



# TOWN TALK

News from the Town of Elmira

S P R I N G - S U M M E R 2 0 1 4

## THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST...

Number 37

(This story was reported in the local media earlier this year but we thought it was worth a second look. Enjoy!)



Left to right: Philip Stanton, Drew Cartwright, Hunter Argetsinger, and Brock Blakeslee are pictured with Tom Lepkowski, the man they assisted after he suffered a fall.

At the Town of Elmira board meeting on January 23, 2014 our Police Chief, Peter Michalko, presented Drew Cartwright, Philip Stanton, Brock Blakeslee and Hunter Argetsinger with special commendations for coming to the aid of a man who had fallen in a driveway back in October, 2013. Tom Lepkowski was doing tree maintenance at the home of a friend in West Elmira when he fell off a ladder and injured his head when he landed on the driveway. The four boys were riding their bikes and saw Mr. Lepkowski lying on the ground. When Mr. Lepkowski could not respond the boys called 9-1-1 and stayed with him until the ambulance arrived.

Mr. Lepkowski spent several days in the hospital and is now doing well. His doctors credit his recovery in part to the speed in which help arrived on the scene. Mr. Lepkowski attended the meeting in January and extended his thanks to the boys for their quick and decisive action. The Town of Elmira and the greater community is so lucky to have citizens, especially like these young men, who are willing to step up and help someone in need.

Attention Readers: If you know of someone in our town that goes above and beyond to help others and think they deserve special recognition please send a note to Supervisor Dave Sullivan at [dsullivan@townofelmira.com](mailto:dsullivan@townofelmira.com).

**THE FORMER JCC BUILDING**, owned by the town for many years, is getting a facelift.



New windows, new roof and a spruced up interior will help make this space more suitable for additional programming this year. More information to follow on this "adaptive re-use" project.

## Highway Notes

By Matt Mustico, Highway Superintendent

With spring we enjoy warmer weather and melting snow, but also more potholes and dirty roads. We will be out sweeping as soon as the weather permits. We will use a temporary patch on the potholes until the blacktop plants open in April or May.

There is not a spring pickup so please do not place any yard waste on the curbside or in the street. Our compost pit will be open to residents that have permits. If you are new to the town and have not used our compost site please pick up your permit at the town hall. Reminder to all residents, we cannot accept large loads of branches. The compost pit, located at the west end town garage, can only handle lawn clippings, leaves and small branches. Large truck loads and all commercial haulers will be turned away.

## Compost Pit Hours

Please note the Compost Pit is available Monday through Friday from 7:30-3:30. Beginning in the month of May through November the pit is also open Saturdays from 8 AM to Noon.



## IMPORTANT REMINDER

From Police Chief Peter Michalko

Don't make it easy for the bad guys to remove items from your vehicles. Please remember to lock your doors and roll up your windows.

## FIRE SAFETY TIPS

### Help us Help You!

In an emergency every second counts and making sure that you and your children know your house numbers could save your life?



When you dial 911 it is approximately 90 seconds until the Fire Department and ambulance are on their way. The average response time for the West Elmira Fire Department is 2 minutes and 4 seconds. An average of 45 seconds for the firemen to get their gloves on, get equipment off the truck, get to the patient, and hook up the equipment. This is assuming your house numbers are adequate and the Fire Department can see them.

So please do your part and verify your house numbers are visible and legible from the road. The Property Maintenance Code of New York State states that the numbers shall contrast with their background, be at least 4 inches high, and have a stroke of at least 0.5 inch. If you have any questions with this or anything else please feel free to call the fire station's non-emergency number, 734-2204.

Also, with the summer months quickly approaching, a quick reminder that open burning is prohibited within the boundaries of Fire District 1.

## WEST ELMIRA RECREATION

### 2014

Welcome to another year full of recreation events for the whole family! It will be nice to get outside and enjoy the park after such a long cold winter.



The Babe Ruth Baseball, Cal Ripken Baseball and West Elmira Softball Leagues will have their season starting on the 21st of April. The season opening ceremonies and parade will be held on May 3rd, 2014, starting at 11:30am. Come down and support our youth!

