

DANBY NEWS

INTRIGUING COUNTY HISTORY

Submitted by M.A.Barr

A PRESS RELEASE APPEARED in my inbox just in time to meet the Danby News deadline. This is a delightful part of Tompkins County history.

142 years ago, workmen widening a roadway, near what is now Taughannock Falls Overlook, unearthed a life-size human figure, apparently made of stone. The discovery sent all surrounding towns into a tizzy that summer of 1879. *Great Excitement at Taughannock!* shouted headlines in the paper.

This year, on Saturday, July 3, 11am, all interested parties are invited to gather at the grassy area across the street from the Trumansburg Farmers Market to celebrate this long-standing tale and observe the placement of a re-created Taughannock Giant figure in a small pavilion fashioned just for him.

The original Taughannock Giant was built in his basement by Trumansburg mechanic Ira Dean. He secretly buried it near the falls Overlook. Dean collaborated with Taughannock Falls hotel owner John Thompson, both for fun and the hope of some profit. The results were productive: it drove scientific debate, increased tourism and sold newspapers for several months.

The original Giant disappeared not long after he was found and the present Giant was recreated in the spring of 2019 by artist Annemarie Zwack, with grant funding under the auspices of the History Center in Ithaca. Many hands pitched in to help get this new Giant a home. Come celebrate this intriguing figure from our local history!

Contact me for more information, [mbarr@townofdanbyny.org]. ✿

YARD SALE PROMOTES RE-USE

THE DANBY COMMUNITY CHURCH is holding its annual Yard Sale on Friday and Saturday, July 9 and 10, 8am to 5pm. There will be \$1 tarps on the lawn (weather permitting) and much much more inside.

The Church will begin accepting usable goods on Sunday, July 4. The event is open to the public. ✿

[IMHO, this sale ranks right up there with the best area sales. A big assortment of household items. And it's even better when you donate your useful-but-unused items. —editor]

[You can also take part in the Route 96 and 96B Flea Fix sales both days and the Danby Fire Department BBQ on Saturday. For info, call Sharon at 607.273.8241.]

DANBY SENIORS!

Submitted by Margie VanDeMark

SENIORS PLAN TO MEET for the first time since COVID disrupted our lives! We're getting together for our annual Chucken BBQ on Thursday, August 5, Noon, in the Danby American Legion pavilion.

No need to bring anything but we do ask for \$5 per person. Signups can be made with Margie VanDeMark, [margievan@live.com] or 273-8046, and please do so by July 26 so we'll know how many to plan for.

Jon Mosher will head up the chicken cookin' and the Legion will provide the sides. It will be so good to see everyone!

For monthly meetings—sharing dishes to pass—we're thinking we'll wait until the new year. There will definitely be a special December luncheon, most likely on December 2...stay tuned for details! ✿

This Month Inside the Danby News:

- Supervisor's Update ③
- DVFC Fire Station BBQ ③
- WD Water District Update ④
- Clean Heating and Cooling ④
- Legislature Update. ⑥
- CAC Update ⑥
- The Youth Flyer ⑦
- Special Summer Youth Programs ⑦
- Community Library. ⑦
- Calendar ⑧

July 2021

Layout: Ted Crane

Count-n-Label Crew:

Ted and Pamela; others.

Post Office Crew:

Ted

To contribute:

Danby Area News

PO Box 6886

Ithaca, NY 14851-6886

Phone: 607.273.8678

Email: [danbynews@tedcrane.com]

Text submissions:

Send text in the body of an unencoded, plain-text Email message (**not** as an attachment); or mail typewritten copy, double-spaced on white paper. Short handwritten submissions accepted; please write legibly.

Graphics: JPEG preferred for photos, GIF for line graphics. PNG also works. Check with editor before sending hardcopy graphics.

Deadline is the 15th of the month. Materials may be accepted later if time allows. Submissions should generally not exceed 250-350 words (one column). We cannot print political material or letters of opinion.

