

Benson Bulletin

Benson, Vermont's Community Newsletter

January 2010



THANK YOU, JAN!

After 15 years of dedicated service to the Town of Benson, Town Clerk and Town Treasurer Jan Ladd is retiring. Jan's many contributions to the Town have gone far beyond her duties as Town Clerk and Treasurer. An active member of the Church, Jan was also a member of our First Response and has remained a strong supporter of that organization. Hopefully she will now be able to enjoy spending more time with her family, friends – and crafts.

Thank you, Jan, for all you have done to make Benson a better place for all of us!

MEETINGS/EVENTS THIS MONTH

<u>DATE</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>TIME</u>	<u>PLACE</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION/EVENT</u>
January 5	Tuesday	3:30 pm	Town Office	Auditors' Reports Due
January 6	Wednesday	6:30 pm	Benson School	Bingo
January 7	Thursday	7:00 pm	Benson School	Winter Concert
January 11	Monday	11:30 pm	Community Hall	Senior Luncheon
January 11	Monday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Selectboard
January 12	Tuesday	6:30-8 pm	Community Hall	Benson Busy Buddies
January 12	Tuesday	6:30	Town Office	History Project
January 12	Tuesday	7:00 pm	Benson School	School Board
January 13	Wednesday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Zoning Public Hearing
January 14	Thursday	6:30 pm	Library	Energy Committee
January 21	Thursday	6:00 pm	Benson School	Playground Committee
January 25	Monday	4:30 pm	Town Office	Petitions for Officers Due
January 25	Monday	7:00 pm	Town Office	Selectboard
January 26	Tuesday	6:30-8 pm	Community Hall	Benson Busy Buddies
January 30-31	Sat.-Sun.		Benson Landing	Fish & Game Fishing Derby
LOOKING AHEAD				
February 20	Saturday	1 – 3 pm	Community Hall	Chowder Cook-Off

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

Monthly Senior Luncheon
at the Benson Community Hall on January 11th

Need a proven way to chase those post-holiday blahs? Come out and join a fun group of friends for a fantastic meal! Proposed menu: Tossed Salad, Baked Fish with Lemon or Dill Sauce, Sweet Potatoes, Brussels Sprouts, Pudding, Bread, Milk, Coffee or Tea.

For reservations, please call Deanna Britton by Friday, January 8th : 537-2971.

TOWN OF BENSON: AUDITORS' NOTICE

All reports for the Fiscal Year 2008-2009 and all budgets for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011 are due in the Town Office by **January 5, 2010**. Anyone who received money during the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year must submit an accounting for that money.

Thank you! Benson Auditors: Robert Butman, Sharrie Hanley, John Kubin

TRANSFER STATION REMINDER

Your annual permit (\$10) allows you to use the transfer station, regardless of how many bags you use OR who transports your bags to the transfer station. EVERYONE who brings OR sends garbage to the transfer station needs a permit.

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR!

If you are interested in serving your Town by running for any of the following positions, your petition, signed by at least seven registered Benson voters, is due in the Town Office by **4:30 pm Monday, January 25, 2010**:

Agent to Prosecute: one 1 year term

Auditors: one 3 year term

Benson Village School Board: one 3 year term and two 1 year terms

Benson Village School Moderator: one 1 year term

Cemetery Commissioner: one 5 year term

Delinquent Tax Collector: one 1 year term

First Constable: one 1 year term

Library Commissioner: one 5 year term

Listers: one 3 year term

Selectboard: one 3 year term and two 1 year terms

Town Clerk: one 3 year term

Town Moderator: one 1 year term

Town Treasurer: one 3 year term

Trustee of Public Funds: one 3 year term

Remember: You can only sign ONE petition for each open position!

ARE YOU REGISTERED YET?

If you plan to vote on Town Meeting Day, you need to be a registered voter. The deadline for becoming a registered voter in the Town of Benson is February 24, 2010.

Questions? Call Jan Ladd at 537-2611 Monday – Thursday, 8 a.m. – 12 or 1 p.m. – 4:30



BENSON PUBLIC LIBRARY



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

If you're looking for some fascinating - and free - local entertainment for these snowy times, why not stop in and see what we have on our shelves. We guarantee that we can help you find something to brighten up a dreary winter day. Fiction or non-fiction, mystery or romance, science fiction or fantasy, classics or best-sellers, we have something for every interest. Be sure you're ready for the next storm – you know it's coming!

CHURCH NEWS

On Wednesday, January 13th, we will be finishing our current Book Study Group : Moments That Take Our Breath Away by James W. Moore. After a short break, we will then begin studying Revelation in February. Everyone is welcome to join us.

