulletin

Benson, Vermont's Community Newsletter

April 2009

## HELP KEEP YOUR TAXES DOWN

Wednesday, April 1 is the deadline for registering your dog without paying a penalty and/or possibly receiving a ticket and a fine. If you register your dog by April 1, you will pay \$8 for a neutered dog and \$12 for a non-neutered dog (\$10 and \$16 after April 1). **ALL** dogs must be registered. That's the law. There is no dog equivalent of "My owner ate my homework" excuse. We all know that there are health and safety benefits involved in having all dogs registered, BUT please also remember that it costs the Town (the Town = the Taxpayers = you) money to track down and deal with unregistered dogs. This is money we would not have to spend if everyone cooperated and obeyed the law.

## VOLUNTEER NEEDED

It's time to begin planning our Memorial Day Parade. We need someone to step up and volunteer to organize this great event. Please call Jan Ladd (537-2611) if you are willing to put the parade together. Lots of people will help you, but we need someone to take charge!

## MEETINGS/EVENTS THIS MONTH

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/EVENT</u>
April 1	Wednesday	4:30 pm	Town Office	Dog Registering Deadline
April 4	Saturday	8 – 10 am	Applebee's	8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Fundraiser
April 6	Monday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Selectboard
April 8	Wednesday	6:30 pm	Benson School	Bingo
April 8	Wednesday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Planning Commission
April 9	Thursday	6:30 pm	Library	Energy Committee
April 9	Thursday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Policy Committee
April 13	Monday	11:30 pm	Community Hall	Senior Luncheon
April 14	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Community Hall	Busy Buddies 4H
April 15	Wednesday	6:00 pm	Benson Library	Book Group
April 16	Thursday	7:30 pm	Community Hall	VerdMont
April 20	Monday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Selectboard
April 21	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Community Hall	Garden Club
April 21	Tuesday	7:30 pm	BVS Library	School Board
April 22	Wednesday	6:30 pm	Benson School	Bingo
April 28	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Community Hall	Busy Buddies 4H
April 28	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Town Office	History Project
		<b>LOOKING</b>	<b>AHEAD</b>	
May 2	Saturday	All Day	Everywhere	Green Up Day

**Monthly Senior Luncheon**  
**at the Benson Community Hall on April 13th**

Come and enjoy a "Spring Fling" luncheon with old friends and new. We promise to try to keep the snow away! Proposed menu: Tossed Salad, Meatloaf with Brown Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans, Homemade Bread, Tapioca Pudding with Peaches, Milk, Coffee/Tea.  
Suggested donation: \$3.50.

**For reservations, please call Deanna Britton by Friday, April 10th: 537-2971.**

**SPRING FEVER**

By the time you read this, I'm sure all of you have a touch of Spring Fever, so let's think gardening. The Garden Club will meet on Tuesday, April 21 at 6:30 p.m. in the Community Hall. At this meeting we will pick a date for the May Plant Swap. If your perennials have expanded, bring what you want to get rid of and pick up something new. Even if you don't have plants to bring, there may be some available. Watch for further information in the May Bulletin.

In February's newsletter, we mentioned providing a 10 x 10 foot garden with all seeds, plants and start-up labor supplied. At our meeting, we will make a decision on the recipient of this garden. If you would like to be considered for this garden, please contact Bob Phelps at 537-3155. You may have never gardened before or you may want help getting started.

In late April or early May, we will be working on raised beds at Benson Heights. If you have a few extra seeds to donate to the seniors, it would be greatly appreciated – cucumbers, summer squash, greens, carrots, radishes, beans.

Garden tips for April: Anyone interested in testing their garden soil can contact the UVM Extension Service at the Howe Center in Rutland, 773-3349, for a free soil sample kit. Complete instructions come with the kits. Soil testing costs \$12 and up. Things to do this month: If you've mulched plants for the winter, it's time to remove the mulch. Rake up yard debris and get the compost pile started. Turn over last year's compost pile as soon as it's thawed. Plan your garden, rotating crops from last year. Check your notes or your memory from last year's garden to help you decide what you may want to try this year. Start some tomato and pepper seeds in the house, for transplant after the last frost, or buy your seedlings locally.

It was nice to see 4 new people at March's meeting. All are welcome. Hope to see You on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Always ready to talk gardening – Bob Phelps 537-3155. The dues are dirt, and the vision is a garden in every yard.

**Have YOU Remembered?**

Have you posted a list of your medications, along with any other written medical directives, on your refrigerator? Don't make our Firemen and our First Responders waste valuable time looking for information. Help them help you.