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DANBY NEWS NOTES

Submitted by Ted Crane

Submission Guidelines: Before submitting an item for the Danby News, please have a look at the *Submission Guidelines*. You can request them by Email from the editor at [danbynews@tedcrane.com] or find them at [danbyny.org/DanbyNews]. 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* at the same web location.

You'll learn what is, and isn't acceptable material for publication. If it's acceptable, we'll make an effort to include it; *generally, we print everything we receive!* You'll find hints about how to prepare a submission. Following these guidelines makes the editing and layout easier.

A terse version of these guidelines is in the left-hand column of this page. ❁

SUPERVISOR'S UPDATE

Submitted by Joel Gagnon, Town Supervisor

SUMMER GREETINGS, ALL! I am writing this month's message the day after the Governor announced the end of COVID restrictions. The state vaccination level has reached 70 percent and we in Tompkins County have only eight active cases and no new ones in several days. It really does look like a return to pre-pandemic conditions is at hand for us in the United States. It is well to keep in mind that this emergency is far from over elsewhere in the world. In fact, global deaths in 2021 at the mid-point of the year already exceed the total for all of 2020. The risk at this point is that new variants will emerge for which the current vaccines will be less effective. We also do not yet know how long the protection afforded by the administered vaccines will last. Accordingly, the Town is cautiously moving toward reopening and putting in place a plan for reimposing restrictions if the need arises. Steve Cortright, Danby's Code Officer, is drafting the plan. I expect the Town Board will adopt it during the June 23 meeting.

As of right now, we are planning on a return to in-person meetings in July. We have acquired the needed hardware to enable hybrid meetings—which is to say, you will be able to attend in person or by Zoom. The links will still be on the web site calendar, along with an indication of whether the meeting is also in-person. New York's Open Meetings Law requires that official bodies meet in person and that the public be able to observe the proceedings. Town Board, Planning Board, and the Board of Zoning Appeals are all official bodies and will thus have to meet in person. Other meetings could still be entirely by videoconference, and some of them might well be so check the calendar for certainty.

State Approves Legislation for Tax Abatement

One of the first things to come out of the Planning Group and find favor with the Town Board was a proposal to reduce property taxes on properties protected by conservation easements. The Tax Working Group proposed that the abatements apply to temporary as well as permanent easements. Four other Towns in NY had previously been given this permission after an initial proposal by NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Abating taxes is not something Towns can do on their own authority. The State mandates that properties be taxed based on market value. There are exceptions in law, but all of them are authorized by the State. So, in order to abate we needed to have the

—continued on page 4 ➔

HEADS-UP FOR FRESH BBQ!

Submitted by Steven Hilsdorf, Danby Volunteer Fire Company

THE DANBY VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANY (a.k.a., the uphill fire station) is planning on hosting a drive-thru chicken BBQ on Saturday, July 10, from Noon 'til gone.

On your way there—or on the way home—stop in at the Danby's Community Church Yard Sale! ❧



The Danby Bobcat has made another appearance, this time on Curtis Road!
—photo by Cory Goodenough



Town Office Info

Town Clerk • [townclerk@townofdanbyny.org]
Phone: 277.4788 • Fax: 277.0559
Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm, by appointment only.

Highway Department • [highway@townofdanbyny.org]
93 Hornbrook Road • Phone: 272.9169
Mon-Thu, 6am-4:30pm

Planning Office • [planner@townofdanbyny.org]
Phone: 592.0417 • Fax: 277.0559
Mon-Thu, 9am-5:30pm
Appointments encouraged (or call or Email ahead).

Code Enforcement Office • [code@townofdanbyny.org]
Phone: 277.0799 • Fax: 277.0559
Mon-Fri, 8am-4:30pm

Town Court • [dgair@nycourts.gov]
Phone: 277.0095 • Fax: 277.0031 • Tue, 9am

All offices at Danby Town Hall except where noted.

OPENING

W.D. WATER DISTRICT UPDATE

Submitted by Tod Sukontarak

OUR INTERNET OF THINGS team of Cornell students ended their semester without fully completing the project's goals. The most important portion of the project—to install a measuring device to display the depth of the water in the well—was done. The only portion of the project remaining is to install a gateway device that will allow the operator to monitor that depth remotely via an electronic device.



