

# Village of montebello review

Jeff Oppenheim, Mayor, Lance Millman, Deputy Mayor, Marc Citrin, Stacy Caridi, Steven A. Sorrillo, Trustees



## Greetings from the Mayor



Dear Residents,

Our recent Village elections witnessed a significant voter turnout to elect two Trustees. I congratulate Lance Millman and Marc Citrin on their re-election to 4-year terms. As Mayor, I have made it a policy that the Village does not issue newsletters or other memoranda that might be misconstrued as campaign ads in the month prior to the election. This newsletter is therefore published

only after the election. Consequently, I thought it might be constructive to address some of the important questions that arose in the last month.

1. *Why is it taking so long for the roads and the park in Montebello Pines to be dedicated to the Village?*

Answer: Although all the homes in the Montebello Pines community have been built, the roads and the park are not yet dedicated to the Village. Dedication is something that the Village desires because this will allow us to take control of road maintenance, plowing and development of the park. Dedication will also allow us to collect state highway aid. During my 2 years as Mayor we have worked diligently to assist the developer, JMK, Inc., in giving us dedication. However, before JMK, Inc. can offer dedication, and before we can accept, its legal obligations must be met. These obligations include finishing all contractually required work on the roads, the sewers and the park.

Unfortunately, JMK Inc. has not yet complied with all its legal obligations. Absolving it of these obligations could leave the Village with a large financial problem. Our Village Attorney and Engineer are working hard to facilitate the completion of this project. We are determined to pursue dedication and I am confident that we will be able to accomplish this in the near future in a manner that will be favorable to the residents of Montebello.

2. *Why is development permitted in front of the Montebello Mansion and why were so many trees cut down?*

Answer: The owner of this property has always had the legal right to build an office building in front of the mansion. In 2003, as an alternative to erecting an office building, the Village (under a different administration) approved a zone change that permitted construction of a limited number of "carriage homes" in an "estate overlay" zone at the option of the owner, coupled with the owner's assurance to preserve the mansion. A refinement of our slopes law in 2005 (introduced by me as a Trustee) further reduced land area credit throughout the Village for slopes according to a sliding scale. Regarding this property, what started out as a proposed 90 units by another developer ended up as 20 units. Despite the desires of many in our community, we could not legally prohibit any and all construction on this site. However, we could (and did) act to responsibly control this development.

In an effort to mitigate the impact of this development, we enacted laws and regulations requiring that this property be occupied only by those 55 years and older; that the building designs be approved by the Historic Preservation Commission, the Architectural Review Board, and the

Planning Board; and, that a 75 ft. buffer of trees be maintained along Montebello Road. Our Village Engineer and professionals oversee all of this work in order to ensure strict compliance with our Code. Although our efforts cannot save all the trees on this parcel, we are working hard to lessen the impact that this development will have on our Village.

For comparison, consider the Town of Ramapo's decision to re-zone a single family 10.9 acre property on Carleton Road (just outside our borders) to permit 88 adult housing units. The Town Board allowed this zone change despite the written and verbal objections from your Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Planner and the neighborhood. We believe that there is a meaningful difference between accommodating unnecessary high-density development and mitigating permitted construction in legally pre-designated zones.

3. *Will the Town of Ramapo continue to provide Montebello's road maintenance and snow plowing services?*

Answer: Montebello has long contracted with the Town of Ramapo for road maintenance and snow removal. The Town has done a good job. However, its charges have risen faster than inflation and we are likely paying well in excess of the actual cost and we still do not know how the Town apportions the expenses of its Highway Department. Another reason for an apparent overcharge is that the Town bases its fee on the Village's assessed value (i.e. the aggregate value of all of our real estate). Since our homes tend to be more expensive than the homes in most other Villages, and we have proportionately lower road mileage, we wind up paying much more on the average on a per capita and a per mile basis than other villages. We believe that this is unfair to Montebello's tax paying citizens.

The Town has not agreed to change its assessment-based formula. Therefore, at a minimum, it makes common sense for us to explore whether it would be possible to retain services at a lower cost that would be at least as good as those provided by the Town. Montebello will seek bids from responsible contractors in an effort to afford our taxpayers the best value for their tax dollars. We hope to reach a decision on this matter by the end of the summer. The Town will be free to bid.