# BENSON PUBLIC LIBRARY



Open Wednesdays, 3 pm – 7 pm and Saturdays 11 am – 2 pm

The book discussion group will meet on Wednesday, April 15 at 6:00 pm at the library. We will be reading Black Elk Speaks by John Neihardt, which is available now. Black Elk, a Sioux holy man, told his life story and the story of the Oglala Sioux during the time of the Custer battle, the ghost dance and the Wounded Knee massacre. Join us for an interesting discussion!

## CHURCH NEWS

### EASTER WEEK SERVICES

- Our Easter Week services will begin with our Maundy Thursday Service on April 9th at 7:30 p.m.. This special worship service will be held downstairs in the church. We will be remembering the last week of the life of Jesus - from Palm Sunday to His death on Friday. This service includes communion, Scripture readings, and a Tenebrae service where candles are extinguished one by one until, at the end of the service, there is complete darkness. In this darkness, we will leave worship, meditating on the great sacrifice Christ made for us on the cross. This is a particularly moving experience and everyone is invited to attend.
- We will be celebrating the Son's rising from the grave with the sun's rising on Easter morning. Our Easter Sunrise Service will be held on Easter morn, April 12th at 6:15 a.m. at Arthur's field, across from the home of Betty and Leonard Lussier on Hulett Hill Road. After the service, we will all gather back at the church for a Pot Luck breakfast! Our regular Easter Sunday service will be held at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary of the Church. We hope you can join us for these special worship services.

### SHAW'S RECEIPTS AND THE GIFT OF GIVING

Shaw's Grocery Stores are continuing with their program to help local food banks and it is easier than ever to help put food on the shelves of Fair Haven Concerned. Shaw's has linked Shaw's Rewards Card numbers to the Fair Haven Concerned identification number. All you have to do is go to the Shaw's website [shaws.com/neighborhoodrewards](http://shaws.com/neighborhoodrewards) and register your Rewards Card number with the Fair Haven Concerned ID number (49001018296). You will need to do this annually. Then when you do your shopping on **Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday** and use your registered Shaw's Rewards Card, Shaw's will contribute 1% of the cost of your eligible purchases to Fair Haven Concerned. If you would like to participate and do not have a computer, Fair Haven Concerned will be glad to help you. Or call Holly.

Questions? Call Holly Noble at 446-3575.

Everyone is always welcome each Sunday at 10:00 am and, if you enjoy singing, Choir practice starts at 9:30 am!

If you want more information – minutes of meetings, schedules, opportunities in Town - please remember to visit our Town's NEW website: <http://www.benson-vt.com>

## **Benson Village School News**

The month of April brings many exciting things to Benson Village School!!

Benson Village School along with Swanton School applied for and was awarded a fellowship through the Young Writer's Project which will feature songwriter and musician Pete Sutherland. Pete will work in the school creating a ballad with the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade. The project aims to bring together 3 school disciplines – history, music and writing. YWP received a grant for the project from the Lake Champlain Basin Authority as part of the Lake Champlain Quadricentennial Project. An aim is to create a ballad involving the historical period when Samuel de Champlain visited this region 400 years ago. There will be a public performance of this ballad on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

Our PTO is planning a movie night for Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm. If you have any questions please contact Alice Apjohn for more information.

The Hampstead Players will be performing Pinocchio on April 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm.

Strummer's Club continues to be happening on Wednesdays from 2:30-3:00.

April's Bingo nights are set for the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Come and join in the fun!

The 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Class will head to Fair Haven Union High School for lunch and to shadow some students on April 8<sup>th</sup>. They will leave around 10:00 am and spend the rest of the day exploring the high school, meeting teachers, and getting a feel for their Freshman Year.

The Scholastic Book Fair (Buy one, Get one) will be coming to BVS from April 24-April 30<sup>th</sup>.

Spring Break will be April 13-17, NO SCHOOL!

Spring Pictures will be Wed. April 22, beginning at 8:30am.

Grades 3-6 have two performances to attend in April. On April 23<sup>rd</sup> they will be going to CSC to see Paul Revere at 1:00 pm and then they will head to the Paramount Theater on April 30<sup>th</sup> to see Freedom Train.

## **IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN**

As you are filing your Federal and State Taxes, please remember to fill out and file the HS 122 (to qualify you for the lower local tax rate) and the HI 144 (to qualify you for the tax prebate).