West Elmira Recreation will sponsor the following events:

**Easter Egg Hunt** – April 13th at 12:00pm. The event will be held in Pirozzolo Park in the playground area.



**Music in the Park** - Wednesday Nights starting on July 9th and going through the end of August. These events will be held in Pirozzolo Park under the Chris Fredo pavilion from 6:00pm - 8:00pm

**Movie in the Park** – August 7th – the event begins at dusk and will be held in Pirozzolo Park.

**Spook House** – October 24th and 25th - with the starting times of 7:00pm. Location TBD

**Christmas Party** – December 12th



Check us out online at [westelmirapark.com](http://westelmirapark.com) and feel free to offer your ideas and suggestions.

## MYTHS & MISUNDERSTANDINGS

### in the Assessor's office



#### **Myth #1 Assessors determine property taxes**

Typically property tax rates are set by school boards, town boards, village boards, and county legislatures, but not by assessors. Each board determines the total amount of taxes it needs to raise, and then divides that number by the total taxable assessed value of the jurisdiction to determine the tax rate. Your share of the tax is calculated by multiplying the tax rate by your property's assessed value minus exemptions, such as STAR.

Assessors are responsible for determining your property's assessed value. In order to do this, the assessor estimates your property's market value (the price it would sell for in the real estate market), and then applies the municipal level of assessment (LOA) to that market value. In many communities, the level of assessment is 100 percent, so a home with a market value of \$90,000 has an assessed value of \$90,000. In a town with a level of assessment of 50 percent, the assessed value of the same home is \$45,000.

The assessor also performs other functions, such as processing exemption applications and keeping track of the local real estate market, but the assessor does not determine your tax rate.

#### **Myth #2 Taxes are high because of assessments**

It's important to distinguish between taxes and assessments. If you feel your taxes are too high, you should take that up with the town board, school board, or other governing authority that is determining tax levies and setting the tax rates. If you feel your assessment is too high, there are administrative and judicial processes where you can seek to have your assessment lowered.

Assessments should be based on market value. If you feel your assessment is too high your first step is to determine your property's market value. The best way to do this is to look at the sale prices of similar properties in similar neighborhoods. If you still feel that your assessment is too high, we recommend that you informally discuss your concerns with your assessor. More information on the grievance process is available from your assessor's office and online: [www.orps.state.ny.us](http://www.orps.state.ny.us)

#### **Myth #3 I have to be 65 to get the STAR exemption**

All New Yorkers who own and live in their one-two, or three-family home, condominium, cooperative apartment, mobile home or farm home are eligible for the Basic STAR tax cut on their primary residence.

Seniors with incomes not exceeding the statewide standard may be eligible for the Enhanced STAR exemption. Applicants need only be 65 years of age as of December 31 of the year in which the exemption will begin. If you think you may be eligible, please contact your assessor for more information.



### KODE KORNER

By Chip LeValley, Code Enforcement Officer

It's that time of year when we simply break down the doors and get outside...at last...and stay there until next November. And well we should; it's been a hum dinger of a winter! So from my vantage point as a code person, let me share a few observations:

I've said it often and this past winter I've personally been involved with two near misfortune's involving carbon monoxide, and the detectors that saved a half dozen lives (or more). It is law that a carbon monoxide detector/alarm is required on the lowest sleeping level of a dwelling AND where carbon monoxide is generated...so that means generally in the hallway serving the bedrooms plus in the basement where the furnace or boiler is located. You may never have a fire for the smoke detectors to sense (which must be IN EACH bedroom, by the way), but you might, someday, have a faulty heat exchanger in your furnace, or a poorly adjusted burner in your boiler...and without the CO (carbon monoxide) detector/alarm you and your loved ones may sleep eternally! So, PLEASE, invest a few bucks in a detector/alarm....it may be the best investment of a lifetime!