4. *Are the salaries of elected officials being raised in a time of recession?*

Answer: None of the elected officials in Montebello received a raise this year. The combined total amount of all stipends for elected officials declined by \$16,000 in the last 4 years. Montebello offers some of the lowest stipends to elected officials in the County. The total payroll of Village employees has also declined. Our Village has sought to stay ahead of the recession by cutting costs aggressively and we will continue to do so.

Montebello stands out as a great place to live. We are the only Tree City in Rockland (see article inside). We have Rockland's only Historic Preservation program certified by the State of NY. We continue to seek out and receive grants (see article inside) in an effort to save money. We are open and interested in your thoughts, comments and complaints. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Oppenheim, Mayor

## DEDICATED OPEN GOVERNMENT

By Lance N. Millman, Deputy Mayor



The Village of Montebello has turned out to be the trend setter for many other villages and towns. One trend we are proud of is our "open government" policy. We have and will continue to expand the ability of our residents to hear and see what is going on in our wonderful community. Some of these are:

1. A newsletter published four times a year.
2. Televised Village Board meetings on Sunday night on Cable TV, channel 78.
3. Larger room capacity at all board meetings at our new Community Center.
4. The ability to give "public comments" twice at our Village Board meetings, once in the beginning and once near the end.
5. Twenty four hour access to our village web site with the ability to send emails directly to Village Hall, look up minutes, local laws, upcoming events, etc.
6. Emergency call access to Village officials twenty four hours a day.
7. Easier access to Village Hall departments though the new handicap access renovations done at Village Hall.
8. Independent Certified Public Accountant reports on the state of our Village financial position and reporting.

This open policy allows our residents to give their opinions in many ways and to have access to Village information without physically coming into Village Hall.

We conduct our business in public whenever possible. We invite all to come in front of the Village Board and state their case. If a builder has something to request, they come in front of the Board and ask in front of the public and on taped TV.

We can expand our ability to notify you of emergencies and new decisions regarding your neighborhood through the internet. We have tried in the past to build a Village resident e-mail list. It has been difficult and has not always been welcomed. If you wish to have your name with an email address on file at Village Hall please drop it off at Village Hall, email it in through our website or drop us a letter.

We pride ourselves on this type of government and are always open to new ideas to better reach our residents, and will continue to work for you and with you to make a better Village.

## FROM THE DESK OF

Frank Wilson, Fire Inspector

All Residents, please be aware that the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in cooperation with the firm named below, today announced a voluntary recall of the following consumer product. Consumers should stop using recalled products immediately unless otherwise instructed.

**Name of Product:** Kidde XL Fire Extinguishers

**Units:** About 167,000

**Distributor:** Walter Kidde Portable Equipment Inc., of Mebane, N.C.

**Hazard:** The pressurized cylinders in the recalled fire extinguishers could lose pressure and fail to operate. In the event of a fire, this failure could put a consumer and property at risk.

**Incidents/Injuries:** None reported.

**Description:** This recall involves the Kidde XL Fire Extinguishers with model numbers FX340SC, FX340H, FX340GW, XL5MR, FX210R, FX340SC-2, FX210W, XL2.5TCZ-4, E340-3 and with manufacture dates between October 2007 and April 2008. "Kidde" and the model number can be found on the label on the front of the extinguisher. The manufacture year is on the bottom of the extinguisher. If your extinguisher is one of the listed model numbers and is marked with the year 07 or 08, contact Kidde to determine if you have a recalled extinguisher.

**Sold at:** Department, home, and hardware stores nationwide from October 2007 through April 2008 for about \$35.

**Manufactured in:** Mexico

**Remedy:** Consumers should immediately inspect the pressure gauge. If it points to the red zone, contact Kidde to receive a free replacement extinguisher. If the gauge is not in the red zone, but you have questions about an extinguisher within the listed model numbers, please contact Kidde for additional information.

**Consumer Contact:** For additional information, contact Kidde at (888) 345-4407 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET Monday through Friday or visit the firm's Web site at [www.Kidde.com](http://www.Kidde.com). Consumers can obtain this release and recall information at CPSC's Web site at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov).