## **VERD MONT FCE CLUB**

Verd Mont FCE Club will hold its monthly meeting on Thursday, April 16, 2009, at 7:30, in the Community Hall. (Please note the change from the usual date.) All are welcome.

Verd Mont FCE is part of the National Family Community Education Association with the following mission: "Strengthening individuals, families and communities through continuing education, developing leadership and community action."

## DOES THE GROUND WHERE YOUR DAFFODILS GROW...

... seem to be further away from your hands this Spring? Our local Bone Builder's can help you improve your balance so you can pick your tulips and daffodils more safely. Join us from 9 – 10 am every Monday and Thursday morning downstairs in the Community Hall. The program is FREE and is a great LOCAL way to improve your balance, strengthen your bones and get your day off to a positive, upbeat start – lots of laughs are included at no extra charge!

## 'TIS THE SEASON

It's a great time of year to get outside and enjoy some fresh air! Walk Rutland - a FREE team based walking program for residents of Rutland County – always has room for new members. You can improve your heart health while you enjoy some great company. Contact Sandra Owens (775-0555 or Sandra@walkrutland.com) for more information or visit the website: [www.walkrutland.com](http://www.walkrutland.com).

## PUT SOME FLING IN YOUR SPRING

If you are looking for a one hour workout which incorporates aerobic conditioning, strength and abdominal work, come join the local kickboxing class.

**When:** Wednesday's from 6 – 7 pm , April 1<sup>st</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>

**Where:** Community Hall

**Fee:** \$6/class

**Instructor:** Joni Imperato

Please be sure to bring a mat or towel to lie on and wear comfortable clothes.

Questions? Call Joni 775-0980

## FOOD DISCUSSION GROUP FORMING

The Energy Committee and the Garden Club are co-sponsoring a discussion group on food. We will use a guide from the Vermont Earth Institute, called "Menu for the Future." Its six sessions consider food from multiple perspectives - cultural, economic, ecological, health and social - each presenting a different, though complementary, angle on the complex modern food systems that most of us depend on. We'd like to start later in April. The course participants will set the dates and times of the discussions. If you are interested in participating, please call Karen Barber at 537-3155.

## DUMP PERMITS ARE IN

New annual permits are now available - \$10/household. Please remember that if you recycle you can save a lot of money for yourself and for the Town. The Town pays \$88/ton to have garbage hauled away and only \$25/ton to dispose of recyclables. You need your new permit by April 1<sup>st</sup>.

## The First Hundred Years 1869 School Funding

The Town of Benson had eleven school districts in 1869. Each district managed its own affairs included its budget. The district had a treasurer and the town treasurer transferred the district share of town school funds to the district treasurer in return for a receipt. In 1869, 1/3 of available funds were distributed in equal shares to each district and 2/3 distributed based on district aggregate attendance. Available funds in 1869 totaled \$553.42 (state school tax - \$298.03, interest on U.S. deposit money - \$160.02 and school land rent - \$95.37).

School District	Aggregate Attendance	Total Funds
Center – Village	8578.5	\$139.35
One – Park Hill & Goodrich Cross Road	3507.5	\$68.03
Two – Herrick Road & Temple Road	1984.5	\$46.42
Three – Lake Road West (sharp turn)	1936	\$45.67
Four – Frazier Hill Rd – North Lake Rd	No Dividend?	
Five – North Stage Road	1060.5	\$33.47
Six – Howard Hill Road (sharp turn)	2873.5	\$58.95
Seven – Crandall Rd-East Rd	869	\$30.89
Eight – South Stage Road	352.5	\$23.42
Nine – East Road – South	2242	\$50.05
Ten – Rte 144 – Pleasant Valley & Ledge Rd	2747	\$57.17
Totals	26,151	\$553.42

Of interest – some students were 20 years old, nearly as old as the teacher. The ½ day attendance in several of the totals reflects the school week included ½ day on Saturday. The school land rent total of \$95.37 was the same each year because the land was rented in perpetuity at a fixed rate.

## **ENERGY TIP - COMPOST**

Help yourself, help the community, but more importantly help the planet! It has been estimated that a 70-year old has generated 50 tons of trash in his/her lifetime. More than half of that is yard trimmings and food scraps. If you compost a fifth of your garbage, you save \$1.50 per bag and save energy by not using fuel hauling it to the landfill. When compostable material is put into the landfill, it can break down to release a potent greenhouse gas.

