

May 2010

TOWN NEWSLETTER

Published by the:
Berkshire Communities Association

BCA
PO Box 113
Berkshire, NY 13736
Phone: 607-657-2742
www.berkshirenyc.com

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SUPERVISORS NOTE

Here's hoping that 2010 is an economic recovery year. Normally the Town budgets \$10,000 to \$12,000 each year from interest acquired on savings accounts and Certificates of Deposit. Last November, at budget time, we anticipated only \$1,500 but with the interest rates remaining at ridiculously low levels (fractions of one percent on municipal accounts), it is unlikely that we will even realize that amount. In addition a Tioga County business paid too much sales tax last year and won a court settlement with NYS to recoup their overpayment. Tioga County's share of the overpayment was approximately \$ 1 million. Since the municipalities get a small percentage of the County's sales tax income, we also will share in the penalty. Although I do not yet have the March figures, I expect that we will lose most or all of our anticipated March sales tax revenues. That's the bad news. Even though it is still early in the fiscal year and despite the aforementioned income shortfalls, we appear to be doing OK. We have the funds set aside in a capital reserve fund to renovate the exterior of the Town Hall and we hope to get at least a portion of that work done this year. We also plan to use the remainder of the Senator Libous grant money for sidewalks before the grant expires in October.

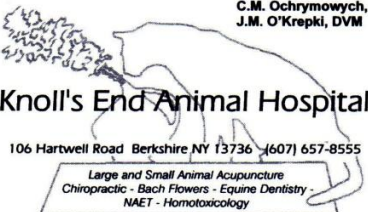
Mike Simmons

HIGHWAY NEWS

The weather has allowed us to get an early start on road work and screening gravel in the pit. Payne Marsh Road. is just about ready for oil and stone and we hope to pave Dimon Hill as well. No firm word on CHIPS funding. We will probably get hear something if NYS ever passes their budget. The new plow/dump truck has arrived and we are inspecting to make sure everything is as we ordered and working. We will eventually be retiring the Freightliner that we use as a salt brine truck. Although the engine is OK, the entire drive train needs very expensive repair/replacement. We will retain the oldest of our dump trucks which we will retrofit to accept the brine tank as needed so that we will have a dual purpose spare. By the time you read this newsletter we will most likely have finished interior walls and insulation on the new section of the Town Barn. We still need to do the electrical work and purchase a waste oil furnace and then move our operation and equipment from the old side to the new. You can now bring your waste oil to the highway garage. By doing so you not only have a way to get rid of the oil, but it will save tax dollars used to purchase heating oil. This past season we spent over six thousand dollars on heating oil for the garage. That is one of the main reasons we have constructed the new, very well insulated addition. Hopefully the new section will be completed in time to allow the Fire Department to use the old side for their equipment during the construction of the new station. When no longer needed to house firefighting equipment, we will use the old section, which has a new roof, for cold storage of the highway equipment.

Karl Spoonhower

C.M. Ochrymowych, DVM
J.M. O'Krepi, DVM



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TOWN WIDE EMAIL

This unofficial email list is used to disseminate information of significant happenings in and around Berkshire such as major projects, meetings, fundraisers, public hearings, new or proposed legislation, etc. We have 150 addresses on the list and have been using it for seven years. It has proven to be an increasingly effective way to get near real time communications to the people in Town who receive email and wish to be on the list. The program also serves as an excellent way to receive feedback. As a protection against personal use and SPAM, messages are sent out as Blind Carbon Copies so the entire list will never be sent to any recipients. Comments on the information provided and the use of the list has been very positive. To be placed on the list or to change an address-- contact Skip Hartwig skhartwig@frontiernet.net.