Be sure to check all of your Fire Extinguishers. If you have any questions at all please refer to the above listed web sites and contact phone number.

## THANK YOU ASSEMBLYWOMAN ANNIE RABBITT.

Assemblywoman Annie Rabbitt has secured another grant for the Village of Montebello. In the past few years our Assemblywoman has secured funds to help us pay for new flag poles and our solar electric panels. She has just announced that she will now be able to secure an additional \$5,000 to help us pay for renovations at the Montebello Community Center.

## FROM THE DESK OF

P. Douglas Siebenaler, Building Inspector



A structure, as defined by Village Law is a combination of materials constructed, assembled, or erected on, above or below the ground or attached to something having location on, above or below the ground, including but not limited to buildings, fences, tanks, towers, and swimming pools.

The Building Department is aware that there are some "structures" including mailboxes, decorative driveway entry structures, and walls that predate the incorporation of the Village (1986). We are currently working on a process to identify and legalize these structures

Continued on Page 3

as defined by Village Law. Presently, issuing a violation is the first step in this process.

The only "structure" permitted in the Village Right of Way is a "mailbox structure" as defined by chapter 115 of the Code of the Village of Montebello. Briefly, this law regulates the size and height of the mailbox enclosure. Mailbox structures are required to have a building permit and Certificate of Use. You can view the Village Code on line at the [VillageofMontebello.com](http://VillageofMontebello.com).

All other structures must be removed from the Village Right of Way. The right of way is measured from the curb inward towards your home. This distance varies throughout the Village. Decorative driveway structures may be placed behind that point with the appropriate building permit.

Please feel free to contact the Building Department with any questions or concerns you may have at 368-2491 or [building@villageofmontebello.com](mailto:building@villageofmontebello.com).

## NOTES FROM THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Like all of you, the HPC was affected by this snowy, icy and windy winter and had to cancel some of our meetings. However, my crocuses are blooming and by the time you read this note it will officially be Springtime.

We are back in business. We are waiting for matching funds from the state to look for an Architectural Historian who will assist us in finding properties worthy of historic designation status. We are proud to have Village Hall as our newest designation, not only for the architecture but also for the interesting history of its owners.

We are also hoping that Montebello's website will be enlarged so that we can post our efforts, show you pictures of houses and the status thereof.

We are not happy with the cutting of trees at the Montebello Mansion site, but assure you again that we will keep a close watch on further proceedings. Make sure you take a nice long look at the now unobstructed view of the Mansion, truly impressive and beautiful. We are aware of resident's complaints about the tree cutting.

Just to remind you, there are public hearings for all of the committees (listed in the newspaper and posted at Village Hall), i.e. Zoning and Planning Boards, Trustees Meeting and yes - the HPC. You can attend all of them and voice your opinion.

We accept the resignation of Valerie Rainford and Chantal Schwartz with regret, thank you for all of your hard work.

Happy Spring - Hannelore Renud, Dodie Bracken, Sandra Ward, and Wayne Leone.

### ROAD OPENING ON LAKE ROAD

The Rockland County Sewer District's contractor requested that they be allowed to open a portion of Lake Road prior to April 1st in order to install a new sewer main. Section 160-5-A and B of the Village Code was recently changed to prohibit road openings between November 15th and April 1st unless approved by the Village Board. In consideration for being allowed to open the road a few weeks prior to the permitted period, the contractor agreed to repave an additional segment of Lake Road, curb to curb, at no cost to the Village. This project should be completed by April 8th.

## VILLAGE ELECTIONS: DEMOCRACY COMES IN FROM THE COLD

By Trustee Marc D. Citrin



Last month, Montebello residents went to the polls to exercise their right to select two trustees for the Board of Trustees, the governing body of the village.

While the weather on Election Day was clear and dry, many residents were probably surprised to find the candidates ringing their door bells and stuffing their mailboxes in the "dead of winter" through January and February. In addition, although we're all used to voting on a

Tuesday, this year, Election Day was on a Wednesday. While September primaries and November general elections are the norm, New York State law calls for village elections to be held on the third Tuesday in March.

