



DANBY AREA NEWS

DANBY FOOD PANTRY BENEFIT DINNER ON JANUARY 14

Submitted by Peter Fraissinet

Saturday, 5pm; West Danby Fire Hall, 47 Sylvan Lane (off NYS Rt.34/96)

We wish the economic news were better this year but, the fact is, that more people than ever—including some of your friends and neighbors—rely on local food pantries. This is where you come in.

For the last two years, the West Danby Community Association has hosted a benefit dinner for the Danby Food Pantry. Each time, it managed to deliver a substantial check and a carload of goods to the Pantry. The dinner menu and the camaraderie made it an especially worthwhile event to put on.

This year we will have the help of Chef Michael Short of Enfield. He has put together an enticing menu of salmon balls over rice or bread, topped with peppers and onions and a special sauce. Alternately, a vegetarian “three sisters” option of polenta, winter squash, and refried beans with a sauce will be particularly satisfying on a cold winter evening. A simple green salad, elegantly dressed, will complement all. And of course the famous West Danby dessert table will help round out the meal. Michael, who was once a personal chef on Maui, is excited to present this menu. All we have to do is come enjoy it!

A free-will donation will be collected at the door, and non-perishable goods are welcomed as well. Let’s help stock the Danby larder for our friends and neighbors!

Questions, and offers to lend a hand, just [pf13@cornell.edu]. ✨

DANBY COMMUNITY COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING

Submitted by Bob Strichartz, DCC President

The Danby Community Council’s Annual Meeting will be held on Thursday Jan 26, 2011 at 7pm in the Danby Town Hall. During the meeting, new board members will be elected. Any resident of Danby who is 18 or older is eligible to vote. Three two-year positions are to be filled out of a total of seven members.

Refreshments will be served and there will be short presentations about the accomplishments of the Council during 2011.

Serving on the DCC Board is an enjoyable way to contribute to your community. We are particularly in need of people who are knowledgeable about, or interested in, programs for Danby youth.

If you’re interested, please contact me at [str@math.cornell.edu] or 607.277.3058. ✨

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BREAKFASTS ARE BACK At the Danby Volunteer Fire Company

Submitted by Sharon Gaden

It’s Pancake Breakfast season at the fire station, 1780 Danby Road! Starting on Sunday, January 22, 8-11am, these breakfasts are popular with the community (a fact for which we are grateful) and the fire company tries to offer three or four breakfasts each winter.

If you haven’t experienced one yet, here is the scoop: wake up at your leisure on Sunday morning and let someone else do the cooking for you. Head to the fire station where your choices are eggs cooked the way you want them, home fries, sausage, pancakes, french toast (or all of them!) and beverage. We’ll be

—continued on page 5

January 2012
Layout: Ted Crane

To contribute:
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Phone: 607.273.8678
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Text submissions:
Send text in the body of an
Email message (**not** as an at-
tachment); or mail typewritten
copy, double-spaced on white
paper. Short handwritten
submissions accepted; please
write legibly.

Graphics: JPEG preferred.
TIFF, GIF, or PNG accepted
but discouraged. Check with
editor before sending hard-
copy graphics.

Deadline is the 15th of the
month. Materials may be
accepted later if time allows.
Submissions should gener-
ally not exceed one page. We
cannot print political material
or letters of opinion.

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DANBY NEWS NOTES

Submitted by Ted Crane

Submission Guidelines: Visit the
Town of Danby web page, and have
a look at the "Danby News" section,
[town.danby.ny.us/DAN]. If you're
thinking of sending something for
publication in the Danby News, there's
two documents to read: the *Guidelines*
and the *Submission Guidelines*.

The first document describes what is,
and isn't acceptable material for publi-
cation. If it's acceptable, we'll make an
effort to include it; *generally, we print
everything we receive!*

The second document gives some hints
about how to prepare a submission.
Following these guidelines makes the
editing and layout easier.

A very terse version of these guidelines
is presented in the column on the left
side of this page.

**TWO PUBLIC ACCESS
COMPUTERS IN TOWN HALL**

A second computer *for use by the public*
has been installed in Town Hall. You
can cruise the web with it and check
your web-based Email. It has a DVD
drive, so you can use it to view presen-
tations and other DVD media.

If you're new to computers, one-on-
one introduction/how-to is available.
Contact me at 607.273.8678.

Thanks go to Scott Stratton for the
eMac and to Dan Hevett for the iMac.
Also to Larry Chace for the wireless
network, available both inside and
outside Town Hall.

DANBY WEB SITE

Have you visited [town.danby.ny.us]?

Meeting agendas, minutes, and rel-
evant documents. Happenings in
Danby. Everything in a nutshell. ☘

TOWN CLERK'S DESKTOP

Submitted by Pamela Goddard, Town Clerk

Oh, cruel January! We're barely past the indulgences of holiday parties and staying up late for New Year's Eve when reality hits. There is no escape from the Cold and Dark, or from Taxes. There are days when it seems as though chocolate is the only thing that will get us through.

