



Volume XV11 Issue 7

# Our Town

*Your Sprague Newsletter*

July 2007

**Farewell, Good-bye, Auf Wiedersehen, Good Night** – Since I am not sure how long I will continue to gather and edit the Sprague news for **Our Town** as I am now doing it on a month-to-month basis until a replacement is found, I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their calls and notes of support and appreciation that I have received during the last 15 years. I have made many friends in the Town of Sprague and will miss my last little connection there. As most readers know, I moved from Sprague quite some time ago but continued doing the **Our Town** as a community service because I believed that the newsletter was an important asset to the community, informing residents of community news, local events, legal notices, school happenings etc. The selectmen have decided to take **Our Town** in another direction, a direction which I do not support as I feel Opinion Pages belong in newspapers, not in local newsletters which are being paid for and supported by the taxpayers of the town, not all of whom are interested in said opinions. I would especially like to thank the staff at Town Hall and the many who have acted as the “collating crew” once a month for many years. Sprague truly has some wonderful people living there. Thank you all. **Dee**

## **Summer Reading Program**

The Sprague Public Library is once again sponsoring a summer reading program for all children from birth to entering eighth grade. The theme this summer is The Pursuit of Happiness, featuring fun and inexpensive summer pastimes kids can pursue right here in the town of Sprague. Over the summer, each child needs to read and report on at least 8 books, an average of one per week. All participants who meet that reading goal will be invited to our annual Ice Cream Sundae Party. Thanks to the Ejchorsz Family and the West Main Street Norwich Dairy Queen for the donation of the ice creams. Winners will also receive their choice of books donated by the Sprague Garden Club. A new addition this year is the Sprague Library’s partnership with the Connecticut Defenders Baseball Team. Readers who meet the goal will earn two tickets to a game and recognition at Dodd Stadium. If you haven’t registered for the reading program yet, please stop by the library any time it is open to sign up. If you have any questions or to volunteer to help (teens and adults, please) call Miss Rebecca Cipriani at 822-1643. Remember- read, read, read!

## **Summer Recreation Program**

Once again this year the Sprague Parks and Recreation Committee is sponsoring a series of recreation programs for the area youth. The cost is \$10 per child for one, two, or three weeks of programs. (Out of town students will be accepted on a space-available basis for a fee of \$10 per week.) The schedule of programs is listed below. If you haven’t registered yet or to volunteer to help, please call Miss Rebecca Cipriani at 822-1643.

Drama and Games with Mrs. Labbe 9:00-12:00 at the Grist Mill

Entering Grades 1-2 July 16-20

Entering Grades 3-5 July 9-13

Entering Grades 6-8 June 25 - 29

Sports with Mr. Gonzalez 1:00-4:00 at the Ball Field

Entering Grades 1-2 July 9-13

Entering Grades 3-5 July 23-27

Entering Grades 6-8 July 30- August 3

Arts, Crafts, and Science with Miss Cipriani 12:30-3:30 at the Baltic Playground

Entering Grades 1-2 June 25-29

Entering Grades 3-5 July 2-6 (Not July 4)

Entering Grades 6-8 July 9-13

**\*\*\*NEW\*\*\*Teen Program for Students Entering Grades 9-12 at the Grist Mill**

Thursday Evenings 6:30-8:30 PM from June 22- August 16

Come hang out with your friends, play games, eat snacks, make crafts, almost anything goes! YOU will decide what to do each evening!!!! Just drop in; registration is not necessary.

\*\*\*Added Bonus\*\*\*- This year it is free!



## **Sprague Butterfly Garden**

If you are looking for a place to relax, check out the new Sprague Butterfly Garden. It is located at the River Park in Baltic. Rachel Fish is to be thanked for this lovely new addition to our town. Working with the Sprague Parks and

Recreation Committee, Rachel undertook the design and creation of the butterfly garden as a fifth grade class project at Sayles School. She researched which plants and flowers would attract butterflies and also flourish in our climate. Next she designed the garden in the very creative and appropriate shape of a butterfly. The next step of Rachel's plan was to fundraise to purchase the plants. Thanks to everyone who contributed to Rachel's penny jar at Box Office Video! Finally Rachel went shopping to purchase the appropriate plants. When she visited the Baltic Greenhouse with her funds, she was pleasantly surprised to also receive a donation of plants and supplies in addition to the ones she was able to purchase. Many thanks to the Baltic Greenhouse for the generosity! Then on Wednesday June 13, Rachel invited her fifth grade class to help plant the garden. A good time was had by all and the final product is very impressive! As the plants settle in they will spread over time and eventually we hope to add a bench to the garden. These flowers should attract butterflies for years to come and help in just a small way to beautify our town and make it a more enjoyable place in which to live. Thanks for getting involved, Rachel Fish, and wonderful job!

#### **Grade 5 DARE Graduation**

On Tuesday June 5, 2007 the Sayles School Grade 5 DARE Class held their graduation. DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) teaches children strategies to help avoid drugs, tobacco, alcohol, violence, and negative peer pressure now and in their futures. The DARE program is taught over a series of weeks by a specially trained police officer. We would like to thank Trooper Galley for his fantastic work with this year's DARE class. At the graduation ceremony, students shared a bit of what they have learned in the program and received diplomas. Awards were also presented for the best essay and poster related to the DARE experience. The winning essays were: Larry Ejchorszt in 5-Labbe and Gregory Dziekan in 5-Cipriani. The winning posters were: Rachel Fish in 5-Labbe and Timothy Paz in 5-Cipriani. Congratulations to all of our graduates and let's all remember to stay drug free!