BERKSHIRE FIRE STATION

As many of you already know the Berkshire Fire District will be constructing a new fire station this year. We would like to thank all of you that helped and supported the project and all who came out to vote. We have begun planning the new building, an architect has been hired and some money has been applied for. We met with the architect and preliminary plans were reviewed and changed to better suit our needs. The meeting room will be larger and will seat about 100 people with tables and chairs. There will be a separate mechanical room and a storage room attached to the meeting hall. The kitchen will be enclosed but will have a serving window, for now the plan is to reuse the existing appliances to keep cost down. Both restrooms will be handicap accessible. The truck bay will also be larger. There will be 5 bays so all the trucks can have their own door and be parked straight. There will also be the required room around the trucks. The truck bay will have a chief's office, a squad office, a small radio room, a storage room, and a restroom with a shower for decon. There will also be an open area behind 2 of the bays for gear racks, hose racks, and a place to work and train. The interior of the truck bays will covered with metal and the meeting room will be sheetrock. There will be a drop ceiling in the meeting room. The entire building will have in floor heating with 3 zones, office, truck bay, and meeting room. The new building will also have 14 foot doors for the trucks so our neighbor's vehicles will fit if called to stand by here for mutual aid. There will also be an exhaust ventilation system for the trucks. The outside of the building will be metal with a metal roof and the siren will still be on the roof. There will be 40 parking spaces and legal handicap spaces as well. The current plan is still to use wood frame. Some of the things not yet decided were weather to have blacktop or concrete for the truck drive, and whether to use post in the ground or a frost wall. These decisions may be cost driven and will be determined when cost estimates come in. The station will meet all the latest codes and other requirements. The architect will have the plans ready by early June. We have applied for \$300,000 from NYS at 2.5% for 30 years, that is the most we can get from that source. Work is still being done on the USDA grant / loan paperwork. The Town Board and Highway Department have been generous enough to allow us to use the old section of the town highway garage until the new station is completed. Thank you to all of them for that. Anyone wishing to know please come to meetings we will try to keep them posted on the sign in front of the station.

As always more volunteers are needed anyone wishing to join please stop by any Tuesday night at 7:00 PM. The first Tuesday of the month is our meeting and the rest are training nights. There is a job here for everyone.

Remember this is brush fire season so be very careful with any outside fires.

Bret Welch, Fire Chief

BERKSHIRE FIRE COMPANY

Chief: Bret Welch
 1st Asst: A.J. Hanson
 2nd Asst: Dean Belden
 3rd Asst: Clair Rupert
 4th Asst: Al Hepp
 Squad Chief: Cheryl Ceurter
 President: Butch Ceurter
 Secretary: Tammy Welch
 Treasurer: Bill Leonard

BERKSHIRE FIRE AUXILIARY

Meetings - 1st Wednesday of the month at 7 pm at the fire station.

President Darlene Hoffmier
 Vice President Melinda Case
 Secretary Diana Burk
 Treasurer Nancy Hunt



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HELPING HANDS FOOD PANTRY

The Helping Hands Food Pantry is located in the First Congregational Church of Berkshire (the Red Brick Church) on the corner of State Route 38 and Glen Road. It is open to all residents of Berkshire, Richford, and Speedsville as an emergency food source. The regular hours of operation are Monday evenings from 6:30 to 7:30 pm and Thursday afternoons from 2 to 4 pm. In case of emergency, call 657-2501.

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Sharlene Kinney, M.D.

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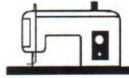
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BERKSHIRE FREE LIBRARY

Spring is here and that means gardening! We have a number of books on various gardening topics in the Library and more can be borrowed from other libraries in the Finger Lakes Library System. You can do this yourself on your home computer if you have a library card, or you can ask for assistance in the library. We are looking toward Summer and our Summer Reading Program. This year's theme is "Make a Splash @ Your Library". We are planning some great activities around that theme. Our favorite Puppet Lady, Nancy Sander will be returning with a new show full of laughs and fun. Watch for fliers and posters giving more details, as time progresses. Of course, we have some great new books! For instance, Elizabeth Berg's latest, "The Last Time I Saw You" just arrived. Barbara Delinsky's "Not My Daughter", Stuart Woods' "Lucid Interval" and Mary Higgins Clark's "The Shadow of Your Smile" are also here. If you plan to travel, or drive a lot for work, you might enjoy listening to a book on CD. We have a good collection, including "Silent Sea" by Clive Cussler and "U is for Undertow" by Sue Grafton, among others. All books, audio books and magazines can be borrowed for three weeks. There are many movies on DVD here as well, which can be borrowed for one week. There are a number of new books for Children, too. "Amelia Bedelia's First Day of School", by Herman Parish, "Augustus and his Smile", by Catherine Rayner and "Mr. And Mrs. Portly and Their Little Dog, Snack", by Sandra Jordan are a few of the new titles.