There were delays in researching the necessary equipment but they now have that sorted and hopefully by the time you are reading this will also have it installed. ❁

CLEAN HEATING AND COOLING

Submitted by Jim Holahan

WANT TO LOWER YOUR HOME ENERGY BILLS? Right now, generous incentives are available to low- and moderate-income households for insulation and air sealing, energy efficient heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters.

The Town of Danby is excited to be partnering with HeatSmart Tompkins on a Campaign for Clean Heating and Cooling that will kick off with a webinar on Tuesday, July 13. A successful campaign will result in greater comfort and energy savings for participating households and grant funding for the Town—a win, win.

Here's how it works: Sign up with HeatSmart to get a free assessment for home energy improvements such as insulation, heat pumps, and hybrid water heaters, or call 607.500.HEAT (4328).

Want to learn more? The HeatSmart is hosting a Clean Heating and Cooling webinar via Zoom on Tuesday, July 13, 7pm. You can find a register-in-advance link at [heatsmarttompkins.org/danby] or via the calendar on Danby's web site [townofdanbyny.org/calendar]. ❁

➤ Supervisor, cont'd from page 3—

State Legislature pass an exception allowing Danby to do what the other Towns had already done. Both Anna Kelles, who represents us in the Assembly, and Peter Oberacker, who represents us in the Senate, championed our cause and orchestrated passage in their respective houses. That they did this in the first months of their terms is nothing short of remarkable. We owe them a debt of gratitude. The legislation awaits the Governor's signature, but there is no reason to expect that he will not sign. Yay!

Now that the ball is soon to be in our court, we will need to craft the local law to implement the program. Since we are in the midst of a big push to revise zoning before the end of the year, that process will unfold in slower motion that many might wish. Although Danby can enact an abatement of Town taxes, getting school districts (all five of them: Caroline, Ithaca, Newfield, Candor, and Spencer-Van Etten) and the County to participate will take outreach and convincing. The law Albany passed allows them to participate but does not require it. Obviously, the benefit to landowners would be much greater if it included County and School tax abatements. If you would like to help get this program

going, let me know and I will put you in touch with the Tax Working Group.

Wimsatt Conservation Easement Approved

I am very pleased to report that the Town Board accepted and authorized me to sign a conservation easement donated by the Wimsatt family for just over 90 acres abutting the DePutron Hollow Unique Natural Area. If I counted right, it will be the Town's sixth easement. The property is located at the southwest corner of the Marsh-Deputron Hollow Road intersection. It has been under the same ownership for more than 50 years. Used as a hunting and recreational property from the outset, that is the intended use going forward as well for the portion the Wimsatts' will retain. The property is being divided into three pieces. The westernmost part will be annexed to an adjoining property, the middle piece (including a log cabin handcrafted from logs harvested on the property) remains with Ruth Wimsatt Jones, and the eastern portion is being acquired for the construction of a new home. The Wimsatt's easement is the third in that immediate area and helps protect a part of Town that many value for its special character.

—continued on next page ➤

➔ *Supervisor, cont'd from previous page*

Conservation easements limit the future development of the properties they protect. They can be quite restrictive if the objective of the donor is to protect some special feature of the property, but they can also be minimally constraining, allowing much of what can occur on any other property in the area with the exception of the residential development being foregone by the donation of the easement. The rights to develop donated are not retained by the qualified conservation organization to whom they are gifted; they are extinguished for the period of the easement. All of Danby's easements to date have been permanent. The new program to provide tax abatement in exchange for commitment to a conservation easement will enable temporary easements (starting with a 15-year commitment). In the new program, properties already protected by conservation easement will qualify for a 90 percent reduction in property taxes, as will any newly protected properties where the donation is permanent. Lesser commitments will qualify for lesser reductions. Much more about this as the program gets fleshed out.