In Montebello, as in most villages, the candidates for trustee and mayor have not run with the endorsement of the major political parties. As such, historically, since it would be very difficult to construct a ballot in November that would both list offices contested by the major political parties as well as the "non-partisan" contests for village trustee and mayor, this is likely why village elections are held at such odd times of the year. Ergo, the recent "icy" campaign complete with snow-covered lawn signs and shivering candidates. In addition, in honor of St. Patrick's Day, New York State law provides that no village election may be held on March 17. Thus, this year's even odder Wednesday voting.

Government operates at its best when it has the consent of the governed. This principle is the essence of democracy. Those 400+ village residents who chose to come to Village Hall on March 18 to cast their ballots are to be applauded for exercising their right to vote.

## PARKS COMMISSION REPORT

by Nick Altebrando, Chairman

I'd like to start this Spring 2009 report by sincerely thanking Bob Congionti for his service as Chair of the Parks Commission over the past three years. He has been a dedicated friend of the Village and he remains committed to the Parks Commission and certainly will be helping me out as we move forward with our annual events and the development of what will truly become a jewel in our midst - Ponds Park.

We start the year with Montebello Clean Up Day on Saturday, April 18th, with a rain date of Sunday, April 19th. We are hoping to continue the increased participation we have seen each year now and we especially hope that we get some spirited involvement by our Middle and High School students this year. It is a fact that this event tends to do more than just provide a short term removal of debris and trash from our streets. We have seen that we get a longer and more durable pattern of behavior when there is a large enthusiastic turnout. Help us make that happen. This event is sponsored by Keep Rockland Beautiful, [www.keeperocklandbeautiful.org](http://www.keeperocklandbeautiful.org) for more information.

Ponds Park is approximately 26 acres of wooded property anchored physically and aesthetically by 7 ponds of various sizes that run thru the middle of the property located within Montebello Pines. It



is loaded with historic, cultural and natural assets. It also is a critical drainage conduit that moves the large majority of water from the Spook Rock Golf property as well as the Pines out to the Mahwah River thru a series of formal weirs and spillways. It is a great resource to have for our Village and we envision a park with formal trails and walkways, observation points and undisturbed natural areas carefully embedded throughout the site. With this resource comes the responsibility of properly developing it, constructing it and then maintaining it. All this will be part of our upcoming efforts and we will be sharing information with you on our progress. We are looking forward to resolving the remaining ownership issues of the property with the developer at which time we can formally start the process.

The Parks Commission is looking forward to our concert series continuing this summer. Dates will be announced shortly. Also look for the annual Montebello Camp Out which we have tentatively scheduled for the weekend of June 20th and 21st.

Our Parks Commission meetings are held the first Thursday of every month and all are welcome to attend.

## PLANNING AND ZONING BOARD UPDATES

By Gloria Scalisi, Planning & Zoning Clerk



### Weinberger Subdivision – Public Hearing - Continued Final Subdivision

Application of George Weinberger, 1757 East 23rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11229 for an approval of a Final Plat for a subdivision entitled "Weinberger Subdivision" consisting of 84.25 acres of which approximately 17.62

are wetlands. The subject property is located on the south side of Grandview Avenue approximately 900 feet east of Spook Rock Road and west of Martha Road and is known and designated on the Ramapo Tax Map as Section 41.13 Block 2, Lots 5 and 6 and Section 41.17, Block 1, Lots 5 and 6 in a RR-50 Zone.

The applicant has received a permit from New York State Environmental Conservation and will be appearing before the Planning Board in the coming months.

### 9 Bayard Lane – Public Hearing – Continued Wetlands Permit

Application of Dominick R. Pilla, 23 Depew Avenue, Nyack, NY 10960 for approval of a Wetlands Permit entitled "9 Bayard Lane" consisting of .76 +/- acres located on the south side of Bayard Lane approximately 389 feet from the intersection of Haverstraw Road in the Village of Montebello, which is known and designated on the Ramapo Tax Map as Section 48.10, Block 1, Lot 76 in a R-35 Zone.

The application is currently before the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and will return to the Planning Board.