Come in and see what else we have for you to enjoy! The Library is open on Tues., Noon – 5:00; Weds. 1:30 – 7:00; Thurs, 1:00 – 5:00; Fri, 3:00 – 8:30, and Sat. 9:00 – 2:00PM. We are located at the corner of Jewett Hill Road and Rte. 38, next to the Berkshire Fire Station. Our phone number is 657-4418.

Marleta Anderson

U.S. CONGRESSIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Part of Tioga County and all of Berkshire is within the 24th Congressional District. Our Congressman is Michael Arcuri. His permanent office within the District is located in Cortland. He has just notified us that he has established what he calls "Mobile Office Hours" for constituents who need assistance with a federal agency or would like to offer a comment about a legislative issue. His Mobile Office for Tioga County will be at the Newark Valley Village Hall. One of his staff representatives will be there on the fourth Tuesday of each month from 4pm to 6pm. Just drop in -- no appointments needed. This is a chance to voice your opinion on issues like health care reform, gun control, gas drilling, or any other subject that does, should or could come before Congress. For questions or further information call 607-756-2740.

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NEWSLETTER NEWS

R NEWS: Many thanks to all the sponsors who have renewed or came on board for the first time. They make it possible for you to get the next four issues of this newsletter without using any of your tax dollars. Because we now have to pay for printing the costs, including mailing, expenses would exceed our income. The only way we can make ends meet is to send as many copies of the newsletter as we can electronically. We so far have about 120 people who have agreed to forego the hard copy and receive the newsletter via email. Thanks very much to those who responded. But we still need more electronic deliveries. If you can possibly receive the newsletter electronically (it will arrive via email, blind carbon copy so no one else will see your address, as an easily opened pdf attachment) please let me know at skhartwig@frontiernet.net. I will also need your mailing address especially if you have a P.O. Box so we can eliminate the proper hard copy. We continue to refine our mailing list so that those who cannot receive it electronically will be assured of getting the printed version. If you know of someone who is not receiving the newsletter, or change your email address, please let me know.

Skip Hartwig -- 657-8418.

**TOWN OFFICIALS & MEETINGS**

Town Board Meetings 3rd Monday, 7 pm

Supervisor

Mike Simmons
657-8678 h 657-8642

Town Clerk

Connie Liddington

657-8131

12421 Street Route 38
Hours M-T 6-8 pm, Sat.
10 am – 2 pm

Highway
Superintendent

Karl Spoonhower
657-2705

Justice

Charles Brundza

657-8286, 657-8601

Court 1st Mon 7 pm, 3rd
Mon 5:30 pm

Town Board

Lillian Hoffmier
John Stoughton
Fraser Williams
Skip Hartwig
657-8678

Dog Control
Officer

Ron Raab
426-4567

Planning Board Chair
Meets 1st Tues. 6:30 pm

Ken Ceurter
657-2831

Code
Enforcement

Lee Virtue
657-8635

Vice Chair

Joe Palmeri

Hours 1st & 3rd Sat. 10

Secretary

Tim Pollard

am-Noon, 2nd & 4th

Planning Board Member

Jim Lacey

Sat. 9-11 am

County Planning Board Rep

John Gehm

Assessor

Catherine Edwards

18 Railroad Avenue

657-8635 c 857-7482

Hours: 1st and 3rd

Sat. 9 am-Noon

AdHoc

Charlie Dowdell
Sarah Albrecht

**THE BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY HALL**

As you have noticed over the past several years the Berkshire Community Hall (BCH) is returning to its Beauty and pride of years gone by. This year, 2010, we are excited about the continuing progress that with the addition of an ADA compliant West Wing entrance located on the south west corner of the building. The grants received from the Community Foundation for South Central New York and the Mildred Faulkner Truman Foundation are sufficient to construct the shell of this new entrance. To finish the West Wing addition several items will be needed including a handicap lift providing access to both the hall and the basement, bathroom fixtures, heating, sewer and water well. These improvements will be added when and as funds become available.