#### **DARE Graduates**

**John Baldino**  
**Daniel Briggs**  
**Wilfred Chabotte IV**  
**Heather Cicio**  
**Nicole Desaulniers**  
**Monica Dort**  
**Benjamin Ducharme**  
**Gregory Dziekan**  
**Lawrence Ejchorszt, Jr.**  
**Rachel Fish**  
**Benjamin Giroux**  
**Kiel Harris**  
**Casey Henk**  
**Kimberly Henk**  
**Corey Holman**  
**Joshua Hoskins**  
**Michael James**  
**Serena Johnson**  
**Timothy Jorsz**

**Jeremy LaBrecque**  
**Anastasia Moffatt**  
**Briana Montgomery**  
**Timothy Paz**  
**Hannah Potter**  
**Jacob Provost**  
**Nicole Pugh**  
**Emily Rondeau**  
**Marc Schroth, Jr.**  
**Mason Thibodeau**  
**Sara Tiffany**  
**Christopher Weeman**  
**Anne Woronecki**  
**Kevin Zeller**

#### **SPRAGUE PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION**

The Planning and Zoning Commission holds its regular scheduled meetings on the first Wednesday of each month, at 7:00 P.M., in the courtroom on the second floor of the Town Hall. The agenda is posted on the bulletin board in the Town Clerk's Office on the Monday immediately preceding the meeting. The public is always welcome and is encouraged to attend.

Members of the Commission are: Mick Collins, Joe Osowski, Paul Piezzo, Arthur Spielman, Jr., Gerald Stefan, Anna L. Talbot, and Richard Waterman. Alternate members are: Kathleen Boushee, Kord Jablonski, and Shawn Bittman. The Commission employs a part-time planner and consultant, Tom Seidel of the Southeastern Connecticut Council of Governments, and Zoning enforcement Officer Joseph Smith.

A record of the activities of the Commission is available on audiotape at the Town Hall, and typed minutes of the meeting are also available there. Additional information concerning the Commission and the Sprague Plan of conservation and Development may be obtained by viewing the municipal website: [www.ctsprague.org](http://www.ctsprague.org)

#### **SPRAGUE CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

Hello Sprague, this is our update for July:

The **BIG NEWS** is that we have scheduled the **RIVER PARK DEDICATION**. It will be on **Friday July 27<sup>th</sup> at 6pm**. We will sponsor a **COMMUNITY PICNIC**. Please join us. We will celebrate the volunteer efforts of our community. Come and enjoy this wonderful asset to our town. On that note, we had a great time joining with the Rec. Committee at the River Fest. A good time was had by all. We hope that next year will be even bigger and better. We look forward to working together in the future. Come and join us.

Also at the Mukluk Nature Preserve, the clean-up is going great. We have saved a great amount of money in the process. Please continue to stay away from the fenced in area. We will keep you posted on the progress. We hope to have a more complete update for the next Our Town. Any questions concerning this please call me @822-9808 or attend our next meeting on July 12<sup>th</sup> @7pm. You should see the trail map posted soon and the bulletin board up. This is one of our next

summer projects on our “to- do” list. Anybody who would like to volunteer on any small project please call me. We can all make a big difference in OUR town.

**July’s Mukluk hikes** will be on Monday July 16<sup>th</sup> and Saturday July 21<sup>st</sup>. 9am -1pm.. Meet me at the Grist Mill @ 9am. Come join us and bring the family. -  
**Don Boushee**

**Healthy Eating Consistently and Successfully**

Hello to all and Happy Summer! This month I want to talk about how we can tackle the inconsistencies we face when we are trying to make healthy changes with our diet.

As you all know, most of us who have tried to change eating habits do really well for a good two weeks. Then at about the two week mark, falling off the wagon of change becomes a common occurrence. You need to have a few things in place for consistent success.

First, find a buddy—this is someone who is trying to change as well. You and your buddy are to become each other’s support system. Together you should set a time to meet or talk on the phone for at least a half an hour or more each week and share how you are doing with your changes. Motivating and supporting each other is the key. You will also have to push each other at times and inspire each other to set new goals. The point is that you have someone to be accountable to and this tends to bring much more success than doing something alone. When we do things alone, it’s easy to become isolated, lethargic, or say “I don’t feel like it”. Then before we know it, we are back where we started. Having a buddy is a sure way to stay consistent.

Secondly, buy healthy foods and set aside time RIGHT AFTER grocery shopping to cut, chop, and prepare convenient and healthy snacks. We all like to snack throughout our day. Many of us tend to eat what we brought if we know it’s there. Usually it’s when we are at the office and don’t have anything with us that we wander to the kitchen and eat whatever is on the table. These foods tend to be the following: cookies, donuts, cakes, muffins, chips, soda, etc. None of these foods are good for anyone. Bring healthy snacks conveniently packed in plastic baggies and you will avoid many pitfalls.

And lastly, persistence is what will bring you to your goal. If you fall, get right back up, dust yourself off, and start all over again. There is no other way to succeed at anything in this life. Realize perfection can never be achieved and that is perfectly okay.