### Emerald Pines – Public Hearing – Continued Final Subdivision Wetlands Permit

Application of Rockland Estates Homes, LLC, 301 North Main Street, New City, NY 10956 for approval of a Final Subdivision Plat and Wetlands Permit entitled Emerald Pines consisting of 4 lots from 10.127 +/- acres located on the North side of Viola Road approxi-

mately 600 +/- feet west of Spook Rock Road in the Village of Montebello, which is known and designated on the Ramapo Tax Map as Section 49.05 Block 1 Lot 17 in a RR-50 Zone.

The applicant has requested an adjournment from the Planning Board until the July 7, 2009 meeting.

### Manhattan Beer Distributors (10 Dunnigan Drive) –Public Hearing — Continued Amended Site Plan

Application of Manhattan Beer Distributors, 400 Walnut Avenue, Bronx, New York 10454 for approval of an amended site plan entitled Manhattan Beer Distributors consisting of 5.6111 acres located on the east side of Dunnigan Drive approximately 1,700 feet from the intersection of Airmont Road in the Village of Montebello, which is known and designated on the Ramapo Tax Map as Section 55.7, Block 1, Lot 11 in a PI Zone.

The application was approved at the January 9, 2009 meeting.

### Monsey Jewish Center – Application for Amended Site Plan

Application of Congregation Shaarey Israel, 18 Montebello Road, Montebello, New York 10901 for approval of an Amended Site Plan entitled Monsey Jewish Center consisting of 5.53 +/- acres located on the west side of Montebello Road approximately 1,000 feet north of Airmont Road in the Village of Montebello, which is known and designated on the Ramapo Tax Map as Section 48.19, Block 1, Lots 48 & 49 and Section 55.07, Block 1, Lot 1 in a RR-50 Zone.

The application was approved at the January 9, 2009 meeting.



The Hackney Farm, located on the "flats" Montebello Road.

## ZONING BOARD

### Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp. Public Hearing

Application of Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp., Old Mill Road, Montebello, New York 10901 for a waiver from the moratorium provisions of Local Law No. 6 of 2008 to allow application to the Planning Board for Site Plan approval for a remote data center. The premises which are the subject of this application are located on the west side of Hemion Road, and 0 feet from intersection of Old Mill Road in the Village of Montebello, which is known and

designated on the Ramapo Tax Map as Section 55.6, Block 1, Lot 1 in a PI-C Zone.

The application was approved by the Zoning Board of Appeals at the March 19, 2009 meeting, the applicant will be before the Planning Board in the coming months.

## RAMAPO POLICE SAFETY TIPS

By PO Mike Brown

I just wanted to take this opportunity to stress how important it is to pay extra attention to matters concerning security of your homes. Here are some suggestions to help lessen the likelihood that you are the victim:

- Never open your door for strangers. Ask for identification from all persons who you are unsure of.
- Security chains are easily broken. Consult with a locksmith and get deadbolts on all exterior doors. Make sure all sliding doors are secured to prevent them from being pried off of their tracks.
- Have wide angle peepholes installed on exterior doors.
- Never leave doors open; even when just going to the store.
- Never hide spare keys outside. Leave them with a neighbor or friend in close proximity to where you live.
- When going on vacation have a trusted friend or relative pick up your mail for you. Have your newspaper delivery stopped and your mail put on vacation hold if there is no one that can pick up your mail.
- Make sure the entrances to your home are lit. Put them on automatic timers.
- When going away you should have automatic timers on inside your home so people just passing by believe people are at home.
- Put a wooden broom handle in the track to your sliding door to help prevent someone from sliding it open in your absence.
- If someone has an emergency and asks to use your phone, call 911 for them. **DO NOT OPEN YOUR DOOR!** You may believe you are doing the right thing and going to help someone and end up being a victim yourself.
- If you believe someone is in your home after returning home do not go inside, go to the nearest phone and **CALL THE POLICE** and **DO NOT TOUCH ANYTHING!**

When in doubt call the police. It is better to be safe than sorry. If you have any questions feel free to contact your Community Police Officer Mike Brown at 845-357-2400 x620. If it's an emergency call 911.