The Latest on the Planning Effort

How do we accommodate businesses in Danby? This question has drawn attention from both the hamlet working group and the conservation working group. We have indicated in the past that Danby is not looking for heavy industrial businesses and isn't CAFO-friendly (confined animal feeding operations) either, but that leaves a lot of other possibilities open. Apart from home occupations, which I think we deal with pretty well, we really haven't been very business-friendly. Even where businesses are allowed by our zoning, permitting by the Planning Board is required to do much of anything and there is little area zoned specifically for business. How open are we to more, and where? David West, the Town Planner, has put together a survey to get a feel for what the residents of the town think about this. There is a link on the front page of [townofdanbyny.org] if you would like to express your opinion. The more people we hear from, the better the chances that what gets proposed will be acceptable.

Both working groups are getting into the nitty-gritty of the rules for the zones. We have a rough idea what zones will be proposed and where. You can see the zoning map in its evolving form using the link on the front page of the web site, and the navigation to the working documents is also there. The hamlets are divided into

core and surrounding neighborhood zones. The neighborhood zones are primarily residential, although response, so far, to the business survey seems to indicate a willingness to locate businesses there as well, especially along the main highways. We had considerable discussion about whether drive-throughs should be allowed in the hamlet cores. The conclusion was no. There was more willingness to allow them in the hamlet neighborhoods zones, but with strong restrictions. The current low-density residential zone (most of the Town) would be divided into at least four types of zones. The most extensive discussion has been about the already built-out areas. The current proposal is to have neighborhood zones for these where the current rules would mostly still apply. Some of the remaining areas would be divided into two classes of rural and others into a very low density zone to include state forest and properties in their vicinity where the landowners would be willing to have their property restricted to one dwelling unit/20 or 25 acres. Otherwise, the two rural districts would be at a density of one dwelling unit/10 acres. That's average density. The lots need not be that size; one option would be to require that newly-created lots either be small (perhaps <2 acres) or very large (>20 acres). Much more information, including recordings of the working group meetings, is on the web site.

Other Stuff

Our Town Clerk, Janice Adelman, is researching ways to upgrade the Town's telephone system. We currently have a very expensive hodge-podge of land lines and cell phones with very little integration. There is the potential to improve functionality and ease of use while still saving money. No resolution yet, but coming soon, I think. Janice has been the driving force behind the digital revolution in the Town offices, driven initially by the need to do much work remotely and electronically due to the pandemic, but our Town Clerk is leading a broader movement into the 21st century. Her tech-savviness is a big asset to us.

Jim Holahan, Town Board member, is our point-person in a new campaign for clean heating and cooling. You can read more about that in his article elsewhere in this issue.

As always, please feel free to contact me, [supervisor@townofdanbyny.org] or 607.227.4440, about any of these matters or anything else on your mind. ❧

COUNTY LEGISLATURE UPDATE

Submitted by Dan Klein, Tompkins County Legislator

TOMPKINS COUNTY OWNS 550 ACRES of forest land—450 acres in Newfield and 100 acres in Caroline. By NY State law, we cannot sell or develop this land. Most of the trees are about 90 years old.

The County adopted a policy in 2008 to log the forest every year for 30 years. That policy was never acted on. As recently as 2018, the County attempted to log 150 acres. No loggers bid on the project.

Since I got on the legislature, I have been advocating for leaving this forest alone and allowing it to mature into old-growth forest. I have argued that local government is in a unique position to protect forests long-term, and that old-growth forest is a rare ecosystem worth protecting.

I am very happy to report that last month the County Legislature voted on my proposal for the first time, and it passed 11 to 3.

It has been surprising to me how much controversy this debate has generated. The main disagreements I encountered along the way involved the definition of

old-growth, how logging affects carbon sequestration, what to do with the red pines that had been planted in the 1930s, and what we mean when we say a forest is “healthy”.

I did a lot of research about past forestry practices and recommendations by experts. I found a number of interesting examples of mainstream forestry practices that later turned out to be really bad ideas (starting with the 1930s belief that planting rows of red pines was a good idea). If my ideas about what is going to happen to the 550 acres of publicly forest turn out to be incorrect, then it can always be logged in the future. But once logged, it sets the clock back decades, or maybe even centuries. We have 90-year old trees, and that is a good start towards something great in the future.