### While outdoors consider these code requirements:



**Grass really does need to be cut!** For lots of reasons not the least of which is a New York State code requirement of 10" maximum height....and folks, that's a hay field which shouldn't be in West Elmira!! Also when you mow the lawn, please don't place the clippings into the street: they get washed into catch basins, clogging drains and they de-compose in the streams and rivers altering the biology and upsetting the aquatic balance. Not good!

As we get all the gear around for the trip to the lake, bear in mind that there's an ordinance concerning boats, trailers and RV's in front and side yards...they shouldn't be there. That equipment must be in the back yard or side yard rearward of the front of the house.....let's keep the neighborhood looking nice.....not like a marina!

The same applies for unlicensed vehicles in driveways. When that beater has given its last breath hauling you to work, please don't junk it in the back of your driveway....do us all a favor and have it taken to an auto salvage yard. You'll be complying with town ordinance and saving me lots of paperwork.

Don't forget that we have an ordinance concerning barking dogs! It's only natural that a dog will bark at something..... but in the middle of the night?? Please observe the law: continuous barking for longer than 10 minutes, or intermittently for longer than 30 minutes, is in violation. Let Fido in the house and save a knock at the door by a cop.

While you're outside, consider those house numbers that aren't up yet. When the pizza kid delivers to the wrong house, or the ambulance takes a lap around the block looking for your home, you'll wish you had complied with the good old code and put them up!

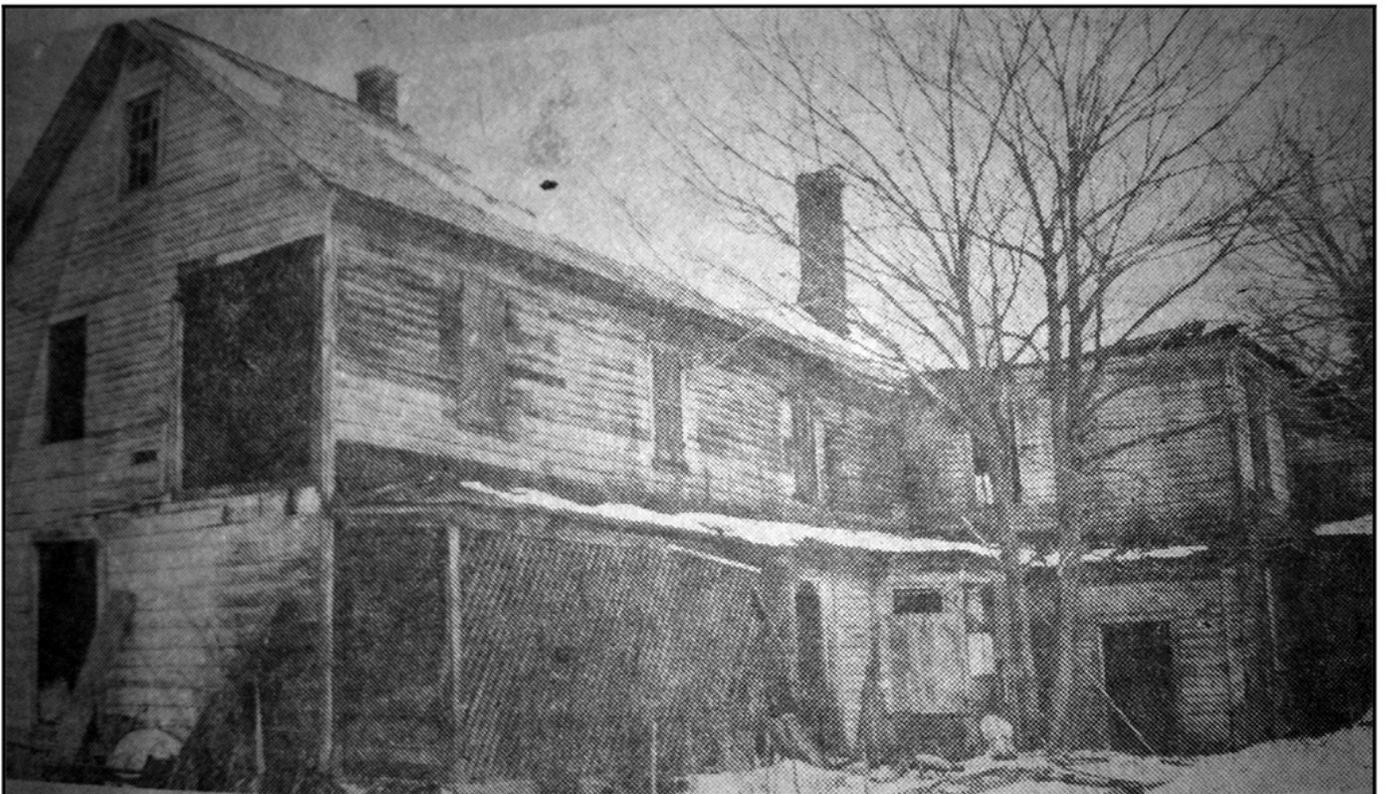
Please have a safe and fun summer and if you'd like some fun reading while out on the deck (that you got a Permit to build, right?) go to <http://www.ecode360.com/EL2935> which has all the ordinances I've referred to, and to the Buildings/Codes page of our website [TownofElmria.com](http://TownofElmria.com) for links to more fun stuff like the State Building Codes. Most of all, call me (734-3608) just before you throw in the towel; together we can save the project or calm the neighbor!!