## WHAT A MESS!!

By Trustee Steve Sorrillo



We are now feeling the last gasps of winter and we are all very grateful for that. This year winter seemed especially harsh, long, cold and snowy. Now, as the warmer weather begins to set in we can see the damage done. Many of our roads have been cratered with bone jarring potholes and a few trees are down. But what has become most apparent is the trash. Everywhere we look, scattered on lawns, in bushes and woods we can see all manner of trash. The plows did a nice job of clearing the snow from our streets but in the process they

kicked the garbage up on our lawns and shrubbery. The wind than took over and blew it all around. Walking through our neighborhoods you can see so much of it and such an eclectic array. Everything from TV sets to paint cans, from newspapers to coffee cups and plastic bags, everywhere I look, plastic bags. Do plastic bags have offspring? Do they procreate? The litter seems to be everywhere ruining our once picturesque vistas and degrading the quality of life we have come to enjoy here in Montebello.

It is now time for us as homeowners to begin cleaning up this mess. I know that much of the trash may not be yours to begin with but it is on

## MONTEBELLO IS NAMED THE FIRST "TREE CITY" IN ALL OF ROCKLAND COUNTY!

This important recognition again places our Village on the forefront of progressive conservation. Tree City recognition acknowledges our commitment to preserving trees and promoting the environment. This also helps us maintain property values as Montebello will continue to be the nicest place to live in Rockland County.

For more information, please see:

<http://www.arborday.org/programs/treeCityUSA/index.cfm>

The Tree City USA® program, sponsored by the Arbor Day Foundation in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, provides direction, technical assistance, public attention, and national recognition for urban and community forestry programs in thousands of towns and cities that more than 120 million Americans call home. The many benefits of being a Tree City include creating a framework for action, education, a positive public image, and citizen pride.

your property and no one else is going to do it. I take great pleasure in walking or driving through our village. I for one am quite proud of this village and I am sure you are too. It has always looked so attractive and invites you to enjoy its bucolic scenery. It saddens me to see the current state of our community. I have begun my own personal campaign against this blight by picking up the trash on my own property and the street in front of my house and I ask you to do the same. On April 18th we will have our annual Clean-Up Day and if past Clean-Up Days are any indication a lot of trash will be removed from our streets. But that is only a portion of the battle, most of the trash is on our property and the clean-up crews keep to public areas only. It falls on each of us as homeowners to take care of this problem.

I hope that each of us will take on this responsibility and make the necessary effort to clean up our village. We have in the past and the sooner we begin this task the better off we will all be. All of us have seen the value of our homes decline over the past year and a half. It is up to us to improve the appearance of our property and our village in order to restore some of this value at least to the extent we can. I also ask that if anyone has any ideas on how to combat this situation they contact me or any member of the board through Village Hall with your suggestions. These ideas do not have to be earth shaking just readily doable. For instance we noticed that on recycling day the pickup crews picked up bottles and cans first giving the wind time to spread the newspapers over a large area. By asking that papers be picked up first we eliminated quite a bit of trash. This kind of idea was effective and did not cost the taxpayer any additional money. Thank you for your time and energy.

## KEEPING SAFE IN TODAY'S TIMES

by Trustee Stacy Caridi



Two Burglaries occurred in February in Montebello Pines. We discussed these events with the Ramapo Police. They agreed to increase the patrols in the Pines. However, the police can't patrol every street every minute of the day. Therefore, we need to exercise some

simple measures to reduce the chance of break-ins.

Burglars often target homes that have easy access to highways and often strike in the afternoon, when most homes are vacant. The police believe that these are likely burglars

**CONGREGATION SHAARAY ISRAEL**

A new Jewish synagogue was dedicated on Montebello Road on March 8th. The congregation's leadership has agreed to limit the use of Montebello Road as an access point so that most cars will utilize Executive Boulevard. This will limit the impact of traffic on Montebello Road. In addition, the property is being landscaped to improve the site's "green" appearance.

coming from a remote location (and then leaving) our neighborhood. In the past, some burglars have come from as far as New Jersey in order to steal from homes in Rockland. As we are now in a recession, there may be a higher probability that we will experience more crime.