Several factors contribute to the Town and County tax bill that you'll find in your mailbox in very early January.

The Town Board and Fire Districts passed budgets during



November. Thanks to careful planning and belt-tightening, the Town of Danby was one of the few local governments that was able to stay under New York State's two-percent tax cap. Does this mean that your taxes have changed less than 2% since last year? It depends. Your tax bill includes Town, Fire District, and County taxes and, if you live in West Danby, a Water District charge. The County was

not able to keep its budget within the tax cap; it's increased almost twice as much, percentage-wise, as the Town.

The total Town tax rate increased only 1.027% this year (1.315% for those in the West Danby Water District); the County's tax rate increased about 3.1%.

The numbers at the bottom of your tax bill, however, reflect the tax levy (that is, the total to be collected from all taxpayers), and are different. In that section, individual lines show the levy and rates for the County, the Town of Danby, the Danby Fire District, and the Danby Water District (if appropriate).

Other notable information on the tax bill includes the Full Market and Assessed Value of your property, the exemptions applied to your assessment (both are above the list of levies at the bottom), and the "bottom line": total due and date due (unsurprisingly, at the bottom of the page).

Information regarding how to make out your check, where to mail it to—and our hours if you want to pay in person—are found on the right side of the bill, next to the value and exemptions section. If you prefer not to pay your entire bill during January, dates and service charges (or penalties) can be found in the lower right corner, on the remittance stubs.

If you have any questions, feel free to give us a call. Sue McLellan or I will do our best to explain the information on your bill.

In order to be as accessible as possible, the Town Clerk's office will be open during January, 10am-5pm on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, and 10am-1pm on Saturdays. We are closed on Sundays and Thursdays.

The first day of tax collection is Tuesday, January 3, since Monday is a holiday following New Year's Day on Sunday.

Please remember, Town Clerks are only tax collectors. We don't set your assessment or your tax rate. I know that there's little I can do to make January better than it is, but I can promise that the candy bowl will be filled with chocolate kisses—including plenty of dark chocolate. I look forward to seeing many of you during the cold days of January and February. I can renew or issue dog licenses and answer questions about town government at the same time.

Questions? Call 607.277.4788 or send Email to [townclerk@town.danby.ny.us]. ❀

TOWN HOURS

TOWN CLERK

Phone: 277.4788 • Fax: 277.0559
Mon-Tue-Wed-Fri, 10am-5pm; Sat, 10am-1pm.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

93 Hornbrook Road • Phone: 272.9169
Mon-Fri, 6am-2:30pm

CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE

Phone: 277.0799 • Fax: 277.0559
Wed-Fri, 10am-5pm or by appointment

TOWN COURT:

Phone: 277.0095 • Fax: 277.0031
Tue, 7pm

All offices at Danby Town Hall except where noted.

DANBY FIRE DISTRICT UPDATE

Submitted by Pat Cavenev, Fire Commissioner

An election for Danby Fire Commissioner, to serve a five-year term, was held on December 13, 2011. Two candidates, Wayne A. Westmiller and Jeff Baker ran for the position; 115 votes were cast, and Westmiller won.

Candidate	Dist. 1+3	Dist. 2	Votes
Jeff Baker	19	0	19
Wayne A. Westmiller	57	38	95
Write-in Votes	0	1	1
Total Votes	76	39	115

Description of the Fire District

The Danby Fire District is a political subdivision of the State of New York, and provides fire and EMS protection to the district thru the Danby Volunteer Fire Company and the West Danby Volunteer Fire Company.

In addition a small portion of the district, located along Coddington Road, is protected thru contract by Brooktondale Fire Department.

Even though both fire companies are entirely volunteer, the District is, effectively, their 'employers' and are responsible for: providing and maintaining facilities and equipment; overseeing district and company operations; developing and maintaining an annual budget; and setting and administering policy.

The Board of Fire Commissioners consists of five members, each one publicly elected by the qualified voters of the district to a five-year term. The position is volunteer, per Town Law 174, so none of the commissioners receives any pay for their work. Elections for commissioner are held annually, on the second Tuesday of December, for one of the five seats, thus ensuring that there are always experienced commissioners in office per Town Law 175.

Candidates for office must submit their name in writing to the District Secretary signifying their request to be placed on the ballot at least 20 days prior to the election date per Town Law 176.

On the third Tuesday of every October, the District presents its budget at a public hearing (per Town Law 181) and records any comments received. All regular monthly meetings of the Board of Commissioners are open to the public. ❧

DANBY FIRE DISTRICT ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Organizational Meeting for the Danby Fire District of the Town of Danby, County of Tompkins, New York, will be held on the 10th day of January, 2012, at 7:00 P.M. at the Danby Fire Station, 1780 Danby Road, Town of Danby, County of Tompkins, New York. The regular meeting will follow. ❧

W.DANBY WATER DISTRICT UPDATE

Submitted by Tod Sukontarak

During the December 12 meeting of the Danby Town Board, Gene Beavers presented the West Danby Water District's plan to upgrade its system. The upgrade includes the replacement of the water storage tank and non-functioning meters, along with other recommendations in an Engineering Report prepared by T.G. Miller. The original report, in October, 2009 was updated and amended in November, 2011.