The other good news is the BCH is open and ready for those pickup basketball games for young and older alike. Maybe you would like to have a volley ball game, or a table tennis tournament, or a pickle ball game. Just let us know and it can be scheduled. The only requirement is that there is an adult that will be responsible to open the door, keep the building in good shape and lock the door when leaving. Skip Hartwig has agreed to keep a calendar for those that want to schedule an activity, his number 657-8418 and his email is skhartwig@frontiernet.net. If you have questions please call me Fraser Williams at 657-2742 or email fraserw@citlink.net.

Fraser Williams



**PASTOR JIM AND KAREN—40
YEARS SERVING BERKSHIRE**

Palm Sunday, 1969.... Rev. James Willard and his wife Karen arrived in Berkshire where Jim would vie for the position of pastor at the First Congregational Church. The Pulpit Committee, along with the committees from three other churches, had listened to Jim preach, and all had invited him to become their pastor. Jim and Karen chose Berkshire, and the rest is history. They took up the pastorate here in August, 1969 soon after the birth of their first son, James Jr. Two other sons, Mark and David, and daughter Roxie completed the next generation of Berkshire Willards. Jim and Karen now have seven grandchildren. The Willards have spent many years working with Special Olympics. Jim is the Chaplain for the Berkshire Fire Department, and was a certified ambulance driver.

Karen worked at the high school for many years. The Willards are looking forward to a more relaxed life after Jim's retirement. They are planning a major train trip encompassing four National Parks in the western US. More golf, more gardening, more things getting done on the "to do" list are all in their plans. They still plan to be involved in doing the LORD's work. Hopefully the work will be at a more relaxed pace and they will have the freedom to go where God beckons them. Filling in for other pastors in the area is a likely possibility. The Church and community said "thank you" to Jim and Karen for their 40 years of service, wishing them well in their new season of life with an Open House on Saturday, April 24. Jim's last Sunday as the pastor of the Red Brick Church was April 25. Starting May 1, Rev. Dr. Charles Horvath will become the intentional interim pastor for the Church. His wife Becky also plans to be active in the life of the Church and the community.



One of the highlights of last fall's Heritage Day celebration was the outstanding performance by the Southentiersmen Barbershop Chorus. The newly renovated Berkshire Community Hall was the ideal location for this event. At the conclusion of the concert, several of us lingered in the auditorium to exchange recollections of occasions when we had danced, played basketball or enjoyed a holiday party in this historic building.

As memories were jogged and stories were shared, I realized what an important role the Community Hall has played in bringing our town's citizens together. The town leaders who formed the Berkshire Community Club - Herbert Howland, Howard Jewett, Frank Aldrich, Harper Prentice, Clark Gage - not only addressed the need for a school gymnasium, but had the vision to construct a building that could be used for a variety of purposes. They wanted to have a meeting place where residents could enjoy concerts and athletic events. They wanted the citizens to have a hall where social affairs could be held, such as birthday parties, family reunions and wedding receptions.