Good luck and stick with it!

**Submitted by: Angie Daly, HHC AADP**  
Holistic Health Counselor, American Academy Drugless  
Practitioner

\*Before beginning any exercise regimen, please consult with your doctor.

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**Assessor, Town of Sprague**  
**P.O. Box 162**  
**Baltic, Connecticut 06330**  
**fax 860-822-3016**

**Correction** – Last month’s article submitted by the Republican Town Committee contained a misstatement of fact.

Last month’s article read “ When you lose close to 10 % of your grand list.”

It should have read – **“The grand list decreased by 5%.”**

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**HAZARDOUS WASTE COLLECTION**

July 21<sup>st</sup> in Groton  
Transfer Station, Flanders Road  
448-4083

**Sprague Garden Club**

The Garden Club held its Annual Sale on May 19. The occasional rain didn’t dampen the spirit of the day. We thank everyone who came by and especially the town employees and elected officials who worked with us to make it a success.

Please take notice of the planters around town. Nine of our members care for the planters. This year they selected their own plants resulting in 10 little unique gardens. It takes a lot of perseverance to keep the planters watered and weeded once the hot dry weather arrives. We also have some anonymous helpers that water or mow the grass around the several of the planters. Thank you for your efforts.

Three shrubs at the Grist Mill were affected by dehydration due to the fluctuating winter weather. The result is brown, dead leaves. This has never been a problem in the past therefore no anti-desiccant (such as Wilt-Pruf) had been applied. We will be cutting back the dead branches in hopes of encouraging new growth and saving the shrubs.

Have a safe summer and I hope you will take time to explore our town’s ‘wet and wild’ areas. The Baltic Reservoir, Mukluk Preserve and River Park are great places to take a walk, enjoy a picnic lunch or just relax and recharge after a busy week.

**-Jan Settje, Secretary**

**Three Village Fall Festival**

**The Three Village Fall Festival** is in pre planning stages for October. This year’s event should be quite a surprise for the entire town. We have some really great things in development that will have the entire town thrilled. If you thought the helicopter landing, last year was cool, hang onto your hats! As P.T. Barnum said..You ain’t seen nothin’ yet! Stay toon’d , more to come!

**The Three Village Tour Bike Race** is shaping up nicely. We will be part of a 2 day series. It starts in Sprague on the Saturday, followed by Norwich’s 1<sup>st</sup> professional bike race....called...wait for it....THE ROSE PEDAL CRITERIUM! Expect this to grow, as the riders and clubs plan their race schedules. We are partnering with Mystic Velo Bike Club to ensure we have plenty of professional help, to make this a day to be remembered. It will be during the 3VFF, so expect crowds!

Included in the concerns expressed to Trooper Patterson included excessive speed, (particularly on Pautipaug Hill Rd), burn outs all up and down the hill and general poor driving of many drivers on the hill – both residents (you know who you are) and non-residents. Trooper Patterson reassured the Watch group that he would be paying special attention to the hill now that the Country Club has passed ownership to the Mohegan Pequot Tribe. On a more pleasant note, as always it was great to see Rose Goderre join us for a spell in the afternoon. Though in her words her “head was feeling heavy” she walked on over to share some time with us. Additionally, several “hill” residents popped by on their way to and from various other goings on and we thank them for stopping by for as long

### **RENTERS REBATE**

Sprague residents at least 65 years of age (in 2006) or totally disabled may be eligible for the State Renters Rebate Program. 2006 qualifying income limits are: **\$28,800 for single residents and \$35,300 for a married couple.** To file an application, bring proof of all 2006 income including 2006 Social Security 1099 and Federal Income Tax Return (if filed.) Also, bring receipts for rent and utilities (electric, water, gas/oil) you paid in 2006. Applications are available at the Assessor’s Office and must be filed by September 13, 2007.

\*\* The Assessor’s Office is open to assist with filing the applications Wednesday, 8 am to 5:30 pm and Thursday, 8 am to 4:30 pm. Please call for appointment at 822-3000, ext 222. -Nicole Lintereur, Assessor

as they could. We’d especially like to thank Sue Sweet and her family for hosting the event. Sue always seems to go out of her way to make the group feel welcome and comfortable. Thanks again Sue. Weekend time is so much busier for all of us – especially when the weather is warm, there are graduations and sporting events to attend and of course there’s always yard work. The next “Watch” meeting will probably be in the early Fall after school is back in session. If you’d like to be added to the Pautipaug Hill Neighborhood Watch email list for notification of Watch meetings and general town happenings, please contact me at 822-6834 or slsmock@aol.com.

Enjoy a safe Summer!

**- Steve Smock**

**Pautipaug Hill Neighborhood Watch**

### **Goin’Postal 2007**

There is so much to talk about and so little room!