Along with having a current Engineer's report, Gene's presentation to the Town Board is the first step in a plan to acquire funding for the project, with the help of County Representative Frank Proto and our State Senators.

The entire report is, or should soon be, available on the Town of Danby web site, [town.danby.ny.us].

The Water District is are currently locating and marking all the service connections to households in our district. You may find a blue paint spot in your yard and a blue stripe nearby in the road. The stripe points out the direction to the spot, and the spot locating the cap to our service. These are necessary, so the company hired to detect leaks can put a sounding device on the service connection. New York Leak Detection is the company doing the work and they do their work in the middle of the night when there is normally little intentional water consumption.

If you know of leaking faucets or toilets in your house, please have them fixed to help reduce our increasing water consumption. Another way to help is, if you find unusual water pooling in your yard, please notify Carl (607.564.7395), Gene (607.564.9554), or Tod (607.564.0469) so we can determine if it comes from a leak in the water service. ❧

SUPERVISOR'S UPDATE

Submitted by Ric Dietrich, Town Supervisor

Volunteers run our Town of Danby.

Danby has its elected officials and paid staff: Town Board, Supervisor, Clerk, Judges, Fire and Water Commissioners, Code office, and Highway Department. They provide very important core services to the Town.

I do not believe that the Town could have accomplished what it has, over the last several years, without our volunteers. The volunteers are the best of what we have to offer. Not only do they give of their time, but sometimes they have to put their life on the line.

The churches, and the food bank rely heavily on volunteers. Look at the West Danby Community Association, the Danby Area News, the Community Council, the Community Library, all are volunteers.

The Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals, the Gas Drilling Task Force, the Land Bank...it's volunteers and, like the turtle myth, it's volunteers all the way down.

William James, father of American psychology, tells of meeting an elderly woman who told him the Earth rested on the back of a huge turtle. "But, my dear lady," Professor James asked, as politely as possible, "What holds up the turtle?" "Ah," she said, "that's easy. He is standing on the back of another turtle." "Oh, I see", said Professor James, still being polite. "But would you be so good as to tell me what holds up the second turtle?" "It's no use, Professor," said the woman, realizing he was trying to lead her into a logical trap. "It's turtles-turtles-turtles, all the way!"

So you know what I'm talking about, here's some of the recent accomplishments of our volunteers.

- Rewrite of the comprehensive plan and the zoning laws.
- Road construction and road use agreements.
- Gas Drilling Task Force. This group is truly remarkable for the sheer volume of work they have put in. They advised the Town on issues related to the potential industrialization of our Town, two different dSGEIS drafts (the second should be on file by the time you read this), and the Rapid Waters documents related to usage of our State Forest.

These documents are another outstanding example of the many ways Danby residents contribute to making ours an outstanding community.

- Our Fire department. In addition to responding to everyday calls, they turned out for our tornado and floods. The hours of training and commitment to serving our community unselfishly, they put their neighbors first.
 - The Food Pantry, stepping up to the plate, responding to an ever-increasing need in our community.
 - Community Council for its commitment to youth and services, working to unravel a shrinking pool of dollars and continuing the vital work.
 - Senior citizens, keeping our community connected.
- Highway has taken the lead in the Town's environmental goals by building a salt shed to protect groundwater, by insulating, installing efficient lighting, a bio-mass boiler, and programmable thermostats.

The Town is putting a call out—another opportunity for residents—to help us direct the Town's energy future.

And that brings me back to the beginning: volunteers are the physical force running this Town. They really live the way they want to change the world.

As always, if there is an issue the Town should address, please contact me, [supervisor@town.danby.ny.us]. ❁

➤ **Pancake Breakfasts , cont'd from front page—**

happy to serve it all to you while you visit with friends and neighbors.

Watch for announcements of breakfasts in February, March, and possibly April. All proceeds benefit the Danby Volunteer Fire Company. Anyone who would like to help at the breakfasts is welcome to contact John Gaden, Dick Oltz, or Roger Grant (607.272.8114).

House Numbers

During the breakfast, you can also complete an order sheet to obtain a house number for your home. These are metal with large reflective numbers and are placed near your driveway to help emergency personnel locate your house quickly.

All too often, we encounter house address markers that are not visible, either because the numbers are too small, are not reflective, are faded or have fallen off and not been replaced, are difficult to view because of placement or angle, or are not visible from both directions. Our house number signs solve this problem. We will install it for you too if needed. ❁

HOUSE FIRE IN DANBY

Submitted by Christel Trutmann

On a cold and windy Veterans' Day, 11/11/11, at 2:18 in the afternoon, the Danby and West Danby fire companies were dispatched to a "fire in the attic" at 1820 Danby Road.

As Danby members responded to the station, we could see smoke billowing east across 96B. Without waiting to get on scene for a more detailed size-up, Danby firefighter Simon Wyatt called Tompkins Dispatch to confirm a structure fire and request two engines out of Ithaca. By the end of the day we would also have apparatus and manpower from Brooktondale, Candor, Newfield, Slaterville, Varna, and Bangs Ambulance, and we thank them all for their assistance.