## West Elmira's Weaver Hotel

**By: Scott W. Deming**  
Town of Elmira Historian

The Weaver Hotel was once located on the Town of Elmira-Big Flats town line just behind the old Log Cabin Motel at 1871 West Water Street. The original hotel was built around the mid 1800's and was the contemporary of the old Mountain House (once located at the base of the white cross just west of the town along Route 352) that Eugene Berthod owned. The hotel was originally located on a plot of land that encompassed 80 acres of land which was eventually parceled off over time. The 17 room Weaver Hotel was "the country club" of its time where prominent men came to play cards. At the turn of the 20th century it was owned by Edward J. Weaver and his wife Josephine who took the hotel over in 1896. Mr. Weaver came to Elmira from Bethel, Pa. and for years operated a store on Fulton Street in Elmira. The hotel had overnight guest rooms and on the second floor was a dance hall. Back in those days West Elmira was a stretch of farmland with only a few scattered homes from the city line to the town line. At some point the town line was shifted with the help of prominent patrons so that the hotel straddled the town lines of Elmira and Big Flats. For years the hotel fought the local liquor laws of the two townships. When the town residents voted the town dry the bar was on casters and it was pushed from the dry town side of the hotel to the wet town side of the hotel to stay in compliance with the local law. Upon the death of Mr. Weaver in the early 1920's the remaining property was sold to Hiram S. Beecher and his wife Edith.

As a young boy growing up just west of the point in West Elmira I remember "Sam's" store (once owned by the late Sam Mathews and his wife) that was located near the old hotel. It was next to the now abandoned car wash that is located just to the east of the current convenience store near Fitches Bridge. Sam's sold penny candy, ice cream, soda, bread, milk, etc.