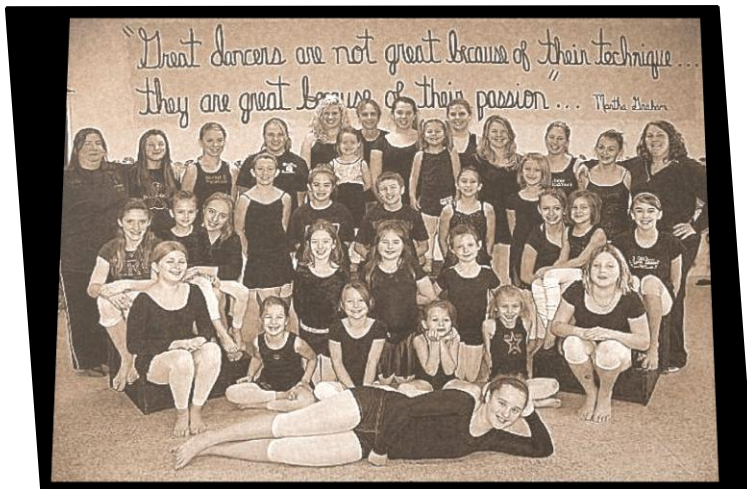
Eighty years ago, the Berkshire Community Club members understood that what makes a community prosper is the positive interaction of its citizens. Constructing a building that could house large and small gatherings was the original purpose of five civic-minded citizens in the 1930s. The Berkshire Community Association's recent revitalization of the hall has made it possible for us to rekindle this spirit of community. We can take pride in the spacious, convenient facility that is available for our residents' enjoyment. I am looking forward to attending many future concerts at the Berkshire Community Hall. *Evelyn Martin Berkshire Resident for 68 Years*

FULL OF GRACE DANCE

In the summer of 2004 Erica Hanson owner of Full of Grace Dance Instruction and her family started making renovations an old plank building in the town of Berkshire. This old building has been known over time as an old Grange building, a Red and White grocery store, an apartment building, a book store, an upholstery shop, and now a dance studio. The old building was mostly being used for storage and was in need of a good cleaning and fix up but it was a big open space and was perfect for a dance studio! Most of the original renovations were done by Erica's family including Richard and Valorie Hammond, Andy and AJ Hanson, and David Smith. The renovations included new floors, a new ceiling in some rooms, running water, and painting inside and out. The upstairs was renovated in the summer of 2005 by connecting the two levels together, more new floors and carpeting, lots of painting, a second furnace, insulation, and a second bathroom; thus giving the business two studio rooms, a weight room, two student waiting areas, two waiting rooms, two bathrooms, and an office. We offer classes in Ballet/Point, Tap, Jazz, Lyrical, Contemporary, Modern, Open, Acrobatics, Hip Hop, Riverdance, Karate, and Yoga! We offer classes in a group setting as well as private and semi private lessons. The teachers include Erica Hanson, Meg Ward, Stephanie Marsh, Marcia Payton-Harp, Jennifer Willard, Denise Wright, Sarah Parrish, Nikkota Spoonhower, Richard Hammond, and Michael Shepherd. The assistant teachers are Kerra Matolka, Barbara Jordan, Savannah Howland, Mickaela Brown, Eleni Riechers, Tori Bean, Kayla Bean, Mackenzie Harris, Kylie Marsh, and David Bean. The Office Manager is Myrna Matolka and the acting personal assistant is Dianna Brown-Parrish.

This studio caters to about 100 students and growing! Full of Grace has a competition team of 37 students that all compete at a regional level. The region is nothing short of the Syracuse area to near New York City! In the 2010 competition season the team has taken home many awards from gold to platinum! They have won many awards for 1st place, high score over all, and special judge's awards. They have also had nominations for best choreography! We will be competing at a national competition in Wildwood, NJ this July.

When the students were asked to describe what they thought of when they thought of Full of Grace they used words such as "amazing, family, home, life, memorable, love, support, freedom, faith, escape, strength, fun, confidence, and passion." The best came from 8 year old Amber Bean when she said "living the dream!"



This is what Full of Grace has brought to Berkshire and what Berkshire has brought to the nation. If you would like to see the students in action please join us for our FREE recital on Saturday June 19th at the Newark Valley Middle school. There is dancing from morning through the night with three different shows offered. If you would like to see what our building looks like now please join us for an open house on Berkshire's Heritage Days this September!

