



**February  
2026**

## Mayor's Message

As we struggle through this winter's polar vortex, I hope this newsletter finds you well. Warmer days lie ahead as Punxsutawney Phil has predicted six more weeks of old man winter.

With spring around the corner, the village has been busy organizing the many events to be held at Hickory Park this summer and fall. The village, along with the Bergen Business and Civic Association, continue to organize events at Hickory Park which bring our community together in fellowship.

Speaking of the BBCA, on behalf of all the village residents, I would like to thank this organization for donating proceeds from park day to the village which will be used to purchase and install a 30-foot flagpole at Ward Park. (Rochester St. & RT33) This is the only park in the village that does not currently have a flagpole displaying our American Flag.

The DOT has been informed of the potholes along RT. 19, and we await their response time.

The village board is finalizing budgets for fiscal year 2026-2027 for General-Electric-Sewer. The sewer budget is a big concern with such factors as NYS mandates, higher chemical cost, and higher electricity cost all contributing significantly to the overall cost of operating the treatment plant and infrastructure. When the budgets are finalized, there will be a public hearing for public input and discussion. The residents will be informed of the time and place for the public hearing.

*Mayor Joseph M. Chimino*

Until next month, Be Safe Be Healthy

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. I can be reached at [jchimino@villageofbergen.com](mailto:jchimino@villageofbergen.com) or (585)703-2875.

## From the Desk of the Village Historian, Vicky Truax

Today's story highlights the remarkable life of Carl W.E. Almquist.

Carl was born on April 10, 1923, in Alden, New York and graduated from Alden High School in 1941. He went on to attend Cornell University, where he excelled both academically and athletically. He was named Athlete of the Year and, in 1947, was inducted into the Cornell Hall of Fame.

On September 14, 1946, Carl married Betty Neufang, a registered nurse who worked at LeRoy Central School. In the 1960s, the couple moved to Bergen and purchased a farm on South Lake Road just outside the village. Their property included an 1870s two-story Victorian farmhouse and 168 acres of land, located just north of what is now the Oxbo building. Carl maintained a herd of 38 Holsteins and farmed an additional 300 neighboring acres. Together, Carl and Betty raised four children: Roger, Candace, Steve, and David.

Carl's life changed dramatically in September 1953 after a visit to the New York State Fair, where he contracted the polio virus. He entered Strong Memorial Hospital with a fever and never walked again. The virus caused total paralysis, affecting his breathing and leaving him paralyzed from the neck down. He lost the use of his diaphragm and relied on a wheelchair for the remainder of his life.

At the height of the polio pandemic, approximately 20,000 people in the United States were affected. Polio was a highly contagious virus spread through direct contact and contaminated food or water. It attacks the nervous system and can lead to irreversible paralysis, particularly in children and young adults. *Continued on page 2...*



### Village Emergency Contact Numbers

Electric 353-0981  
Sewer 353-3659



These numbers do not receive text messages

# Village Meetings

All meetings are open to the public

**Board of Trustees:** 6:30pm March 12th

**Planning Board:** 7pm March 19th

**Zoning Board of Appeals:** 7pm March 27th

Agenda items must be submitted no later than ten days prior to the meeting

## Save the Date

### Village Elections



An election for mayor and two trustees all for four year terms will be held

Wednesday, March 18th  
12pm - 9pm.

Applications for absentee ballots may be requested from the Village Administrator by phone, email to [vob@villageofbergen.com](mailto:vob@villageofbergen.com), or at the Village Office

Genesee County Office of the Aging  
Will be at the  
Village Hall  
11 North Lake Avenue  
April 9th  
9am to 4pm

The Triangle Club of Bergen would like to help support our veterans by collecting necessity items for the Eagle Star Housing facility in East Pembroke. Please drop off items at the Byron-Bergen Public Library, the Gillam-Grant Community Center, or the Village of Bergen Office during the month of March. Items will be delivered for Easter..

### Eagle Star Housing Wish List

**Gift Cards:** Walmart, Aldi, Tops, Dollar Store

**Food Items:** Coffee, coffee filters, non-dairy liquid creamer singles

Non-perishable food items, Protein and energy bars, Nuts and snacks, Microwavable items, Beef Jerky

**Hygiene:** Disposable razors, shaving cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes, dental floss, liquid hand soap, deodorant, lotion, lip balm, nail clippers

**Entertainment:** Word search, sudoku and crossword puzzle books, playing cards, card games

**Household Items:** 13-gallon garbage bags, liquid dish detergent, dishwasher pods, toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, laundry detergent pods, cleaning supplies, sponges, pillows, pillow cases, new twin or full size sheet sets, new bath towels, new washcloths

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The remarkable life of Carl W.E. Almquist

During an 18-month hospital stay, Carl was confined to an iron lung, the state-of-the-art breathing therapy of the time. The machine worked by altering air pressure to force air in and out of the lungs while the patient lay inside with only their head exposed. The treatment improved his condition enough for him to return home. His family credited answered prayers and their strong Christian faith for the additional 25 years they were blessed to share with him. At home, Carl used a rocking bed, a specialized device that gently moved the body to assist with breathing by easing the effort of "frog breathing," or gulping for air.

In the mid-1960s, during construction of Route 490, soil from the Almquist farm was used to help elevate the roadway. The excavated area became known locally as "Almquist Pond," once a popular swimming spot. The pond can still be seen today along Route 490 heading south on the west side of the highway, though it is no longer a gathering place.

In 1970, the Almquist family relocated to York, Pennsylvania for a warmer climate, allowing Carl additional months outdoors in his wheelchair each year. The move also brought them closer to his sister Amy in York and his brother John in State College.

Despite his physical limitations, Carl remained deeply engaged in life and community. He wrote a weekly column for the The Daily News titled "The Grist Mill," initially focusing on farming and agricultural issues before expanding to topics such as politics, family, and current events.

Carl passed away on July 18, 1978, and is buried in Clearview Cemetery.

Among the many who admired Carl was his Bergen neighbor, Fred Ely, who owned a small plane. Despite Carl's paralysis, Fred often took him flying, and the two spent many hours in the air together. Years later, Carl's sister Amy, remembering Fred's kindness and compassion, gifted her secondhand car to Fred and Eunice Ely's grandson—a lasting testament to the gratitude inspired by simple acts of friendship.