

Village of Bergen

September 2008 Newsletter

MAYOR'S REPORT

Village Residence,

As you may know the Town of Bergen and the Village of Bergen were working on a joint project of sharing and renovating the Tully Building at the corner of Buffalo St. and Lake. As of September 9, 2008 the Town Board decided against the joint venture and withdrew from the project. I asked John Specht for the reason for this decision, His reply, "The cost of the project has gotten higher than we expected". The village owns this property and we will move forward in renovating the first floor to cover our needs. Our lease will be up in March at our current location, the owner has other uses for this building and will not be renewing our lease. The village office will be moved to a temporary location, most likely in an office trailer while the construction takes place. I'm disappointed of this change in scope and wish the Town the best in their endeavors for more space.

I want to thank all that have worked so hard on the building committee. You've done a great job and sacrificed many evenings.

Again Thanks to all.

Sincerely,

Wayne Bailey

Mayor

EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER FOR POWER OUTAGE

Please call 234-1454

BRUSH & LEAVES PICK-UP

Our Fall brush and leaves pick-up is on **the 2nd and 4th Monday** of each month. If Monday is a holiday, then pick-up will be on Tuesday.

Place the brush loosely piled, putting small tangled brush in a separate pile so we can pick it up with a loader and transport it. Place large logs in a separate pile in 6 ft. lengths.

Note: We are a brush pick-up service not a tree removal service.

All bagged debris (leaves, grass clippings, etc.) should be placed in a paper bag not plastic for biodegradable reasons. We are phasing out pickup of debris in plastic bags in the near future.

Any questions, please call 494-1048

VILLAGE HISTORIAN

Recently there was an article in the Batavia Daily News about the Underground Railroad in LeRoy. I thought that some of you might also like to know what was happening in Bergen at that time

In the late 1820s after the Erie Canal was built a tremendous influx of people thronged into this area. It became a wild frontier. To fight against the lawlessness and drunkenness a religious revival was held in the only church in the village at that time, the Congregational/Presbyterian (Those two churches joined forces in

this wilderness). In 1830 the women went door-to-door getting people to attend the revival. The church in Stone Church and the one in the village each gained 100 members at that time.

In the 1830s the women waged a campaign to stop all drinking of alcoholic beverages. They stopped a great deal of it which also helped stop some of the lawlessness.

Other changes were taking place. In 1835 the railroad was built through the area a mile north of the settlement.

A Vigilance Committee was formed in Bergen. There is a manual which contains the by-laws of that organization with Bergen printed on the cover and dated 1839. The Vigilance Committee was also started in most of the major cities in northeastern United States. People in this organization furnished food and shelter to the fleeing slaves and helped them on their way to Canada, sometimes physically and sometimes with money to pay their way or both.

In 1840 some of the people in the Congregational/Presbyterian Church in the village insisted on securing a minister from the Oberlin College in Ohio which was involved in the Underground Railroad and the Women's Rights movement. There was much conflict in the church over those issues. Some of the people left this church and started a Presbyterian Church. They built a church on the corner of Appletree Lane and Lake Road. Edmund Wilcox said at the time of the 100th anniversary that the division of the church in the 1840s was probably caused by doctrinal differences and the slavery issue. Women's Rights were probably also part of the conflict as several women left this church at that time. In the early 1850 the new church disbanded and some of the people returned to this church.

In the 1840s the area around the intersection of the railroad and Lake Road (now Route 19 or Lake Road) was developed. In the 1850s the Catholics built a church in the village. The Methodist Church, who had come to the southwest section of the town of Bergen in the 1830s, built a church in the village in the 1850s.

In 1854 the Congregationalist/Presbyterian Church moved its church building down the hill to its present location (They put it on logs and rolled it down the hill). They built on to the west side of the church building and put the altar there. Double doors were put in the center where the altar had been a porch and steeple was added in the 1860s.

In the late 1850s the women of the Bergen Congregational/Presbyterian Church organized. Men could join the group but they couldn't vote. This group instigated the moving of the little church, built by the abolitionists, to a site to the south side of the larger church. It is now the Fellowship Hall for the church (The women got to vote on church issues in the 1860s).

In 1854 independent Methodists started having week long camp meetings during the summer at the corner of West Sweden Road and Cook Road. As many as 10,000 people attended the Sunday sessions. They came on foot, by horse back, and by horse and buggy. To Brockport they came by railroad and by boat. It is reported that the road from Brockport was one solid line of vehicles. There is no information on who came to this affair through Bergen. It drew people from as far away as Boston and New York. This was the beginning of the Free Methodist Church.

A story in Arch Merrill's book "The Underground" concerning Bergen tells that "One night in 1858 three fugitives missed the marker which pointed the way to the MacDonald station and landed in the village of LeRoy. A free Negro who lived in LeRoy took them to his employer, J. R. Anderson, a brusque and vigorous man, who was no friend of slavery, although not connected with the UGRR. After feeding the three Negroes, he pushed them into his sleigh, shouting, Pile in boys, all hell can't get you now and drove them to Bergen. Thence they were taken to Rochester where Douglas got them across the border." There are also stories of the slaves escaping through the Bergen Swamp.

The people of Bergen were very much involved in the affairs of the time. Many of the same people in the village were involved in the revivals, freedom of the slaves, women's rights, building churches and building a village.

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BYRON-BERGEN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Coming events at the Byron Bergen Public Library---

Our Book Discussion group meets every 2nd Thursday at 7pm. We will be reading Devil in the White City by Erik Larson on October 9th. If you have never joined us for a book discussion, just stop by to pick up a copy or call to reserve a copy today!! Come join us for a light snack and some great conversation.

Calling all Teens----Stop by the Library October 14th -18th for Teen Read Week! Take 3 or more books out and have a chance to win a copy of Brisingr by Christopher Paolini!! Drawing will be held on Saturday the 18th! Come check out our great collection of Graphic Novels and Young Adult books!!!

Come Celebrate Friends of the Library week October 21st- 25th. Friends of the Library help support the Library with programs and other out of budget expenses. Join this week and become a Friend! Sale on Library Tote Bags! Raffle of Apple iPod!!! All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Library. Stop in or call for more information!

Our Family story time nights will be Tuesday at 6:30 on October 21st join us for special Halloween stories, craft, and snack and on November 18th our theme will be Thanksgiving. December 16th at 6:30 we will have a Holiday theme and possibly a special visit from St. Nick himself! Registration is not required –just come join the fun!

Election Day is November 4th and the Library will be closed for you to vote. Sorry for any inconvenience!

Our annual Craft Fair will be on November 8th from 9am-3pm at the Bergen Fire Hall. Stop in and see local craft people show their stuff. Come check out our Friends of the Library Book Sale too! The Bergen Fire Auxiliary will be serving lunch. Come find that unique gift on your Holiday list!

For more information on all Library events stop in or call 494-1120!

Nancy Bailey

Library Manager