Weaver Hotel picture from 1959

## WEST ELMIRA'S WEAVER HOTEL CONTINUED



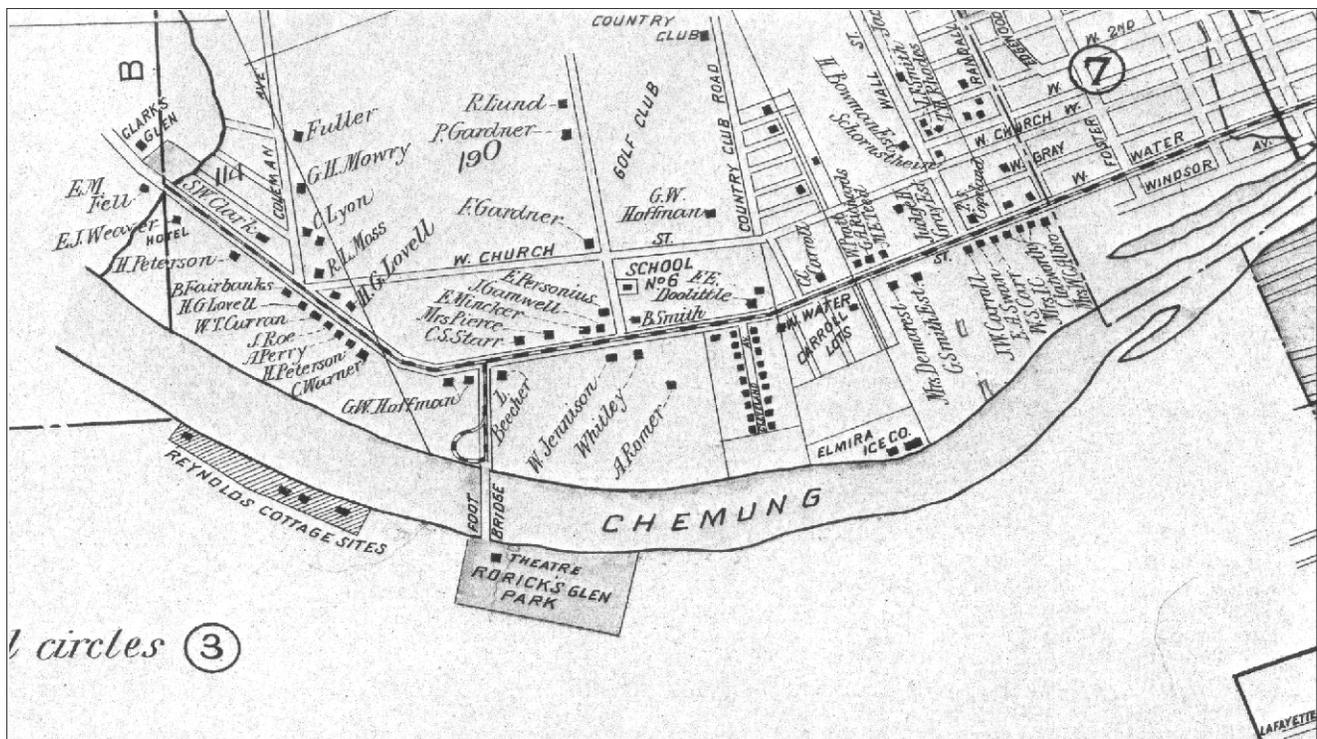
The remnants of Sam's store in 2013

I also remember the old buildings that were part of the former Weaver Hotel behind Sam's store and how they looked old and haunted in the 1960's. The flood on 1972 flooded the old Weaver Hotel buildings and most of them were demolished after the flood.

Information for this article was taken from an article in the Star Gazette from March 1, 1959.

Writer's Note: I continue to look for historic subjects (people, places, homes, historical events, old schools,

family history, etc) about the Town of Elmira to write about. If you have any suggestions or information for future articles please e-mail them to me at demingsw@yahoo.com or call me at 607-732-1177.



Map from 1904 showing Weaver Hotel location

## STORMWATER AND ILLICIT DISCHARGES/ILLEGAL DUMPING

**By: Jessica Verrigni, CPESC, CPSWQ- Chemung County Stormwater Coalition**

Stormwater runoff is rainwater or melting snow that does not soak into the ground but runs off driveways, streets, parking lots and other impervious surfaces. When water does not soak into the ground it can pick up many pollutants from the surfaces it flows over and carry them downstream. Stormwater runoff is collected in many different conveyance systems such as roadside ditches, gutters, and pipes. These stormwater conveyance systems are designated to carry stormwater away and prevent flooding. Unlike the sanitary sewer systems, stormwater systems convey water directly to our lakes, streams, creeks and rivers with no treatment from a waste water treatment plant. When someone dumps oil down a storm drain, that oil goes directly into our lakes, rivers and streams with no treatment. This water eventually becomes our drinking water. Dumping anything, besides stormwater, into the stormwater system is illegal and considered an Illicit Discharge.

### Six Easy Ways that You Can Keep Illicit Discharges Out of Our Waterways

There are simple steps that we can take to solve the problems that illicit discharges create. It is up to YOU, the homeowner and business owners, to clean it up and to help keep it clean!