Vigilance is clearly needed. Home alarms should be used whenever possible. Don't leave any doors or windows unlocked. Garage doors should always be kept down. Please keep an eye out for anything (or anyone) that you feel the police might want to investigate. The telephone number for the Ramapo Police is 357-2400. It might be a good idea to put that number in your cell phone address book.

The police report that most burglars will spend only a few minutes in a home, realizing that an alarm might be triggered. They will usually make a beeline for the master bedroom and search the top dresser drawers, as this is where many people keep valuable jewelry and watches. It would be a good idea not to keep your valuables in such a location.

Our community has a very low crime rate, in comparison to many other neighborhoods. However, the historic data should not lull anyone into a sense of complacency.

**FROM THE DESK OF THE VILLAGE ATTORNEY**

*Warren E. Berbit, Esq.*

Segueing from the Mayor's column, I find two other subjects also worthy of clarification. These are: assessed valuation/real property taxation and fees charged to the users of Cablevision or Verizon FIOS services.

Starting with the latter, simpler subject, after a public hearing the Village Board approved entering into a Franchise Agreement with Verizon, subject to approval by the Public Service Commission ("PSC") which was granted, effective June 20, 2008. Given that Cablevision was already a Franchise Holder, this created a competitive environment which, in theory, and hopefully in fact, gives our citizens a wider range of choice while helping to keep a lid on pricing. The Village has no authority to deal with companion telephone and internet services, nor does it control setting the rates for services. The Village does assist if residents have service related issues. Hence, let the Village know if you have such issues.

Regarding assessed valuation and real property taxation, the first thing to understand is that the Village is not an "assessing unit". Thus, the Town Assessor assesses property within the Village, not the Village. The assessor decides when assessments are lowered or raised as a consequence of corrections, physical changes and other factors. In addition, since assessed valuations are subject to challenge, court ordered changes, by virtue of settlement or determination after a trial, have the effect of lowering the total and taxable assessment bases (deduction of the assessed value of tax exempt properties from the assessment base yields the taxable assessment base). The Village is not a party to such challenges, but is impact-

ed by them.

The amount to be raised by taxation divided by the taxable assessment base yields the tax rate, which is usually expressed as a rate per thousand. Taking the Village as an example, the 2009 budget required that \$ 1,176,679 be raised by real property taxation. Dividing by the taxable assessment base in thousands, \$140,463.738, yields the Village tax rate of \$8.3746 per thousand

As you will have noted, school taxes for the Ramapo Central School District are billed by the Town's Receiver of Taxes in September, Town and County taxes are billed by the Receiver in January, and Village taxes being billed by the Village, also in January. [Note: as based upon 2008-09 school taxes, 2009 Town, County and Village taxes, Village taxes represent about 4.02% of the total taxes paid by typical Montebello property owners].

A final concept worthy of explanation is the difference between assessed value and fair market value, the latter being what a willing buyer will pay in an arm's length transaction. Although, by law, all properties in New York State are to be assessed at fair market value, in reality there are as many variations as there are assessing units. (Perhaps you will recall the abandoned effort a couple years back to revalue the entire County which got mired in controversy and politics?)

As a consequence of the above, in order to account for the differences in the % of fair market value that assessments represent from assessing unit to assessing unit, these differences have to be "equalized" for many purposes. For example, figuring out the fair share each property owner must pay toward taxes across taxing districts exceeding the boundaries of the assessing unit (e.g., county taxes, school districts which cross town lines; etc.) This task is performed by the SBEA (State Board of Equalization and Assessment).

As you will observe on your latest tax bill, the Equalization Rate for the Town of Ramapo assessing unit is 12.65% (about one eighth of fair market value). To convert from your assessed value to fair market value, divide by the equalization rate expressed as a decimal. For example, if your assessed value is \$100,000, the fair market value is calculated to be \$790,514 (\$100,000 divided by .1265).

I hope that this glimpse helped you better understand the subjects, even if you had to read this twice. A Happy Spring to you all.

**FROM THE VILLAGE CLERK'S OFFICE**

Welcome to new Building Inspector, Doug Siebenaler and new Planning and Zoning Clerk, Gloria Scalisi.