We have lots of beautiful stamps that have just been released at the new rate – and the detailing is incredible! The international letter rate of 90 cents features a sunset view from Guam with a person running on the beach. The international postcard rate of 69 cents (also used for international Canada and Mexico 1-ounce letter rate) looks like a misty morning on the Okefenokee Swamp with giant lily pads in the foreground and silhouetted trees in the background in tones of blue and green. The domestic postcard stamps, now rated for 26 cents, are a blue-toned Florida Panther. The look in his eye makes me feel like I could be dinner! May 25<sup>th</sup> was the debut of the Star Wars stamps – a sheet of 15 stamps with a variety characters from Han Solo and Chewbacca, to the droids and Master Yoda. Fresh from his victorious showdown with Darth Vader (the on-line “Vote-For-Your-Favorite-Stamp” contest from last month), Yoda will also be featured on his own stamp that will be for individual purchase soon. June 21<sup>st</sup> was the first sale date for the new Pollinators stamps. Each double sided book of 20 stamps has five sets of four stamps that show beautifully colorful flowers each with their own pollinator species – a hummingbird, a bumblebee, a fruit bat, and a butterfly. On June 27<sup>th</sup>, the newest wedding stamps were released. Forty-one-cent Hearts will be usable for invitations and return cards weighing up to 1.0 ounce – these are pale lavender in color. The 58-cent Hearts will be usable for heavier invitations and mailings between 1.1 ounce and 2.0 ounces – these are pale pink in color. Sheets of 20 pressure sensitive (you don’t have to lick ‘em!) stamps are available for each of these stamps for \$8.20 and \$11.60, respectively.

### **First Annual Golf Tournament**

At

**River Ridge Golf Course in Griswold**

**July 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Registration begins at 9 am**

**\$120.00 per person**

**Price includes cart, round of golf and dinner.**

**Prizes throughout the day and a raffle during dinner.**

**Come Support Our School!**

**For information: Contact Polly at 887-7556, Jenni at 822-8515, Jen at 546-8433 or St. Joseph School at 822-8141**

### **Pautipaug Hill Neighborhood Watch**

The Pautipaug Hill Neighborhood Watch held a “hill” clean-up/bar-b-que & meeting on Saturday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, which was the rain date for the original event scheduled on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. Though not much cleaning up was accomplished (oh well), John Patterson, our new Resident State Trooper, kindly stopped by for an hour on his day off to answer our questions and listen to “hill” resident concerns. It was noted that illegal ATV use on town roads and private property is significantly decreased vs. a year ago. Keep up the good work “hillers”.

June 29<sup>th</sup> is the release date for the new Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamps – this year features a male and female pair of ring-neck ducks in all their colorful splendor! These are \$15.00 each. The Hunting and Conservation Regulation booklets from DEP for the 2007 season are not printed up until late August or early September. For details on how these stamps are used and for regulations for hunting and fishing, contact your local fish and wildlife agency: Franklin Wildlife DEP at 642-7239 or our own town clerk, Claire Glaude at 822-3000 ext 220.

We have become an Eye-Glass Collection Station for the Lions Club and are taking eye glasses (prescription and magnifiers) for use donating to those who don't have the ability to purchase them. If your prescription has changed or you need stronger magnification for reading please consider donating them to the Lions! They can be dropped off

(handed to us over the counter not dropped!) at the Hanover Post Office any day we are open.

We are still sending out "We Care" packages to local residents serving overseas. We currently have Frisbees and magazines. We are going to be purchasing phone cards from local donations and we need snacks, toiletries and stationery (writing paper, greeting cards, envelopes, etc.) to send out another package for July. Your help with this project will be greatly appreciated! Any encouraging notes you'd like to include would be a great addition!

We have a wide variety of packaging products that recently came in featuring decorative designs and characters – Disney and designer colored boxes, floral and teddy bear padded mailers – also bubble wrap and tape, so you can send gifts, share hobby supplies, or completed projects with friends and family no matter how far away they are! So whether your hobbies include philatelic (stamp collecting), outdoor sports, needlecrafts, or anything else, we have what you need to order, ship, share, and enjoy your pastimes – we deliver quality, convenience and service for you! Have a great summer! See you soon!

**Tracy Medling, Postmaster Hanover**

## Q&A on Taxes

### *What's a mill rate and how is it set ?*

The mill rate is basically a percentage of your property value that you must pay in taxes. One mill means you pay \$1 for each thousand dollars your property is worth (or really, what the value it's assessed at). Last year, the mill rate was 24, which means that for each thousand dollars your property is worth, you pay \$24 in taxes. The new mill rate is 26.

Each year, the Board of Finance figures out how much money the town needs to offer services. If the townspeople accept this budget, the Board sets a mill rate that raises enough taxes to cover the budget.

### *Why are taxes rising this year?*

#### **Two reasons:**

One, when Caraustar sold its paper mill in Versailles to Cascades, the price was much lower than what Caraustar had paid. That lowered the assessed value of the plant, which means it now pays a lot less taxes. The loss of revenue equals about 1.75 mill.

Two, unavoidable costs have risen. Fuel. Union and contract salaries. Other stuff. No way around it. This accounted for most of the .25 mill increase.

At the same time, the Board of Finance added a few costs that will help lower other costs. It also cut a few things to balance out the added costs.

### *Who determined the town budget this year?*

So far, no one. The Board of Finance proposed three different budgets. They were rejected in two town meetings and a referendum.

### *Why did the town have a referendum instead of a town meeting?*

A referendum gives everyone a chance to vote. At a town meeting, you can vote only if you're present.