-  Used oil, antifreeze, and batteries can be recycled. Clean up any spills immediately, kitty litter or sawdust will absorb the spill. Be sure to sweep these up as well.
-  Wash your car on the grass so that the water, detergent, and dirt will be filtered by the soil. A better solution is to take your car to a commercial car wash, where the dirty water is sent to a wastewater treatment plant.
-  Empty bottles of household cleansers, pesticides, and weed killer should be disposed of according to label directions.
-  Grass clippings in the street should be swept up after each mowing. Grass clippings left in the street are being washed down into the storm sewers and end up in the streams where they have the potential to cause algae problems.
-  Many household products including paints, paint thinners, and solvents can be taken to drop off sites such as the Chemung County Household Hazardous Waste Collection Days. Paint brushes used with water based paint can be rinsed in the sink. If you have leftover paint in a can, and it is latex or waterbased paint you can fill the can with kitty litter and once it is absorbed you can set it out for trash pickup.
-  When walking your pet, use a bag or use a scooper to clean up your pet's waste. In order to keep animal waste from contaminating our community, anyone who walks a pet should properly dispose of waste by picking it up, wrapping it, and either placing it into the trash or flushing it UNWRAPPED.

### Remember....

What we do on land affects the quality of water we drink and use in so many ways. Many small sources of pollution add up to cause big water quality problems. Natural things such as soil, leaves, grass clippings, and pet waste can cause water pollution. Waste dumped into storm sewers goes into our waterways without treatment.

**Illegal Dumping or suspicious activity can be reported to your local municipal code enforcement officer or to the Chemung County Stormwater Coalition at 796-2216.**

## NEW POLLING SITES

Voting Districts 07-01, 07-03 and 07-04 in West Elmira who previously voted at the First Presbyterian Church will now have a NEW VOTING SITE. These residents will now be voting at the New Day Ministry, 900 W. Water Street, Elmira, NY 14905. The Board of Elections will be sending out cards to all registered voters in these districts to advise them of their new polling place. If you have moved in our out of the above districts you will need to contact the Board of Elections to let them know of this address change. Please call the Board of Elections with any questions at 737-5475.

## FROM THE CLERK'S OFFICE

By Jo Ann Sherwood, Town Clerk

The Town provides a variety of services available through the Town Clerk's Office. Our office issues Hunting and



Fishing Licenses, Marriage Licenses, Dog Licenses and Handicap Permits. To purchase a hunting/fishing license you must bring a valid drivers license with you. The driver's license is used for identification into the New York State computer system. If you are a new hunter, you will need to bring proof of completion of a hunter safety course.

For a Marriage License, New York State requires that you provide proof of birth and current residence as well as any documentation for a divorce or death of previous spouse. The fee for a marriage license is \$40. For a dog license, proof of rabies and proof of spay/neutering is required. We also offer Notary Service and proof of identification is required for this. Voter registration forms are available in our office for you. If you are new to the Town, you will need to register your change of address. You will fill out the form and then mail it to the Chemung County Board of Elections.



**Exercise your right to vote!**

These are just a few of the services available to our residents of the Town of Elmira. As always, if you have any concerns or other questions that we can help you with, please contact our office at 734-2031.