Doug is a licensed architect and was formerly employed by the Village as Asst. Building Inspector. He is now certified by the Department of State as a Code Enforcement Official. We are pleased to have him back.

Gloria, previously employed in the Bronx, has a BA in Business Administration and has melded comfortably into her new role.

Bio-degradable leaf bags are available at Village Hall for spring clean up.



<b>April 2009</b>	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 <i>Parks Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	3	4
	5	6	7 <i>Planning Board Workshop</i> 7:15 P.M.	8	9	10	11
	12	13	14 <i>Planning Board</i> 7:15 P.M.	15 <i>Board of Trustees</i> 8:00 P.M.	16	17	18 <i>Annual Clean Up Day</i> 9:00 A.M.
	19	20 <i>Comp. Plan. Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	21	22	23 <i>Zoning Board of Appeals</i> 7:45 P.M.	24	15
	26	27	28 <i>CDRC</i> 9:30 A.M.	29 <i>Historic Preservation Commission</i> 7:00 P.M.	30		

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	<b>May 2009</b>
					1	2	
3	4 <i>Comp. Plan. Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	5 <i>Planning Board Workshop</i> 7:00 P.M.	6	7 <i>Parks Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	8	9	
10	11	12 <i>Planning Board</i> 7:15 P.M.	13	14	15	16	
17	18 <i>Comp. Plan. Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	19	20 <i>Board of Trustees</i> 8:00 P.M.	21 <i>Zoning Board of Appeals</i> 7:45 P.M.	22	23	
24 <i>Memorial Day Ceremony</i> 9:30 A.M. Village Hall 31	25 <b>CLOSED</b> <i>Memorial Day</i>	26 <i>CDRC</i> 9:30 A.M.	27 <i>Historic Preservation Comm.</i> 7:00 P.M.	28	29	30	

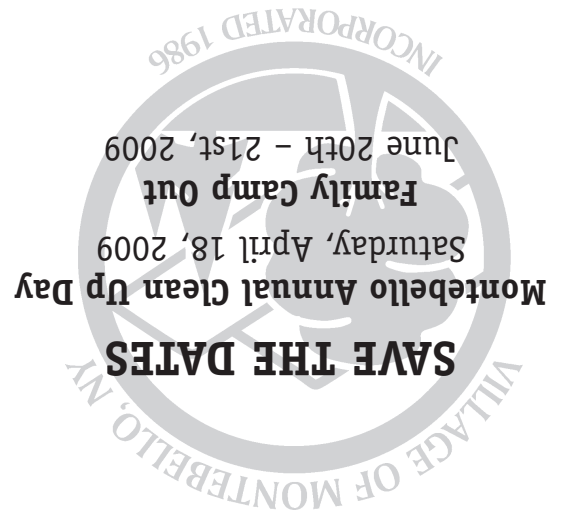
<b>June 2009</b>	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 <i>Planning Board Workshop</i> 7:00 P.M.	3	4 <i>Parks Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	5	6
	7	8 <i>Comp. Plan. Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	9 <i>Planning Board</i> 7:15 P.M.	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17 <i>Board of Trustees</i> 8:00 P.M.	18 <i>Zoning Board of Appeals</i> 7:45 P.M.	19	20 <i>Camp Out at Village Hall</i>
	21	22 <i>Comp. Plan. Commission</i> 7:30 P.M.	23	24 <i>Historic Preservation Comm.</i> 7:00 P.M.	25	26	27
	28	29	30 <i>CDRC</i> 9:30 A.M.				

# MONTEBELLO'S ANNUAL CLEAN UP DAY Saturday, April 18, 2009

Please join us from 9:00 am – 2:00 pm  
"Pitch in" to clean up our Village  
Meet at Village Hall for gloves,  
bags, picks and free T-shirt  
Children may participate with parents.

Rain date:  
Sunday, April 19, 2009

*(For more information, please visit [www.keeprocklandbeautiful.org](http://www.keeprocklandbeautiful.org))*



Village of Montebello  
One Montebello Road  
Montebello, NY 10901



PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Monsey, NY 10952  
Permit No. 1371