### *Why did the town hold town meetings instead of referendums?*

At a town meeting, the people who vote (all citizens present) are informed about what they're voting on because the issues have been discussed at the meeting. Also, at a town meeting, citizens can vote on reducing the proposed budget. A town meeting gives people more control over the budget. ***At the town meetings, was the budget reduced by citizen demand?***

A few people asked to have certain line items reduced, but when votes were taken, the majority rejected the requested reductions.

### *If the majority did not want to reduce the proposed budget, why did the majority vote against the budget?*

This is a mystery.

### *If a budget was not approved, how was the mill rate set?*

By state law, since the townspeople could not agree on a budget, the Board of Selectmen had to set a mill rate based on last year's budget. The Board of Selectmen voted unanimously to increase taxes by 2 mills. Even with that increase, the town expects to run a shortfall (deficit) by the end of the year.

### *Now what?*

The townspeople still have to pass a budget. There will be a series of town meetings until one is passed.

### *What happens if people vote to lower the budget below the 2 mill increase?*

By state law, the mill rate is set for the year. A lower budget will mean a lower shortfall or even a surplus to be applied to next year's budget.

### *Can the town raise more revenues somehow?*

It's trying. Our grant writer brought in more than ten times her salary. The Economic Development Commission is exploring ways to bring more business into town and is working on restaurant placemats that will advertise local businesses.

- **Glenn Cheney, Selectman**

## First Selectman's Office

As we enjoy July 4<sup>th</sup> a day out of work please think about why you have the day off. On this day we celebrate the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. When I was younger on this day we all shot off fire works and went to parades. We need to still declare our independence as did our ancestors.

I want to thank those who put together the Memorial Day activities. Colette Hoffman, Thomas Girard, Marie Hamm, and all the others who worked so hard that we might remember those who have fought that our country may be

free. When I was a young man I was taught that the American Flag and National Anthem are special. We were told to stand at attention and put our hand over our heart when the flag goes by or when the National Anthem was played.

While at the Memorial, did you notice that the trees had been removed along the river? Thanks to Cathy Osten who was able to get the inmates to do this work for our town.

On June 2<sup>nd</sup> the third River Festival was held. There were more in attendance this year than last year. Many came down the river in their kayaks and then went back up the river to come back down on a tube. Thanks to all who took part in organizing this great event.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> Marcia Marien again presented the audit report. There were no problems reported.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> the DTC and others met to learn what is required in creating a charter for the Town of Sprague. At the Board of Selectmen's meeting it was proposed that anyone who is interested in taking part in this project to please send a letter to me so I can take it back to the Board of Selectmen at our regular meeting on July 11, 2007. The process of creating a charter will take a year or so.

The youth from Sayles School came to the River Park on June 13<sup>th</sup> to plant a Butterfly Garden. This will give them a chance to take personal responsibility of this park.

The Town of Sprague is now the owners of the Baltic Mill property. It was taken for back taxes. SEDC is working to see what can now be done with the property. We received \$200,000 Brownfield's grant for further evaluation and clean up of the mill property.

True Blue was awarded the contract to place a protective mat and 8" of gravel over the road going to the Silt Pond at the Mukluk property. This was required because there was lead on the road. They have also removed most of the skeet, and removed the buildings used at the skeet range. This is part of the \$200,000 Brownfield's grant received for Mukluk.

As you know the budget was turned down again on June 13<sup>th</sup>. On June 15<sup>th</sup> the Board of Selectmen met and established a mill rate for the 2007-2008 budget year. That rate will be 26 mills. The town will still need to pass a budget; however, the mill rate will not change.

Here is an update from the questions asked me at our last Board of Selectmen's meeting. I will not cover all 27 items, however, if you would like more information, please call my office.

There is bond money in a bill in the legislature re: dam repair and gravel packed well. The Town is waiting for a State budget and approval of the bond commission. If this passes there will be one million dollars to dig a gravel packed well and make dam repairs. The Sprague Water & Sewer Board has been working tireless on resolving the water problem.

Status of the new town garage; if you remember four years ago the town authorized \$500,000 for building a town garage in the area of the salt shed. We found that the land were the salt shed is now located was land that had been purchased with open space money and we would need a land swap to make that location legal. This is also the best place for the garage. We now have a land swap in place and I have asked for money to hire an Architect and Engineer so that this time next year we could bring to the town the cost and be ready to go out to

bid if approved by the town. This was one of the first budget items that we removed from the 2007-2008 budget; maybe next fiscal year.

We have had an odor from the Paper Mill recently. When you smell this odor call the odor line at 823-3696. This will help the Cascades Boxboard Group deal with the problems.

School is out please drive carefully. Parents please teach your children to obey the law, watch for cars, and do not destroy property. My grandson is here from Florida to fish in the river. Enjoy the resources we have in town; the river, the River Park, the Mukluk Preserve, the Reservoir and the ball parks. Have a great summer.

- **Dennison Allen First Selectman**

### **Ladies Auxiliary – Baltic Fire Department**

The Auxiliary will be selling tickets to the Connecticut Defenders game for Sunday, July 15<sup>th</sup>. Tickets are \$23.00 per person and include admission to the game and a picnic lunch. Anyone interested should call Sue Deschamps at 822-6926, Jeannette Deschamps at 822-8331 or Tina Deschamps at 822-6139. Deadline for tickets is July 7<sup>th</sup>.