If you had a potted plant and you took a teaspoon of the soil away every day, eventually there would be nothing left. We can't continue to take stuff out of the garden and throw it in the landfill – at some point we have to return the material to the soil to feed the plants that feed us. Compost will improve your soil, decreasing the need to purchase fertilizers.

How? Composting can be as simple as raking leaves and lawn debris into a pile and leaving them to decompose. Make sure it will not become offensive to your neighbors by enclosing it so that pets and wildlife can't get into it. To do this, you can invest in chicken wire to make a cage or purchase a composting barrel or bin. Put your leaves and lawn debris in the cage, add any vegetable matter from your kitchen including coffee grounds and egg shells. Never put meat scraps or bones in the pile; these are what attract pests. Add waste from your garden, and some grass clippings, which help the pile to break down faster. Equal parts of matter, air and water aid the process. If properly done, it does not smell or attract flies. Odors can occur if a pile is too big or packed so tightly that air can't circulate, so make sure you have a good flow of air through the pile. This can be done by turning the pile every few weeks.

Here's an easy way to get started: Set up a wire cage for your pile from chicken or turkey wire, 3 feet high and 9 feet long. Shape it into a circle. Add about 2 inches of compost material. Then dust with an activator, a protein-rich material such as alfalfa meal, bone meal or blood meal. Moisten but don't soak the layer with water. Keep the center of the pile loose for good air circulation. Keep adding layers. The temperature should reach 150 degrees F within 2 or 3 days. Turn the pile after a week or so. Remove the cage, set it beside the pile, and fork all the material back into the pile, putting the outside material from the first pile into the center of the new pile, moistening as you go if necessary. The compost should be ready to use in about 15 days. Your finished compost will contain nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in addition to trace elements not usually found in commercial fertilizers. Spread it as a side-dressing on your vegetable or flower garden.

If you have no interest in composting, perhaps a neighbor would take your leaves and lawn clippings to add to their pile.

Bob Phelps (537-3155) will visit anyone who wants to start or improve a compost pile to talk with them about how to get started.

This Energy Tip comes to you from the Energy Committee and the Garden Club.

## **GREEN UP DAY IS COMING!**

Saturday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> will be Green Up Day in Benson. You will also be able to dispose of old tires that day at the dump for \$3/tire. If you need more information about Green Up Day or if you are willing to help, please contact Jan Ladd or Sandra Owens.

## **INSTALLING AND TESTING SMOKE ALARMS**

Home Safety Council research shows that 97 percent of American homes have at least one smoke alarm, but one may not be enough. Do you have enough alarms in your home? Are they correctly installed? Early warning is essential for every fire escape plan. To ensure your family will be effectively alerted to any fire dangers, use the following guidelines when installing and testing smoke alarms.

- Only purchase smoke alarms that are listed by UL and carry the UL mark on packaging.
- Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including the basement. Make sure there is an alarm near every sleeping area.
- The Home Safety Council recommends installing additional smoke alarms inside all bedrooms. For the best detection and notification protection, install both ionization- and photoelectric-type smoke alarms. Some models provide dual coverage. The type will be printed on the box or package.
- Smoke rises, so smoke alarms should be mounted high on walls or ceilings. Ceiling mounted alarms should be installed at least four inches away from the nearest wall; wall-mounted alarms should be installed 4 to 12 inches away from the ceiling.
- Choose an installation that is well away from the path of steam from bathrooms and cooking vapors from the kitchen, which can result in false, or nuisance alarms.
- Don't install smoke alarms near windows, doors, or ducts where drafts might interfere with their operation.
- Test each smoke alarm every month. Push the test button until you hear a loud noise.
- Put new batteries in your smoke alarms at least one time each year.
- The Home Safety Council recommends using interconnected smoke alarms. These are available with wireless connection and hard-wired with battery back-up. These alarms are tied in together so that if one alarm operates, they all signal together. Some models provide dual coverage (both ionization and photoelectric sensing technology).
- **IF YOUR SMOKE ALARMS ARE MORE THAN 10 YEARS OLD, GET NEW SMOKE ALARMS!**

## **LISTERS' NEWS: NEW LISTER!**

We welcome our newly elected Lister, Bob Phelps! Please remember that the Listers now have a dedicated telephone number: 537-2614. If you would like to call and schedule an appointment for one of the Listers to come to your property during their State-mandated re-evaluation process, please feel free to do so.