I believe that future residents of Tompkins County will be grateful for this action by the County Legislature. I am very very proud to have been part of this.

If you have questions or comments, you can contact me at [danbydan@hotmail.com] or my home phone number, 607.272.7582. ❁

CAC UPDATE

Submitted by Clare Fewtrell, Conservation Advisory Council

DURING ITS JUNE MEETING, the Conservation Advisory Council almost managed to complete its business in less than two hours (our ultimate goal is 1.5 hours!).

After many months of negotiations with the owners and potential buyers of part of the property, the CAC finally recommended acceptance by the Town Board of a Conservation Easement on a lovely 89-acre property in Deputron Hollow. A Public Hearing was held on June 14 and we were pleased that the Town Board followed our recommendation and voted to accept the donation of this easement.

We approved the final design for a sign to be displayed on Danby Conservation Easement properties and will now be ordering 50 signs. The signs will include a QR code that will take interested passers-by to the Conservation Easement page of the Town’s web site.

Progress continues on the wording of a proposed Tim-

ber Harvesting/Logging Ordinance for Danby. However we were disappointed that we have not yet been able to get feedback from the Code Enforcement Officer or other Danby officials who would be responsible for enforcing this.

We agreed that Jonathan Zisk’s easement workshop on Zoom, had been very useful and should probably be repeated at some point. In the meantime a Zoom recording of the workshop is now available on the CAC page on the Town’s web site. Other links include the recently held Spotted Lanternfly and Landowner Forestry Education webinars. We also hope to post Brittany Lagaly’s Zoom presentation to the Highway Department on Invasive Species and an excellent Land Trust webinar by Dr. Rebecca Schneider on Re-Plumbing Roadside Ditches: Simple Solutions to Reduce Flooding, Droughts, and Water Pollution.

The CAC meets on the second Tuesday of the month. Our next meeting will be held (via Zoom) on July 13, 7pm. ❁

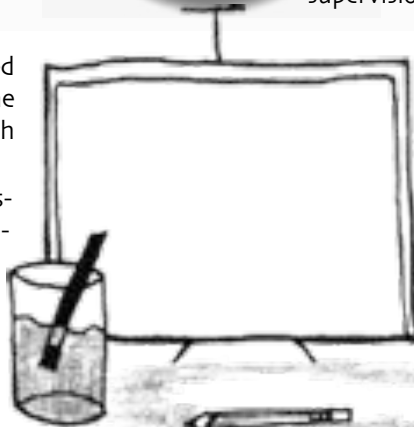
Danby Community Kids Summer Special Series

While the wheels of bureaucracy turn to do the difficult job of filling beloved and recently-departed Youth Program Manager Melis' shoes, the Danby Community Council has leapt into action to offer summer programs for Danby's youth.

We have drafted a framework for a variety of offerings on Tuesdays and Thursdays starting on July 6 and into the first part of August. Naturalist programs, art programs, games, and more are in the works, open to all ages, with the important caveat that these are being offered by community members, not through the official Youth Program managed through Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Morning programs on Tuesdays and Thursdays will be led by talented father-daughter duo Bill and Veery Evans, with natural history (butterflies, moths, bugs, dragonflies and more) led by Bill and art lessons for younger kids by Veery. Materials will be provided.

Danby Youth FLYER



Tuesday afternoons, the Janda-Clougherty family will offer games both active and board, with Thursday afternoons bringing offerings from other community members including Pamela Goddard, ranging from singing to drumming, to claymation and more.

Registration will be required, space will be limited, programs are free but donations will be accepted. Check the Danby Community Council website for specific details and to sign up. Some programs may require parental supervision--this is not day camp. Info can also be found on the Danby Youth Facebook page.