The Annual Holly Jolly Bazaar will be held on Saturday, November 24<sup>th</sup> from 9 am to 3 pm. Table rental letters will be going out in early September. If you are not on our mailing list and would like to rent a table, please call Jeannette at 822-8331 and leave your name and mailing address. Cost for an 8 foot table is \$25.00.

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, September 12<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm at the firehouse. Anyone interested is welcome to join us.

-**Jeannette Deschamps, Secretary**

### **Democratic Town Committee**

Hello Sprague,

The DTC will be holding its caucus in July for endorsement of candidates for the November 2007 elections. If you have interest in running on the Democratic ticket for any of the Boards or Commissions, please contact me so that I can put you in touch with the nominating committee. As a reminder, the Boards of Selectman, Finance, and Education, as well as the Planning and Zoning commission all have seats to be filled. Time is running out!

At our June meeting we had Michael Lahan, Chairman of the Norwich Charter Revision Committee, speak with us about the charter process. While Norwich is very different from Sprague, and a revision is different from a new charter, the process is similar and he was able to provide some helpful insights. Norwich's Committee consisted of eleven members and it was quite interesting to hear how they were able to successfully work together. Those of you who have served on town boards and commissions can appreciate that this was no small task.

The DTC was very encouraged that at the recent Board of Selectman meeting the Board decided to call for volunteers interested in serving on a Charter Commission. The DTC continues to believe that a Charter is a necessary step in addressing Sprague's long term challenges of a shrinking grand list and escalating expenses. Without the clarity and framework that a charter provides, in contrast to the CT

General Statues which currently govern our activities, long term change will continue to remain elusive.

The DTC will be holding a Tag Sale in August, so please keep us in mind as you are cleaning out your basements and garages.

As always please contact me with interest, questions, comments or concerns.

- Kord Jablonski  
Chairman, Sprague DTC  
822-1912, kordjablonski@yahoo.com

**Republican Town Committee**

The RTC held its yard sale on June 16 and 17, I would like to thank all the people who donated items to our event. Thanks to your generous donations, our event was a huge success. I would also like to thank all the folks who volunteered their time and their backs for set up, break down and working the sale as well. A special THANK YOU to Karen and Mick Collins who not only did all of the above, but also opened up their home to host the event.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind all registered Republicans that we will be holding our caucus on July 24 at 7 PM in the Sprague Town Hall. This is your chance to help determine the Republican slate of candidates for the November elections. I would also like to encourage anyone who may be interested in running to submit their names, if you would like a list of positions we are looking to fill please give me a call and I will be more than happy to forward that information to you. Remember, a community is only as good as the people who participate in it, I hope you choose to participate.

It was my hope that we would have some resolution to our budget by now, but unfortunately we were unable to come to an acceptable compromise. We have now voted the budget down three times, the first because our public works department was going to be cut dramatically which did not set well with our residents. The second was voted down because the mill rate was too high, basically all that was done was to reinstate the PW crew and resubmit the budget to be voted on. I was present at the last BoFmeeting before the third budget presentation and with the exception of two members they never really considered making any cuts to a budget that had already been voted as unacceptable. Their plan was to hold another Town Meeting and let the public have at it. True, the budget presented at the last meeting was .15 mills lower than the previous but that was only due to the fact that Sayles School lost a Special Ed. teacher, so once again the budget failed. Now I have no doubt that the BoF presented what they believed was the best budget for our town, that's what they are elected to do. However they are also elected to make the hard decisions when it comes to making a budget acceptable to the people who have to pay for it. Pitting neighbor against neighbor to make the cuts that they are unable or unwilling to make is not making the hard decisions and neither is doing nothing and allowing the Board of Selectmen to set the mill rate. But that was what was allowed to happen, now we have a new mill rate of 26 until such time that we are able to pass a budget that's acceptable. I fully expect the next budget to pass, for the simple reason that it's .15 lower than the one that our selectmen have already agreed upon, and to be quite honest, I

believe that's what the majority of the BoF was counting on. Which begs the question, if you're unwilling to make the hard decisions that you were elected to make, why run for the office to begin with. I know this is not an easy position and it's not one I would choose to run for, it requires a special individual with desire and dedication and the willingness to make the tough decisions when necessary, to be able to differentiate between the wants and the needs of a town when the times are tough. Hopefully we can learn from this and come to a consensus of where we go from here.

- **Michael W. Smith, Chairman**

Republican Town Committee  
822-8148  
asmith7258@aol.com

**Town Manager or First Selectman?  
2 year term or 4 year term for elected officials?  
Town meetings or referendums to decide budgets?**

If you are concerned about how our town government functions or if you think our government could be run more efficiently, then you might be interested in serving on a Charter Commission. The Sprague Board of Selectmen is currently seeking town residents who would like to participate in a process that could change the way our municipal government operates.

Our government currently operates in accordance with Connecticut State Statutes, but we are not required to do so. By forming a Charter Commission and voting to accept a town charter, the Town of Sprague can adopt a much different way of governing.

If you have some good ideas as to how we can improve our method of doing things, and if you can work well with a small group of like-minded individuals, send a short letter of interest to the First Selectman's Office at 1 Main Street, Baltic, CT 06330

themselves. The Resident State Trooper was informed of the damage and will try to keep an eye out. The Recreation Committee has also offered to help keep extra eyes on the trees. Anyone seeing malicious activity around the trees, or anywhere at the ball fields, should contact the Resident State Trooper or the First Selectman's Office.