The first Danby apparatus and four interior firefighters were on scene seven minutes from the initial dispatch. We found an 1800s wood-frame house with flames through the roof. The second floor was "fully involved." As the first officer on scene, West Danby Assistant Chief Ken VanEtten took command and made it clear—even as we strapped on airpicks in case there was still someone inside—that we were going defensive on this fire. This means applying tens of thousands of gallons of water from the outside, a strategy that firefighters call, *Surround and Drown*. It took five hours and 60,000 gallons of Jennings Pond to put the fire out.

The priorities at every scene are life safety, incident stabilization, and property conservation, in that order. By the time of our arrival, the house had already sustained major damage, and our purpose became extinguishing the fire and protecting the remaining property--like the first floor and the old barn. It was also our purpose to be prepared for a high stakes rescue, if one became necessary.

DANBY SENIORS UPDATE

Submitted by Margie VanDeMark

The next meeting of the Danby Seniors will be on Thursday, January 5 at Noon in the Danby Church. It's a dish to share luncheon. All seniors 55 and over are invited to attend for fun and fellowship.

Our December holiday luncheon at the Oasis was enjoyed by nearly 70 seniors. Big thanks go to Pam and Doug for a great meal and festive atmosphere. Our guest singer/comedian, Rich Wilson, really got us laughing and he did a great show. ❁

Liz and Bob Roe's historic house was a Danby icon. Their loss is felt by the community, and the Danby fire companies' thoughts are with them. This wasn't the kind of incident anybody joins the fire service for; you go home exhausted and sore as heck and knowing you did everything possible...but disheartened just the same. But it does highlight several realities for today's volunteer fire companies: aging equipment, escalating regulations, and—most critically—fewer volunteers.

These challenges and their co-evolved solutions will be the subject of a short DAN series intended to offer insight and opportunities for action. In the meantime, if you're looking for a meaningful New Year's resolution, or you drove past the scene back in November wishing there was something you could do to help...join your local volunteer fire company. They need you. ❁

THANK YOU FROM 1820 DANBY ROAD

Submitted by Elizabeth Owens Roe

The families of Elizabeth and Robert Roe and Harold and Nicole Ball and Hayden wish to thank the entire Danby Community during our recent time of crisis. ❁

THANKS SO MUCH

Submitted by Ann and Gary Johnson

We are grateful for all the help and support we received from neighbors, friends, and family after the Tornado on April 28. It may seem like a long time ago to some of you, but the repairs to our house are only now being completed.

We'd like to express a huge *Thank You* to our neighbors and friends for helping with immediate needs and clean-up: Danby Fire and Rescue, Steve Barber, Mark Barber, Nancy & Jim Henion, John & Marge Van de Mark, Linda & Gary Price, Richard & Marilyn Kinner, Susan & Jim Spear, Dan & Susan Cerrantani, Thurman & Heather Soyring, Linda Howe, and Lorraine Bard and Family.

Also, to Sparks Electric for incredibly fast response to our electrical needs. Yaman Construction for equally fast response to tarping the house after the roof blew off. And last but not least our wonderful contractor, Rick Hardesty who has been putting things back together better than they ever were.

If we left anybody out we apologize. Thank you for this opportunity to express our gratitude to such a wonderful community. ❁

WHITE HAWK UPDATE

Submitted by Henry 'Beauty' Peterson

Hey Y'all, Just thought I'd send a jubilant note to say that we closed on a new mortgage for the fifth house at White Hawk Village! The ground is already being prepped for the new foundation, YEAH! We have more interested families in the (peace) pipeline, working on various issues to get started.

DANBY RENEWABLE ENERGY GROUP

Submitted by Eric Banford

A group is forming, to look into renewable energy projects for Danby. We would love to have you join us. The Danby Land Bank has been looking into ways to harvest biomass for grass pellets...what if we had a pellet facility in Danby? It could create local jobs and local energy, plus a way to make money from our land.

Coppicing is an option for sustainably creating poles and firewood. Our woodlots are a great resource for energy and high end products. New York has financing options for renewable energy projects, what could we develop in Danby to take advantage of this?

These are just a few ideas, I'm sure you have more. Come and help us figure out our energy future! The kick-off meeting will be on Thursday, January 12, 6-8pm in the Danby Town Hall. If you are interested, contact me at 607.277.0183 or [brew_bird@yahoo.com]. ❄

DANBY HANDSPINNERS MEET AND LEARN

Submitted by Kathy Halton

On December 11, nine people met to form a Danby Handspinners' group, to spin fiber during the winter months. There were three new spinners, some experienced spinners, and some people returning to it after a long time.

It was really fun, and we decided to meet again in January, at Jean Rowley's house, 251 Bald Hill Road, on Sunday, January 8, 5-7pm. We are going to alter the times and locations, so that other people can come.