Erica Hanson



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ASSESSOR NEWS

The Assessor has finished collecting permits, exemptions and filing all utilities for the 2010 assessment roll. It is the Assessor's job to ensure that all properties are assessed accurately. Property owners who have questions about how the value of their property has been determined are encouraged to contact the Assessor's office to discuss the value. All concerns about the values of the properties must be brought to the Assessor's attention prior to Grievance Day. This year's Grievance Day will be Friday, May 28th from 4:00 PM till 8:00 PM at the Berkshire Town Hall. Applications can be picked up at the Town Clerk's office. Please submit your application prior to May 28th. The assessor, Catherine Edwards, will be in the office on May 15th from 9-noon for any informal hearings. **Pending Legislation** Governor Introduces Property Tax Cap for Municipalities and Special Districts. New proposal would extend cap beyond school districts. On March 18, Governor David Paterson submitted legislation to "ease the crushing property tax burden on New York homeowners." The proposed property tax cap would limit tax levy growth for school districts, counties, cities, towns, villages, special districts and fire districts to 4 percent or 120 percent of the annual increase in the consumer price index, whichever is less. "New Yorkers pay the highest property taxes in the country, and have continuously asked Albany to do something about it. We need to take immediate action to address what has been ignored for far too long," Governor Paterson said. The new bill is based on the recommendations of the Commission on Property Tax Relief, which found that New York's local taxes are the highest in the nation – 78 percent above the national average. However, the Commission was only charged with addressing the school tax burden. The Governor's bill takes the Commission's recommendations a step further by establishing a property tax levy cap for local governments. As was the case for school districts in previous tax cap proposals, local governments' tax levies could only increase by up to the lesser of 4% or 120% of inflation (based on the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index). The cap would provide immediate relief to all taxpayers. At the same time, the bill would protect critical municipal services by allowing local government officials to override the cap with a two-thirds vote of a local government's governing body when circumstances demand an additional tax levy. The cap legislation would impose the same fiscal discipline the Commission concluded would be effective to control school district spending on counties, cities, towns, villages and fire and special districts. Such discipline would continually constrain increasing property taxes and limit their negative effects on families and business by forcing hard budget choices. The cap would not apply to the "Big 5" school districts - those with a population of 125,000 or more.