## **NEWSLETTER DEADLINES**

For the **May 1st** newsletter, please submit your news and ads no later than April 23rd. To submit your news, please either e-mail the information to [bensoanews@shoreham.net](mailto:bensoanews@shoreham.net) or call Sue Janssen at 011-33-4-93-60-32-06. Submit your ads to Shirley Vladyka: [ShirleyV@shoreham.net](mailto:ShirleyV@shoreham.net)

## TOWN MEETING SURVEY

The voters attending Town Meeting on March 3, 2009 asked the Selectboard to look at ways to increase the number of people attending Town Meeting. We want to learn your thoughts about Town Meeting, whether or not you attended. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey and drop your completed form off at the Town Office, Benson Village Store, or G & L General Store. You can also mail your completed form to the Town Office at PO Box 163, Benson, VT 05731. Please write "Town Meeting Survey" on the outside of your envelope. Please respond by April 15<sup>th</sup>.

The questions below apply only to the registered voters in your household.

How many registered voters are in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

How many voted in person at the Community Hall on March 3, 2009? \_\_\_\_\_

How many voted by absentee ballot in the March 3, 2009 election? \_\_\_\_\_

How many didn't vote in the March 3, 2009 election? \_\_\_\_\_

How many attended the Informational Meetings on Monday evening? \_\_\_\_\_

How many attended both parts Town and School District Meetings on Tuesday? \_\_\_\_\_

How many attended only the Town portion of Town Meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

How many attended only the School District portion of Town Meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

If you attended Town Meeting, why did you attend? (Respond separately for each voter in the house)

Voter 1	Voter 2	Voter 3	(Put a check mark in any item that expresses your feelings)
_____	_____	_____	I'm concerned about local issues.
_____	_____	_____	I'm concerned about how my property tax money is spent.
_____	_____	_____	I had a specific issue that I was concerned about.
_____	_____	_____	I believe it is my civic duty to attend to decide the Town's business.
_____	_____	_____	I wondered what happened at Town Meeting (never been before).
Other			

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If you did not attend any part of Town Meeting, why not? (Respond separately for each voter in the house)

Voter 1	Voter 2	Voter 3	(Put a check mark in any item that expresses your feelings)
_____	_____	_____	Local issues don't affect me.
_____	_____	_____	Had to work.
_____	_____	_____	Town meeting is a waste of my time.
_____	_____	_____	Couldn't afford to take a day off from work.
_____	_____	_____	Town meeting should be done away with.
_____	_____	_____	All Town issues should be voted by Australian (paper) ballot.
_____	_____	_____	My opinion wouldn't be heard at the meeting.
_____	_____	_____	Can't hear what people are saying
Other			

How do the decisions made at Town Meeting affect you? (Respond separately for each voter in the house)

Voter 1	Voter 2	Voter 3	(Put a check mark in any item that expresses your feelings)
_____	_____	_____	No impact on my life
_____	_____	_____	They change the amount of taxes I pay
_____	_____	_____	They impact the services people receive in Town.
Other			

What would increase the chance that you would attend Town Meeting in the future? (Respond separately)

Voter 1	Voter 2	Voter 3	(Put a check mark in any item that expresses your feelings)
_____	_____	_____	Town Meeting held in the evening.
_____	_____	_____	Town Meeting held on a weekend.
_____	_____	_____	People only be allowed to speak once on an issue.
_____	_____	_____	Limit time spent on an issue to a few minutes.
_____	_____	_____	Nothing, I'm not interested in Town Meeting.
Other			

If you need more space, feel free to use the back of this page to tell us your thoughts. Thank you for helping us by completing and returning this survey.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Would you like to help us make a difference? We need people like you to donate time, energy, and experience in a variety of areas, including food pickup and delivery, administration, home visits, individual transportation, repair and maintenance of municipal properties, community fundraisers and more. Even if you only have one hour a year to donate, you can make a difference. Even if “all” you can do is make phone calls from your home, your help will be invaluable.

In an effort to raise awareness about the benefits of volunteering and to engage more citizens in volunteer service, the Benson Selectboard’s Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer Benson), hopes to foster the personal involvement, individual generosity, and consistent participation that are the hallmarks of private philanthropy.

Through their service to others, volunteers gain confidence and self-esteem, develop a variety of new skills, and make new friends. Most important, our volunteers will improve the lives of others and improve our community and lower our property tax requirements. By engaging more volunteers, we can avoid “burnout” of individuals who already do volunteer for the Town.

Please call us today at **537-2971** to find out more about how you can help, or visit our Web site at **[www.benson-vt.com](http://www.benson-vt.com)**. We look forward to your support of our efforts to cultivate a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility in our community.

Thank you, and we look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Your Selectboard