I now have permit forms for pruning and removing public trees. I will issue these permits to all contractors (CL&P, AT&T) and landowners who may need to do tree work along the roads or on town property. Remember that landowners must get permission to prune or remove any public tree within the town's right-of-way on the road along their property. This includes construction site prep, driveway installations or view improvement. Additionally, any property owner who would like a tree planted in the right-of-way in front of their property should contact me at 822-9656 for a survey of the site. I intend to continue purchasing 5-10 trees each year for replacement and beautification.

The storm in April exhausted the balance of our contractor tree removal funds two months before the end of the fiscal year. The contractor is used for high and/or dangerous and difficult work. Except for emergencies, like the Nor'easter, the contractor is only scheduled when we have a full day of work for them because they cost us \$800 – 900 a day. While I will always approve safety-related work, funding requires a more conservative outlook for tree removals.

**-Dave Gustafson**

#### **SPRAGUE BOARD OF FINANCE**

A suggestion was made at the June 13<sup>th</sup> town meeting that to allow for no increase or a much smaller increase in the mill rate, the Board of Finance should reduce each budget line item by, say, 5% or 10%. This proposal implies that a small change across all services will ensure the continuity of services and at the same time reduce the burden on all taxpayers. While such a request appears to be fair and reasonable, the reality is the reduction of each line item is not possible and I will tell you why.

Firstly, the reduction of the education budget is limited by State regulations. This year it is particularly limited in that the proposed budget is at the minimum budget requirement set by the State which means no further reductions can be made in next year's education budget. Keep in mind that the Board of Education has made every effort to return to the town all possible savings without risking the quality of the education of our children.

As for the general town budget, over \$900,000 of the next year's recommended budget of almost \$2.4 million is for expenditures external to the town that are either fixed by prior town approval, by contract, or by known historical usage. These items include debt service, town insurance, computer service contracts, legal fees, auditing fees, recycling fees, the cost of participating in the Uncas Health District, and utilities.

Of the remaining \$1.5 million in the general town budget, \$1.050 million is for salaries and benefits for town employees. With the exception of salaries for public works personnel and the state trooper, which are not in the authority of the Board of Finance or town to reduce, all salaries have been frozen at the current year's level. The remaining \$450,000 is for services such as the fire department,

## **Branching Out**

I am pleased that all but one of the trees that were planted in the River Park last fall have survived, including one that was in the parking area island that was transplanted this April. Thank you again to all the volunteers who assisted in the planting effort. The three oaks that were left over from last fall are planted along RT 138 in front of the Transfer Station. All of the seedlings I planted on the RT 97 bank at the park last fall are alive and well too. The difficult part now is keeping the weeds from smothering them. Thanks also to the Cub Scouts for the two dogwoods they planted this spring.

Sadly, four of the seven maple trees I planted at the ball fields last spring were vandalized Memorial Day Weekend and the weekend before that. The stakes and guide lines were removed and the young trees' trunks were broken at ground level. I have driven heavy metal fence posts around the trees and pulled them back straight. They are all still green so we'll see if they survive the summer and heal

roadway maintenance, funds for overtime for the state trooper, parks and recreation, the library, the senior center, and various smaller items including personnel training, mileage, and supplies.

Given the above, if the Board of Finance wanted to achieve a zero mill increase (using the June 13<sup>th</sup> budget data), \$513,000 of reductions are necessary (\$220,000 to cover last year's budgeted shortfall, plus \$85,000 in the requested increase general town funds, plus \$87,000 in the requested increase education funds, and plus \$121,000 to cover the revenue shortfall). Since the education budget cannot be reduced any further and with \$900,000 of fixed costs, the Board of Finance would have to find \$513,000 of reductions in \$1.5 million dollars. That's almost a 35% reduction in salaries, personnel, or services!

Consequently, the Board of Finance decided not to recommend that, but rather to look at what funds the town needs to operate. It determined that the expenditure level that it has proposed is necessary to meet the service needs of the town.

Lastly, the major issue with next year's budget is the loss of the 1.75 mills worth of revenue due to the lower valuation assigned to Sprague Paperboard's manufacturing and machinery equipment after its sale from Caraustar to Cascades Inc. Regrettably, this loss can only be recovered with a mill rate increase.

I hope that this clarifies some of the issues that you, the residents, and the Board of Finance have to face with next year's proposed budget.

- **Claude R. Pellegrino, BoF Chairman**

**Tax Collector's Hours – Monday & Thursdays, 8 am to 12 noon, Wednesdays, 2 pm to 5L30 pm**

**Assessor's Hours – Wednesdays, 8 am to 5:30 pm and Thursdays, 8 am to 4:30 pm.**

**Tax Collector's Office** – The first installment of Real Estate and Personal Property taxes will become due and payable on July 1, 2007. Motor Vehicle tax bills will also become due and payable on July 1, 2007. You will have the entire month of July to pay your taxes. Taxes unpaid as of August 1, 2007 will become delinquent and will be subject to 3% interest, from then on additional interest of 1 ½% per month (18% annually) will be charged. Minimum interest is \$2.00. Please make checks payable to Town of Sprague. You may pay all bills, Real Estate, Personal Property and Motor Vehicle with one check. If you pay by mail and would like a receipt, please mail the entire tax bill and a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your payment. Taxpayers needing an immediate clearance for the registration of a motor vehicle must pay by cash, money order or certified check. If you have any questions regarding your tax bill, you may call the Tax Collector at 822-3000, ext 224. Any questions regarding address changes, assessments, exemptions or your correct tax town should be directed to the Assessor at 822-3000, ext 222.