Bring drop spindles, spinning wheels, and any fiber you want to work with. Teach or learn, or just sit and spin. Contact me [khalton@twcny.rr.com] or Jean Rowley [jeanrowley@gmail.com] for more information. ❄

2011 Notes:

- This past year we have increased our chicken population despite raids by foxes and bird predators. We have a second hen house up to accommodate having too many roosters.
- We completed the horse barn. The two horses pastured seem to be settled in nicely.
- There are now some rustic paths for tours of the land and we plan to semi-refine them to accommodate various hiking ability levels.
- The CSA/Farm "Friends of Garcia Farm" is sleeping now; it awaits the spring melt.
- The new well, dug down by the creek as part of the Danby Aquifer Study, is an artesian gusher.
- Members patched up the road where the culvert overflowed during the September storm.
- The internet connections are working nicely and there are plans to further improve them.
- We have acquired a new riding mower, the coppice grove has seen its first plantings, and our first beehive appears to be thriving.
- We are on the Sustainable Tompkins Map and the Green Home Tour.
- We have simplified and reformed our New Membership Application Forms and various Guidelines.
- Some members attended the CoHousing Conference in Washington, DC.
- We have our first house that's for sale (at lot #7). It's currently being rented. ❄

AT THE DFC...

All of these events are happening at the Danby Federated Church, 1859 Danby Road. For more info, 607.272.1687 or [office@danbyfederatedchurch.org].

Red Cross Blood Drive

Friday, January 6, 2012, 1:30-6pm. Walk-ins Welcome.

Chicken and Biscuit Dinner

Friday, January 13, 2012, 5-7pm. Chicken and Biscuit, Squash, Green Beans, Corn, Harvard Beets, Apple Sauce, Pies and Assorted Desserts, Beverage. Adult: \$8; Children: \$4.

3rd Annual Chili Challenge

Friday, January 27, 2012, 6:30-8:30pm. Musical Entertainment at 8pm, Judging at 8 pm. For chili challengers and the chili challenged! Do you think you have the best chili in the northeast? Bring your best pot of chili to this challenge. Do you like to eat chili? You be the judge of who is the best! More info to come; see [danbyfederatedchurch.org] or call 607.272.1687. ❄

EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT TAXES— BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK

Submitted by Ted Crane

During the 1990s—the Clinton years, if you will—I worked for *el Departamento de Transportación*, ping-ponging between Danby and San Juan. Of all the contrasts in Puerto Rico, few were more ironic than the highway road signs. The Commonwealth government had attempted to convert to the metric system, so all the distance signs were in kilometers, but the speed limit signs were still in miles per hour.

In fact, the only other evidence of metricization was found at gas stations. The pumps were marked in liters. It seems that the metric system was really too much of a bother...except to gas station owners, who discovered that drivers would just as easily pay a penny extra per liter as per gallon. Just like that, the entrepreneurs were able to raise prices by 3.78¢ per gallon.

All of which demonstrates, yet again, that *caveat emptor* is the watchword of the day. Since this is January, you're paying your taxes and...do you know how your taxes are calculated? They seem to change whimsically every year, with politicians flooding the airwaves with talk about percentages and savings.

So here's the tax process in all its glorious detail. It won't make you feel better about paying, but at least you'll know what the numbers mean. You'll learn about Taxable Valuation, the Tax Levy, the Tax Rate, your assessed value, the number of decimal places, your tax, and who pays the few cents needed to make it all balance out.



A Tree-mendous Day: Gay Huddle and Ric Dietrich are firmly on the nice side of the bench. Southview Tree Farm owner didn't make it to the barn for the portrait. Photo by Garry Huddle

Step 1: Who Puts the Tax Dollars, Where?

You're all familiar with the two "April 15" tax agencies, the US Treasury and the New York State Income Tax. Locally, though, we pay to five (5) agencies: the County, the Town, the Fire District, the Water District (in some cases), and the School System.

It's easier to say today than in October, but let's ignore the School Taxes. So that leaves us four pockets to fill.

Step 2: Not All of Danby is Danby, Not All the Time

For tax purposes, Danby's boundaries are drawn three different ways, depending on who's doing the taxing. The first, and obvious, borders correspond exactly to Danby's geographic shape; these are used by the County and by the Town for its General and Highway Funds. The second border, used by the Fire District, is slightly different, because fire protection for some parts of Danby is provided by Brooktondale (and, perhaps, we cover a bit of Newfield?). Finally, the lucky residents of West Danby are enclosed by the border of its Water District.

Step 3: Danby's Taxable Valuation

You know how much your real estate is worth, and how much it's assessed for, but have you ever wondered how much the whole Town of Danby is worth? Well, that depends on the borders. For 2012, the current tax year, the numbers come to

Town and County	\$257,327,599	VALUE
Fire	\$263,197,212	
Water	\$13,465,464	

I bet you never imagined that Danby was worth so much! The numbers keep growing as new homes are built and as existing properties are sold (for more than they were previously valued at). In theory, as the Taxable Valuation grows, the burden on each individual taxpayer shrinks, since the burden is shared more widely. In practice, well, read about the budget in Step 4.