Patience and input are requested as we work to bridge this gap so that Danby Youth have excellent options for summer fun and learning. Safety and adherence to all necessary health department/CDC guidelines for COVID protection will be top priority. Programs will be cancelled if thunderstorms are forecast, otherwise they will be held rain or shine. ☘

DANBY COMMUNITY LIBRARY

Submitted by Cindy Parlett

THE LIBRARY IS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC on Thursday and Saturday, 10m-Noon. The flag will be out when we are open and you may enter the library directly through the door near the library flag.

Our summer books are on display and we also have a nice selection of puzzles available. Online requests and curbside pick up will continue. We look forward to seeing you in person!

New items from the Friends of the Library Sale:

Adult Fiction

- *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennet
- *Tell Me* by Lisa Jackson
- *The Escape Artist* by Brad Meltzer
- *Field Gray* by Philip Kerr
- *Moonflower Murders* by Anthony Horowitz

Graphic Novel

Marvel, Daredevil: Guardian Devil, vol.1 ☘

That moment at 3am
when you whisper
to yourself,
“I need to stop...”
And turn the page.

DANBY NEWS: EVENT CALENDAR

- Jul 1 • Thu
 Noon 📍 Community Church • Seniors (cancelled)
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Danby Community Council Mtg
- Jul 2 • Fri
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Low-Density Zoning Committee
- Jul 3 • Sat
 9am 📍 Town Hall • Library Volunteers Meeting
- Jul 7 • Wed
 5:30pm 📍 Zoom • WD Water Board Meeting
- Jul 8 • Thu
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Hamlet Zoning Committee
- Jul 9 • Fri
 8am-5pm 📍 Community Church • Yard Sale
- Jul 10 • Sat
 8am-5pm 📍 Community Church • Yard Sale
 Noon 📍 Danby Fire Hall • Chicken BBQ
- Jul 12 • Mon
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Town Board Meeting
 7pm 📍 Danby Fire Hall • Fire Dep't Meeting
 7pm 📍 West Danby Fire Hall • WD Fire Dep't Meeting
- Jul 13 • Tue
 7pm 📍 Danby Fire Hall/YouTube • Fire District Meeting
 7pm 📍 Town Hall • Conservation Advisory Council Mtg
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Heat Smart Webinar (must register)

- Jul 15 • Thu
 4pm 📍 Community Church • Danby Food Pantry
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Low-Density Zoning Committee
- Jul 19 • Mon
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Town Board Meeting: Moratorium
- Jul 20 • Tue
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Planning Board Mtg
- Jul 21 • Wed
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Town Board Meeting
- Jul 23 • Fri
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Hamlet Zoning Committee
- Jul 27 • Tue
 7pm 📍 Danby Fire Hall/YouTube • Fire District Meeting
- Aug 5 • Thu
 Noon 📍 American Legion Post • Seniors BBQ
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Danby Community Council Mtg
- Aug 6 • Fri
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Low-Density Zoning Committee
- Aug 7 • Sat
 9am 📍 Town Hall • Library Volunteers Meeting
- Aug 9 • Mon
 7pm 📍 Zoom • Town Board Meeting
 7pm 📍 Danby Fire Hall • Fire Dep't Meeting
 7pm 📍 West Danby Fire Hall • WD Fire Dep't Meeting
- Aug 10 • Tue
 7pm 📍 Danby Fire Hall/YouTube • Fire District Meeting
 7pm 📍 Town Hall • Conservation Advisory Council Mtg

Meeting	Date	Zoom Mtg ID	Pcode
Planning Cmtes	Fridays	970 8279 1227	???
Town Board	July 12	980 8515 9868	754633
CAC	July 13	972 1566 0090	423584
Planning Board	July 20	958 0817 5336	245871
Town Board	July 21	971 0723 2988	535713
Zoning Appeals	None	986 3534 5196	281804
To join a meeting by telephone, call 646.876.9923			

ONGOING EVENTS

- Danby Community Library 📍 Town Hall
 Books available via curbside pickup.
 Can be returned in drop box.
- Danby Food Pantry 📍 Danby Community Church
 3rd Thursday, 4-6pm
- Food Scrap Recycling 📍 Town Hall 🏠👤👤👤👤
 Saturdays, 9am-Noon