**-Mary B Chartier, CCMC Tax Collector**

# COMMUNITY CALENDAR

**Thursday, July 5**  
 SPARC Town Hall 7:00 pm

**Monday, July 9**  
 Inland Wetlands & Water Town Hall 7:00 pm  
 Zoning Board of Appeals Town Hall 7:00 pm

**Tuesday, July 10**  
 Library Board Grist Mill 6:30 pm  
 Republican Town Committee 7:00 pm

**Wednesday, July 11**  
 Board of Selectman Town Hall 7:00 pm  
 Board of Education Sayles School 7:00 pm  
 Planning & Zoning Town Hall 7:00 pm  
 Knights of Columbus 74 Scotland Road 7:30 pm  
 Democratic Town Comm. Hanover 6:30 pm

**Thursday, July 12**  
 Conservation Commission Town Hall 7:00 pm

**Friday, July 13**  
 Neighborhood Watch Fire House 7:00 pm

**Wednesday, July 18**  
 Sprague Water & Sewer Authority Hall 6:30 pm

**Thursday, July 19**  
 Board of Finance Board Room Town Hall 7:00 pm

**Wednesday, July 25**  
 Economic Development Comm. Courtroom 7:00 pm

**All ads and articles for August OUR TOWN  
 are due by Monday, July 16<sup>th</sup>**

## CHURCH SERVICE DIRECTORY

**SUNDAYS**  
 Versailles United Methodist 10:30 AM  
 Bethel Community UMC 8:30 AM  
 St. Mary's, West Main 8:00 AM & 10:00 AM  
 Hanover Congregational 9:30 AM  
 Church of Jesus Christ  
 Of Latter Day Saints 10:00 AM  
 Baltic United Methodist 10:30 AM

**SATURDAYS**  
 St. Mary's, West Main 5:00 PM

**Hanover Congregational Church**  
 Main Street, Hanover  
**Please Join Us for Sunday Services and Sunday  
 School  
 9:30 AM**

**Rev. Robert Morris, Minister**  
**Wendy Schnip, Organist**

## OUR TOWN STAFF

The "OUR TOWN" Newsletter is a monthly publication funded by local advertising and The Town Of Sprague as a forum for public information. The opinions expressed here are those of individual authors, where indicated by his/ her name. These opinions do not necessarily reflect those of this newsletter. All submissions must be signed and submitted by deadline each month. The OUR TOWN staff reserves the right to edit copy for proper grammatical form and to conform to space allocations. Libelous, obscene, or inflammatory material will not be printed.

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## **SPARC News!**

### **Third Annual Shetucket Riverfest**

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Riverfest was a great success. We had 16 Tubers, 6 Canoes, 25 Kayakers and 6 duck owners for our Duck Race. Prizes were awarded to Tubers Race: 1st/2nd Justin Paz and Alex Frost (2nd year in a row for Justin); Kayaks: 1st Tim Dugas and Mike Papineau; Canoe: The Gallimore family; Duck Race: Addison of Occum, Jesse of Lisbon, Sydney of Baltic.

A special thanks goes to Father Goose, Barry Hurst for 'encouraging the ducks' down river and our duck catchers - Mick Collins, Kevin and Ted Generous.

We would also like to thank our sponsors for the following gifts:

Tubers Race: Sharky's Pizza gift certificate; Kayak: Gift Certificate to Dee's Market and T-shirts; Canoes: Defenders' tickets. Ducks: 1, 2, 3 places were given plush ducks, 4th Sharky's pizza; 5th & 6<sup>th</sup> places were given 20% discount from J&D Embroidery.

Our T-Shirt sale was a great success - be sure to pick up more at the Three Villages Fall Festival. If you cannot wait that long - give us a call and we will send you one! (same low price)

We would also like to acknowledge the Baltic Fire Department whose guidance and assistance each year makes this a safe event and one for all the family to enjoy!

#### **Summer Fun:**

Summer Children's' Program: A 9-week program will kick off on June 25<sup>th</sup>! We have 35 children sign up already and the official registration has not even started! Wow! Look for additional information in this edition of Our Town.

Six Flags tickets are now available through Sprague Parks and Recreation Committee! Season passes are \$68.99 and Day passes are \$27.00. Children under 36" get in free. Please contact Noreen Foley of SPARC @ 860 822 1829 or send request to SPARC PO Box 791, Baltic, CT 06330 (Checks should be payable to SPARC)

#### **Upcoming Events:**

Three Village Fall Festival / Three Village Tour - Columbus Day Weekend

**Connecticut Defenders Game  
July 15<sup>th</sup>  
Tickets Available  
From  
Ladies Auxiliary, Baltic Fire Department  
\$23.00 per person  
Includes admission and picnic lunch.  
Call 822-6926 or 822-8331 or 822-6139**