Step 4: The Tax Levy

This is the part where we all throw up our arms and wave them around a lot, or just try to read about it in the newspaper. Each tax agency develops a budget for the year. Two of the big inputs to the budget are the previous years' Tax Rate (see Step 5) and the current years' Taxable Valuation. Since the valuation has increased, the agency can collect more money without raising the tax rate...or it can hold firm on the budget and reduce the tax rate in proportion to the increased valuation...or somewhere inbetween. Or whatever.

Through whatever magic happens, the agency decides how much money it will need to operate during the coming year. This is the Tax Levy, and the first of sev-

eral ways that “taxes change”. For 2012

LEVY	County	\$42,220,798	+3.9%
	Town	\$1,533,533	+2.183%
	Fire	\$372,375	+0.400%
	Water	\$49,167	+2.108%

Step 5: The Tax Rate

Using some high-powered spreadsheets, the Tax Levy is divided by the Taxable Valuation to calculate the Tax Rate. The Tax Rate is described, not in *per cent*, but in *per mille*; that is, *per thousand*. The correct symbol is “‰” rather than “%”, but it’s often displayed incorrectly. And, changes in the Tax Rate (in per cent) is another way to describe changes to taxes. In 2012

RATE	County	4.475763 ‰	+3.107 %
	Town	5.959458 ‰	+1.342 %
	Fire	1.414814 ‰	+0.393 %
	Water	3.651341 ‰	+1.867 %

Remember, the Taxable Valuation went up, so the Tax Rate doesn’t have to increase as much as the Tax Levy. Guess which “change” gets repeated in sound bites?

Step 6: Your Real Estate Assessment

This is a highly sensitive issue, so I’ll defer to the County Assessment Department for an explanation. There is reason to believe that they try to be fair.

You should be aware that your assessment is determined during the Spring of the previous year. That is, April 1, 2011 for the tax year 2012.

Step 7: Your Taxes

If you’ve followed everything so far, this last step is easy. Multiply your Real Estate Assessment by the Tax Rate, add everything up, and pay that amount. In 2012, for a \$100,000 Real Estate Assessment

TAX TAX TAX	County	\$447.58
	Town	\$494.95
	Fire	\$141.81
	Water	\$365.13
	Total	\$1449.47

All of these calculations, except the budget in Step 4, are performed by the County. Got an error? Ask them.

Step 8: The Roundoff, When Numbers Don’t Add Up

Believe it or not, in spite of all those detailed numbers, the total tax collected by the County (the Tax Collector, a.k.a., the Town Clerk, gives the money to the County) is never correct; always a few pennies short. The County is required to give the Town the correct amount. But don’t fret on its account. The County charges fees and penalties when someone pays late, and these more than make up for the roundoff errors. ❧

DANBY LAND BANK COOPERATIVE

Submitted by Betsy Keokosky

Annual meeting

The Danby Land Bank is a 3-year-old pilot project for a land owner cooperative, organized to reduce property taxes through agricultural assessment and using agricultural residue (i.e. fields going to brush) for biomass heating.

We invite you to come to the Annual Meeting for all members and other interested people, to be held Saturday, January 21, 10am in the Danby Town Hall. The Agenda will be to consider new strategies, including the following:

- Consider buying a value-added Mobile Pelletizer or other small-scale production. A feasibility study may be conducted by a Cornell-related group.
- Since biomass producers are facing a difficult startup economy, look for donation or rental of some good hay fields to be a fall-back for our \$10K minimum annual gross income. A contractor would harvest large, square bales, similar to the way it was done in 2009.
- Consider options other than contracting for member mowing and baling. This could be paired with expanding to nearby communities.
- Finances.
- Discuss how to resolve the initial brush-hogging problem.
- Discuss an option proposed by Hilary Mayton of Cornell, who is now working for a company called Beneterra [beneterrapartners.com] to be considered for a project to develop marginal lands. They would bring in their equipment under a land lease agreement of 7 years (to be discussed) and plant crops of owner’s choice on a 50/50 net profit sharing basis.
- Report will be given from the NY Biomass Energy Alliance, of which we are now a member.

The latest DLBC newsletter is available at [www.danbylandbank.com].

Mobile Grass Pelletizer Demo

We’re bringing a pelletizer to Danby! Put it on your calendars: April 21. Snow or rain date: April 28.

More information later but it’ll probably happen at the barn on the corner of Comfort and Lieb Roads. The mobile pelletizer will demonstrate the possibility of heating your home with the product of four acres of goldenrod. We’re making a video. We are using the demo as a publicity and marketing tool...and as a way for members to assess if this is a direction we want to go. ❧

JANUARY HOO-HOOS

Submitted by Jim Reagan

Last January, and there is no reason to believe that this January will be any different, puggle dog Judge and I were treated to the harmonious hootings of at least two pairs of great horned owls in the new development behind our house. Such soft, sonorous hoo-hoos; so beautiful that even Judge stopped his constant sniffing around and peeing for a few moments to listen with those ears pricked up. One owl would start in serenading and then from a long way off another would answer; and then another would pipe up; and another from a different direction. We seemed to be surrounded by feathered hoot machines.