Starting January 3rd, we will be worshipping downstairs for the winter.

9:30 a.m. Choir Practice

9:30 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Worship

**Questions? Please contact Holly Noble: 802-446-3575 or
hollyberry530@yahoo.com**

TOWN OF BENSON

OPEN POSITION

PLANNING COMMISSION

There is an opening on the Town of Benson's Planning Commission for a term which will expire in 2011. If you are willing to fill this position, please submit a letter of interest to the Selectboard by January 11, 2010.

HISTORY PROJECT

The History Project group is ready to move on to its next phase. Several interviews have been recorded with long-time Benson residents. Now we need to decide what form our final product will take. If you would like to offer some suggestions or help in any way, please join us. We will be meeting on Tuesday, January 12th at 6:30 p.m. at the Town Office.

If you would like to tell us your story of Benson in the past, please contact

Karen Barber at 537-3155.

COMMUNITY SCHOLARSHIP FUND

This scholarship fund is dangerously low and could use your support. If you are looking for a worthwhile local way to make a contribution, please contact

Jan Ladd for more information: 537-2611. Thank you.

BENSON CHRISTMAS PARTY A HUGE SUCCESS!!!

Submitted by Jon Dodd



L to R: Steve "Photo Elf" Arthur, Santa Claus, John "Chief Elf" Hill

On December 6th, Benson children of all ages celebrated the Christmas season at the Benson Community Hall. Under the leadership of Chief Elf John Hill and his many assistant elves, the party featured Kris Kringle aka Santa Claus and the children of Benson. Food and beverages were provided by many gracious donors and children's crafts and Christmas carols were featured in the upstairs assembly area. Santa heard the secret wishes of over 60 children, each of whom received a

special gift from Santa. Total attendance was estimated at more than 150 people.

Santa asked that special "Ho Ho Ho's" be given to his Chief Elf, John Hill, Photo Elf, Steve Arthur, Daphne Bartholomew for playing Christmas music and leading the Christmas carol singing, and to the many other elves who provided food, crafts, and cheer. Photos of the celebration are available at the Benson Town Office. Plans are already being made for next year's Christmas party which Santa and the "elves" promise will be bigger and better than this years.!!!

VERD MONT FCE

The Verd Mont FCE Club held their Christmas party on December 10th. Gifts were exchanged, after a potluck dinner consisting of the members' specialty dishes. Names were drawn for Secret Pals for 2010.

There will be no meeting in January. Regular meetings will resume in February. **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."

AT THE TOP...

...of your list of New Year's Resolutions, we know that you have written: "improve my balance and strengthen my bones". Well, we have the solution for your resolution: Bone Builders! Come and see what we're all about. Free frolic and fitness, right here in downtown Benson every Monday and Thursday morning, from 9 – 10 am at the Community Hall.

Unplug for Dollars! Stop 'Vampire Power' Waste

You can save a couple hundred bucks a year by unplugging electronics that aren't in use. Read on to get the lowdown on costs, plus some products to help you cut back on kilowatt consumption.

The secret lies in an often overlooked but easily corrected problem. Put simply, you're paying electric bills for stuff you aren't using. As long as they're plugged in, your computers, peripherals, and home electronics are eating up energy when you think they're off--and in no small amount, either. A few examples:

- A plasma TV, the Department of Energy says, costs a whopping \$165 a year for its standby power consumption alone.
- Remote-controlled power wasters include such common devices as cable boxes (\$10.33 a year), CRT TV (\$5.16 a year), the VCR (\$3.10 a year), powered subwoofer (\$15.50 a year) and computer speaker systems (\$5.16 per year) and DSL modem (\$5.16 a year).
- And don't forget the DVD (\$3.60 a year) and the stereo receiver (\$41.34 per year).

Meet Your In-House Dracula

This phenomenon is often called "vampire energy loss," and it's easy to see why. Like the blood-drinking creatures of the night, your devices are sucking down power while you sleep--albeit without the bite marks. Experts estimate that standby energy drain accounts for anywhere from **5-10%** of an average home's annual power usage. For most families, that means a **minimum of \$130 a year**--more than some people spend on a typical month's electric bill.

The wasted cash is bad enough, but the toll on Mother Nature is worse. Vampire energy accounts for 1 percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions. In the U.S. alone, that's equal to the combined annual production of dozens of power plants.

Save money AND help the environment. But how, exactly?