NEW LAW – CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

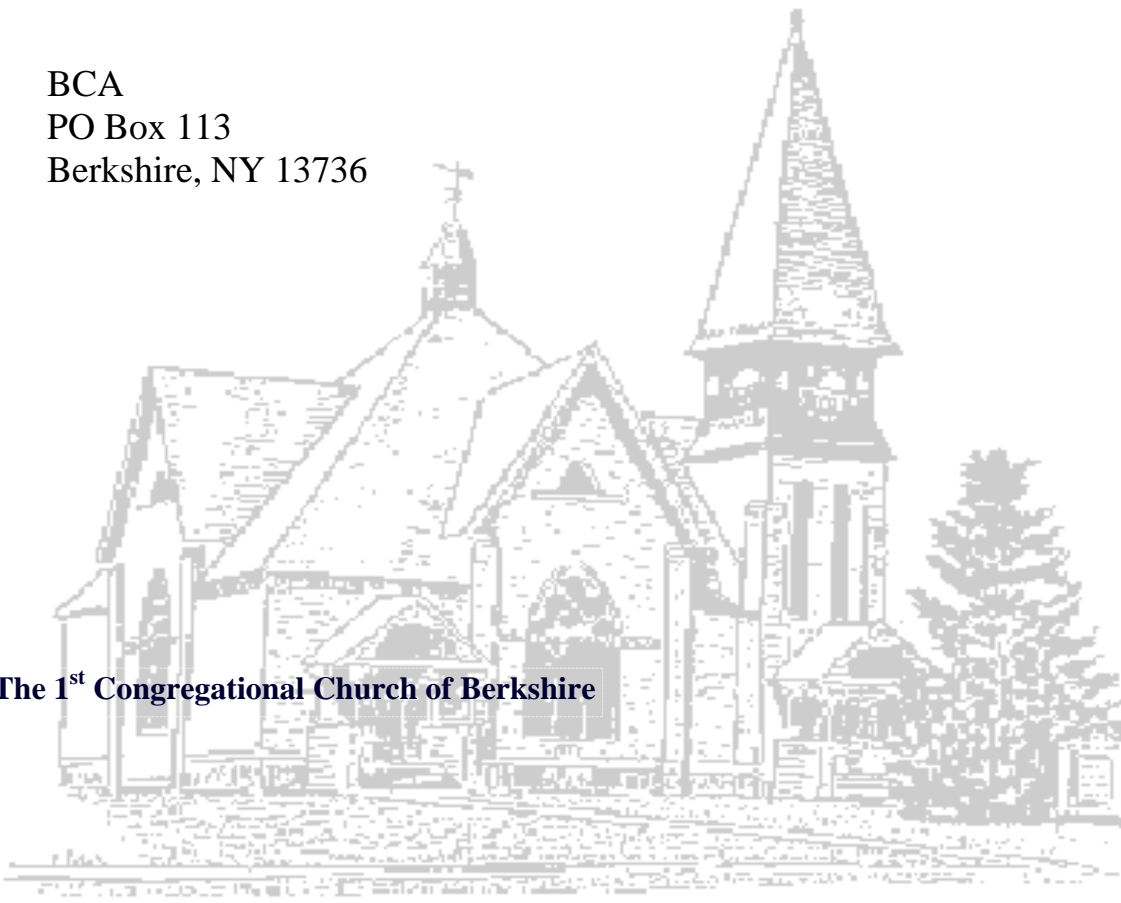
A new Carbon Monoxide Detector Law, "Amanda's Law", went into effect February 22, 2010 in New York State. The law is named after Amanda Hansen, a 16 year old West Seneca, New York girl who died of carbon monoxide poisoning on January 17, 2009 while at a sleepover at a friend's home. A malfunctioning boiler that emitted carbon monoxide was the probable cause of her death. This new law requires location of a carbon monoxide detector within each dwelling unit or sleeping unit where a carbon monoxide (CO) source is located. Potential sources for this gas include fuel fired appliances, fireplaces and stoves, exhaust from motor vehicles, fuel heaters, grills, etc. CO is typically created by the burning of natural gas, oil, wood, coal, propane, gasoline, or charcoal. Carbon monoxide can kill, or cause serious and permanent brain damage in hours or even minutes depending on the levels in the air. When inhaled at damaging levels it can lead to breathing difficulties, impaired judgment and memory, damage to the nervous system, cardiac trauma, brain damage, coma, and death. Everyone is susceptible, but unborn or young children, pregnant women, senior citizens, people with cardiac or respiratory problems, and even pets are especially vulnerable and are at the highest risk of death or serious injury.

Under Amanda's Law, all homes must have a detector installed on the lowest level of the building containing a sleeping area. Homes built before January 1, 2008 are permitted to have battery powered CO alarms, while homes built after this date are required to have alarms hard-wired into the building's electrical system. Newer homes built after 1/1/2008 must also have a CO detector on all sleeping area levels and at all levels of the home that contain a carbon monoxide source. In addition, these homes require connection of multiple detectors on a common circuit, so that if one alarm is triggered all alarms will sound. This law requires that contractors install a CO alarm when replacing a hot water tank or furnace if the home is not equipped with an alarm, and that a detector be installed if any CO source is subsequently added or attached to a structure that previously did not contain one. A combination smoke and CO alarm is permitted when installed according to this law and the manufacturer's instructions, but the alarm signals must be different for smoke and CO detection. Note that a smoke detector is not a carbon monoxide detector, nor are CO detectors replacements for fire or smoke detectors. All detectors must be maintained in an operative condition at all times. *Ken Ceurter*

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The 1st Congregational Church of Berkshire



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Berkshire Town Newsletter

The Red Brick Church

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Summer Hours 10:00 AM
Sunday School 9:30 AM

BERKSHIRE TOWN WEBSITE

The Town Board continues to revitalize the Town Website to make it a readily accessible source of information for all Berkshire activities. Visit us at:

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If you have any updates or suggestions, please feel free to contact Tami Payne at webmaster@berkshirenny.com.



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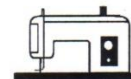
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