Being an unseasonably warm morning with a misty fog, the hooting sounds were very audible and kind of haunting, yet soothing at the same time. I looked in a huge, bedraggled white pine for an owl, but couldn't see it. Same thing in the stand of shag-bark hickories. I told Judge that it was no use; these owls were obviously masters at camouflage and we could look all day and not see them. It was sort of disappointing.

When I was a kid, I was something of a bird-boy and knew a lot about our feathered friends. If the truth be known, I was obsessive/compulsive about birds. I seemed to remember that these owls mated and started nesting during the winter months. Judge was not entirely convinced when I told him that we were eavesdropping on romantic bubo babblings during the height of their 'renaissance of wonder'. You couldn't fault him his incredulity, given the fact that the winter had only just started and many more frigid days lay ahead. No other animal had such thoughts during those dark, short days; no animal save the great horned owl, that is.

Judge and I decided that we would have to be content listening to the concert, as we picked our way through the misty fields. We weren't going to get a glimpse of the virtuosos. I could tell that the dog was not really attentive when I explained that these fields would likely be someone's front yard in the months to come; making them off limits to our trappings. He really scoffs at such projections, being so caught up in the smells of the here and now.

The owls seem unconcerned with suburban development, as long as their trees are left standing, but I wonder what the long term effects will be. It would be a shame to quiet those haunting voices echoing over the calm woods and fields; others will want to discover that there is romance in the air even in January. With that in mind, can Spring be so very far away? ❀

AMERICAN LEGION UPDATE

Submitted by Marvin Eastman

As another year comes to an end, we have time to reflect on the things that have happened during the past year and look forward to all that will be happening in the new year.

Here at the Ithaca American Legion, we give thanks for the Troops that are returning home safely, that no one was seriously hurt during the Tornado that struck



Danby, and that the rebuilding of the damage is done. We incurred damage to both our pavilion and sign but, with the help of our members, we got both rebuilt or replaced. We are now looking forward to 2012!

We have our Fish and Steak dinners continuing. We will also be starting Chicken BBQs in January. These dinners have been well attended and we thank all that have stopped by for their support and hope you enjoyed the meal as much as we enjoyed you being here.

On January 7, 5-7pm, we will be have one of our famous Steak Dinners. Please try to get here early, as we have been selling out by 6:30pm. The menu is a mouthwatering steak—cooked to order—with sauteed onions or mushrooms, a choice of baked potato, onion rings, or french fries, the vegetable of the day (usually located by the coffee), a salad bar, dinner roll, and coffee-tea-and-desserts. All for \$10.

On January 15, we will be having a Chicken BBQ. Serving starts at Noon and will include a half chicken, your choice of two from salt potatoes, baked beans, and potato salad, and a dinner roll, all for just \$7.50.

On January 20, 5-7pm, we will be having a Fish Dinner for \$10. Menu will be Fish—Fried or Baked—a choice of baked potato, french fries or onion rings, the salad bar, a dinner roll, coffee, tea, and dessert. Again, these dinners sell fast, so try to get here early.

Don't forget, If you need a place to have a baby shower, wedding reception, board meeting, or any other gathering and your home is too small and the hotels are too big...give us a call at 607.272.1129.

Wishing everyone a prosperous and healthy 2012. Remember, Freedom was not Free. Some Gave All, All Gave Some. ❀

Community Council Youth Programs Winter 2012

Happy New Year! The Danby Children and I have been having fun outdoors, during this mild Autumn. Lots of Primitive Pursuits adventures, Fun on the Farm, and finishing up the year with Holiday Crafts in the Town Hall.

The January programs have not been determined as of the publication of this newsletter. If you would like to be on my Email list, to let you know about program updates, please contact me. Otherwise, check the web site listed below during early January for the Winter Danby Programs.



These programs are funded by the Danby Community Council, and are free to Danby residents. Registration is required.

Program flyers and permission slips are in the Danby Town Hall, or can be found at [\[ccetompkins.org/4h/rural-youth-services/danby\]](http://ccetompkins.org/4h/rural-youth-services/danby) Questions? Please contact: Julie Kulik, 607.272.2292. x222 or [\[jnk54@cornell.edu\]](mailto:jnk54@cornell.edu). ❁

DANBY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Submitted by Patti Meyers

Happy New Year! What's new?

At the Danby Community Library, we're updating the cards that are older than 5 years.

Did you know that we have almost the entire collection of Victoria Holt books? We're looking into completing the collection and offering them on Ebay.

We only accept small donations of good condition, clean, non-musty books and DVDs, preferably brought in when a volunteer can accept them. Due to our space limits, we may donate overstock to the Friends of the Library book sale.

We are working on providing *Mail-It* applications, so people who cannot get to a library can order and have books delivered to their home through the Finger Lakes Library System.