The easiest way to control vampire power loss is with new "smart" power strips. All these models offer at least two "always on" outlets, giving you the ability to leave items such as DVRs or routers--which would lose functionality when unplugged--continuously connected. Power strips, such as the BITS Smart Power Strip with 7-outlets, are available in some local hardware stores, such as Aubuchon's in Fair Haven, and they retail for \$29.95. Ace Hardware stores (such as Gilmore's) have the Coleman 7-outlet Surge Smart Strip available, which retails for \$31.99. **Efficiency Vermont provides rebates (\$7.00 per item) for these power strips (limit 2 per household).**

Does this all seem like a lot of trouble for a little gain? Think of it in terms of an election - each individual vote may seem trivial—but added together, the effect is enormous. Your individual energy saving action will have an enormous effect when added with others all around Vermont and our country. And hey, that extra couple hundred bucks in your back pocket can never be a bad thing.

8th Grade Bottle Collection

Please remember that you can now “re-cycle” and help the Benson Village School 8th Grade Class raise money for their trip to Washington. There is a container for bottles and cans located just outside the Transfer Station.

All donations to this fund-raising activity will be appreciated!

SCHOOL CLOSINGS/INCLEMENT WEATHER

Again this year our district is using the ‘ALERT NOW’ system for school closing due to weather or if an emergency arises. If your phone or cell number has changed since the beginning of this school year, please let us know. If at any time during the year your information changes, please call us at 802-537-2491.

If you do not have access to a phone, you may check the following TV stations for school closings:

- Channel 3(WCAX) in Burlington, VT
- Channel 5(WPTZ) in Plattsburgh, NY
- Channels 15 & 20 (Rutland Edu. Access TV and the Stafford Tech. Ctr.)

Another means we use to communicate ‘school closings’ is the radio. The stations that will inform the public of any type of closing are:

- WZRT(97.1FM) “Z97.1” WSYB (1380AM)
- WVNR/WNYV(1340AM)/94.1FM)
- WJJR (98.1FM) “Mix 98.1” (WJEN 105.3FM) “Cat Country”

These ‘stations’ are notified early so the information can be sent over the airways.

CHOWDER COOK-OFF

Our Family Day Fundraising Committee is at it again! After the huge success of the Basket Party, they are now in the process of organizing a Chowder Cook-Off. If you are a cook and think you make a pretty good chowder, here’s a chance for you to win \$100. If your specialty is eating, not preparing, you too can participate. On Saturday, February 20th from 1 to 3 pm you can go to the Community Hall and sample the chowders from all the chefs who will be hoping to win the \$100 First Prize. For only \$5, you will be able to sample each of the entries (hint: don’t eat lunch) and to vote for your personal favorite. Contact Gina Cull for more information: 537-2063.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

For the **February 1st** newsletter, please submit your news and ads no later than January 22nd. To submit your news, please either e-mail the information to

bensonnews@shoreham.net or call Sue Janssen at 537-3111

Submit your ads to Shirley Vladyka: ShirleyV@shoreham.net

Zoning and Subdivision Regulation Amendments Public Hearing

The Benson Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing on Wednesday, January 13, 2010 at 7:00 pm at the Town Office to take public comments and to consider for approval and submission to the Select Board the November 2009 amended Benson Zoning and Subdivision Bylaw. The Planning Commission has completed a review of the current regulations and is recommending a number of changes to the Select Board. The changes are based on three years of experience with the existing regulations and are primarily for three purposes: (1) to change setbacks to more closely conform to current development, (2) to simplify procedures and (3) to clarify some of the requirements. The regulations are basically unchanged. The proposed changes include the following:

1. Reduce the setback from the center of the road from 80 feet to 75 feet in the Agricultural and Rural Residential District.
2. Reduce the minimum lot size from two acres to one acre in the Agricultural and Rural Residential District. (This does not increase the number of houses which may be constructed.)
3. Reduce the minimum side and rear yard setbacks from 40 feet to 20 feet in the Village District.
4. A new section with setbacks and dimensions for the Lakeshore and Lake Champlain Shoreline Districts has been added. Side and rear yard setbacks are five feet, shoreline setback is 25 feet, minimum lot width is 100 feet, minimum lot size is 20,000 square feet, minimum density is 20 acres per principal structure and minimum setback from a public road is 65 feet.
5. Increases the size of child care facilities which may be permitted by the Zoning Administrator.
6. Authorizes the Zoning Administrator to issue waivers for new structures, building additions and/or modifications.
7. Adds a new section which allows the DRB to require a "financial guarantee" to cover the cost of removal of an abandoned cell tower or windmill prior to the issuance of a permit.
8. Clarifies and reduces permit requirements for changes to non-conforming structures.
9. Require that plats for subdivided lots of less than 20 acres are prepared by a professional.