We will have lots of new materials available to you in the new year:

DVDs: The Help, Water for Elephants, Temple Grandin, the new Planet of the Apes, maybe a local documentary about PorchFest in Ithaca.

Children's books: Cabin Fever: Diary of a Wimpy Kid #6, If You Give a Dog a Donut, The Artist Who Painted a Blue Horse, The Best of Me, The Bippolo Seed and Other Lost Stories.

COMMUNITY FORUM ON INTERNET ACCESS

A *Community Forum on Internet Access* will be held in the Danby Town Hall on the evening of January 24, probably at 7pm. This event is the first of a series of workshops organized by the Central NY Library System in cooperation with the Broadband Committee of the Tompkins County Legislature.

The evening will be a time when residents can learn more about efforts to make libraries and their services more accessible in the *information age*. There will be time for a general discussion about internet access in rural communities.

A press-release with more details should be issued by the Central Library System by mid-January. For more information, contact the Town Clerk at the Danby Town Hall, 1830 Danby Road, Ithaca NY 14850 or call 607.277.4788. ❁

Adult Fiction: The Dovekeepers, Explosive Eighteen, Hotel Vendome, Nightwoods, V is for Vengeance.

Local Books: The Elephant in the Room, Dos Santos, When Truth Lies.

Ten new books on tape for those fortunate enough to still have a tape player.

And much, much more! ❁

Postal Patron

DANBY AREA NEWS: EVENT CALENDAR

- Jan 4 • Wed
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Gas Drilling Task Force Meeting**
- Jan 5 • Thu
Noon 🏠 Danby Federated Church • **Seniors Luncheon**
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Community Council Meeting**
- Jan 6 • Fri
1:30-6pm 🏠 Danby Federated Church
Red Cross Blood Drive—walk-ins welcome!
- Jan 7 • Sat
5-7pm 🏠 American Legion Post 221 • **Steak Dinner**
- Jan 8 • Sun
5-7pm 🏠 251 Bald Hill Road • **Handspinners Meeting**
- Jan 9 • Mon
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Town Board Meeting**
7:30pm 🏠 Danby Fire Hall • **Fire Department Meeting**
- Jan 10 • Tue
7pm 🏠 Danby Fire Hall
Fire District Organizational & Regular Meeting
- Jan 12 • Thu
6pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Renewable Energy Group Mtg**
- Jan 13 • Fri
5-7pm 🏠 Danby Federated Church • **Chicken & Biscuit**
- Jan 14 • Sat
5pm 🏠 West Danby Fire Hall
Benefit Dinner for Food Pantry
West Danby Community Association Annual Meeting
- Jan 15 • Sun
Noon 🏠 American Legion Post 221 • **Chicken BBQ**
- Jan 16 • Mon
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Town Board Meeting**
7:30pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Conservation Adv Council Mtg**
- Jan 17 • Tue
7pm 🏠 Danby Fire Hall • **Fire Commissioners Meeting**
- Jan 18 • Wed
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Gas Drilling Task Force Meeting**
- Jan 19 • Thu
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Planning Board Meeting**
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Community Park Association Mtg**
- Jan 20 • Fri
5-7pm 🏠 American Legion Post 221 • **Fish Dinner**

- Jan 21 • Sat
10am 🏠 Town Hall • **Land Bank Coop Mtg**
- Jan 22 • Sun
8-11am 🏠 Danby Fire Hall • **Pancake Breakfast**
- Jan 23 • Mon
1-2pm 🏠 Danby Federated Church • **Mobile Food Truck**
- Jan 24 • Tue
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Community Internet Access Forum**
- Jan 26 • Thu
7pm 🏠 Town Hall • **Community Council Annual Mtg**
- Jan 27 • Fri
5pm 🏠 Danby Federated Church • **Chili Challenge**
- Jul 14, 2012 • Sat • **Danby Fun Day and Parade**

ONGOING EVENTS

- Danby Community Library Open** 🏠 Town Hall
Saturdays, 10am–Noon, Wednesdays, 1:30–3:30pm,
and when the Open sign is out!
- Danby Community Library Volunteer Mtg** 🏠 Town Hall
1st Wednesday, 6:30pm. Public Welcome.
- West Danby Volunteer Fire Company** 🏠 WD Fire Hall
2nd Monday, 7pm.
- Military Family Support Group** 🏠 Federated Church
2nd Thursday, 6:30pm.
- Danby Fire Commissioners** 🏠 Fire Hall or WD Fire Hall
3rd Tuesday, 7:30pm.
- Seniors Strength Training Group** 🏠 Federated Church
Mondays, 9am.
- AA Meeting** 🏠 Federated Church
Wednesdays, 7pm.
- Danby Quilters Group** 📞 273.2950
Fridays, 9–11am.

WHERE THINGS HAPPEN

- 🏠 Danby Town Hall • 1830 Danby Road
🏠 Danby Fire Hall • 1780 Danby Road
🏠 West Danby Fire Hall • Sylvan Lane, off Rt.34/96
🏠 Danby Federated Church • 1859 Danby Road
🏠 American Legion Post 221 • 1231 Danby Road