There are also a number of other small changes. The full text of the proposed amended Zoning and Subdivision Bylaw is available for public review at the town office. Please attend the hearing or contact a member of the Planning Commission with any concerns or comments.

THE MONEY HOLE STORY^{continued}

In the December 2009 Benson Bulletin, we left Pete, one of the hired men, creeping down the stairs, trying to discover what Milo was up to. Well, Pete was apprehended by his boss and now Milo had two pairs of eyes following him.

Over stone walls and through brooks, Milo's bobbing lantern led them until at last, quite near the base of a large cliff, it stopped. The trailers crept up Indian fashion until they had gained a spot almost over Milo's head. Here they craned their necks to see what would happen now. Imagine their surprise when he took out a folded paper from his wallet and spread it out on the rock near the lantern. After studying it intently for some moments, he picked up the lantern and walked a few paces to where quite a hole were dug and began digging again, carefully watching the contents of each shovelfull after he threw it out.

They dared not speak to each other, so after awhile they withdrew and started for home and, although neither could imagine what he was digging for, they both knew that the fox story was only a joke. Pete tried to get Milo to tell him, but the only answer he got was "by and by." The boss said he didn't care how much Milo dug at night, as long as he could work days.

But when Milo refused to tell old man Jones, who owned the land he was digging on, there was trouble. Old Jones refused to let him dig anymore unless he knew the why and wherefore. He told the old man that he was digging for treasure and could prove it and, after making a deal to share any findings half and half, he showed the now famous paper and told this story:

First that he was not a Canadian woodsman, but a Spanish sailor. One day in his home port in Spain, he had been watching the ship loaders trundling the endless loads up the gang plank when one of the heavy cases started to topple from the hand truck. Had he not jumped and caught some of the weight, it certainly would have killed the old man who was moving it. As it was, the loader had gotten a crushed foot and Milo had lost a finger. They were taken to the same hospital for treatment and in the days that followed, they became fast friends. One day the old man called Milo to his bedside and asked him to get his coat. He had seemed quite anxious that no harm should come to his coat and, now that it was in his hands, he felt carefully over the lining, ripped open a seam and took out a yellowish old paper which proved to be a map. The old man would not say how it came into his possession, but he told Milo its story.

In the time of piracy, one of these gentlemen of the cutlass had sailed into Lake Champlain, somewhere in the Province of New York in North America and, being closely pursued by a British Man of War, had taken a party inland to hide his loot and, intending to return for it at a later date, had made this identical map. He sailed away, never to return.....

...to be continued in the February 2010 Benson Bulletin.....

Fishing Derby: We have Changed (see #6) !!!

The Benson Fish and Game Club and Benson Youth League will be holding the "Lake Champlain Down Home Derby" the weekend of January 30th and 31st, when fishing people will get the chance to show their skill and win cash if they can hook the big one. There will be over \$2700 in fish category prizes plus drawing prizes.

There will be a "Lake Champlain Kids Down Home Derby" January 30th for ages 14 and under. For the Kids Derby, first place winners in each fish category will receive a trophy; drawing prizes include gift certificates and savings bonds. Tickets will be available for both derbies at bait shops, local businesses and derby headquarters. Additional information is available at local businesses and bait shops or by calling 537-2468.

1. Derby is limited to Lake Champlain waters between Dresden, NY (buoy 16) and Larrabees Point, VT (Route 74).
2. Fish Categories are Northern Pike, Walleye, Three Perch and Biggest Other.
3. Derby Tickets are \$20.
4. Kids Derby Tickets are \$5.
5. There will also be a raffle; prizes will be \$400, \$200, \$100, face cord firewood and face cord firewood. Raffle tickets are \$5.

6. Derby Headquarters will be at Benson Landing.

QUIET TOWN MEETING?

Your Selectboard has not heard from a single one of you regarding the 2010-2011 Budget. We are, wherever possible, seeking to level fund. Our final meeting before the proposed budget goes to the printer is on January 11th. If you have any concerns, **NOW** is the time to speak up. Come to a Selectboard meeting or telephone a Selectboard member or leave off a written concern at the Town Office.

SPRING SPRUCE UP AT THE SCHOOL PLAYGROUND

The Playground Committee encourages everyone to come to their meeting on Thursday, January 21st at 6:00 pm at the School. Among other topics, the planning of the Spring Spruce up will be discussed. All are welcome to come and get involved!

PLAY GROUP IN BENSON

The Rutland County Parent Child Center hosts a playgroup downstairs in the Community Hall every Wednesday from 9:30 – 10:30 am. Any child, age 0 – 5, from any town, is welcome to participate. Please bring a snack.

Questions? Call Lori at 775-9711.