## Contact Us

### We Still answer the phones!

David Sullivan (Supervisor) 734-2031

Jo Ann Sherwood (Town Clerk) 734-2031

Lori Rupp (Deputy Clerk ) 734-2031

Liz Lucarelli (Court Clerk ) 734-5971

Fred (Chip) LeValley (Code Enforcement Officer) 734-3608

Becky Carpenter (Deputy Clerk ) 734-1486

Peter Michalko (Chief of Police ) 8:30 - 4:30 - 734-2031

Matt Mustico (Highway Superintendent) 734-0199



Police Business After Hours 735-8600

Joe Cost (Bookkeeper) 734-2031

Melanie VanNoy (Assessor) 734-1486

### Councilpersons

Ron Allison 734-6474

Kenneth Bush 733-4373

Thomas Milliken 732-6760

Karen Krusen 734-9412

## -SAVE-

### TOWN OF ELMIRA POOL 2014 Schedule

#### IMPORTANT DAYS

Monday, June 2

Swimming lesson sign-ups begin for Park District #1 residents only

Saturday, June 28

**OPENING DAY 12 NOON**

Monday, June 16

Swimming Lesson Sign-ups Begin For Everyone Else

Monday, June 30 - July 11

1st Set Of Lessons

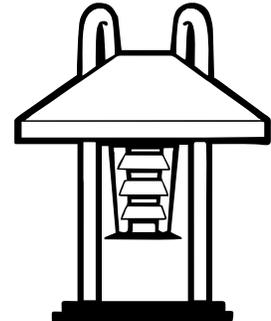
Monday, July 14 - July 25

2nd Set Of Lessons

Monday, July 28 - Aug 8

3rd Set Of Lessons

Monday, Sept. 1 Last Day Pool Closes At 5:45 Pm



**POOL HOURS-** June 28 - Aug. 23 12 Noon - 7:45 PM  
Aug. 24 - Sept. 1 12 Noon - 5:45 PM

**ADULT SWIM:** Monday through Friday, June 30 through August 22 4:30 - 6:00 PM  
**18 YEARS AND OLDER. NO CHILDREN ALLOWED.**  
The baby pool is CLOSED during ADULT SWIM.

#### POOL FEES

Pool Patches available at the Town Hall ONLY  
(No patches will be issued at the pool)  
Park District #1 Residents only.  
Season Pass: \$20 per Person



Resident Pass: Available at Town Hall only.  
Must have for admittance with Park Dist. #1 Daily Fee

Daily Fees:	Resident Park District #1	Outside District
Child	\$1.50	\$4.00
Adult	\$2.00	\$5.00
Senior Citizen (65 older)	Free (with ID proof)	

#### AMERICAN RED CROSS LESSONS:

Four (4) two-week sessions. 40 children maximum per session  
\$25 per session, Age 4 and up.  
Monday through Friday, 11:00 AM-11:45 AM Rain or Shine

## -SAVE-



## SUPERVISOR NOTES – DEER THOUGHTS

By David Sullivan

In the Winter edition of Town Talk we asked for your input on the deer population that seems to be growing and taking up residence in our town. Sixty residents returned surveys and more than half indicated that they believe deer pose no serious problem in the town. However, more than half did note that their landscaping or gardens were damaged by deer. The good news is that 16 residents volunteer to serve on a deer management group.

So, in terms of the deer issue, where do we go from here? The total response to the survey was not large enough to establish a clear direction in managing the issue. The fencing used by the town around its community garden, eight feet in height, seems to do the trick in keeping the deer from hurting the crops. Other suggestions I have received include using electronic whistles that simulate predators of the deer. Some towns have used a controlled deer management program where extra permits are issued to cull the herd.

We will convene a meeting of the residents interested in exploring this issue further and will invite a representative of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. There are no easy answers but we will keep working on this issue.

## TOWN COURT

By James E. DeFilippo, Town Justice-Town of Elmira



I am honored to have been asked to provide an article on behalf of the Town Court for this month's Town Talk. As I write this article, I am entering my 5th year as one of the two Town Justices for the Town of Elmira. My co-judge, Judge Woodhouse has served as Town Justice for over 34 years. Judge Woodhouse and I are assisted on a day-to-day basis by Court Clerk Elizabeth Lucarelli who ensures the efficient operation and responsiveness of the Town Court.

In New York State there are nearly 1300 Town and Village Courts. The Elmira Town Court was established around 1868. Town Courts are commonly referred to as the courts closest to the people. We hear a wide variety of cases that affect people's everyday lives. Last year the Elmira Town Court handled 1,450 traffic tickets, code violations, landlord/tenant matters, small claims actions, violations and criminal prosecutions. Criminal prosecutions handled in the Town Court may end in jail sentences of up to one year in county jail. Other criminal sentences include fines, surcharges, conditional discharges, community service and probation.

It is often said that if a person becomes involved with the criminal justice system just once in his or her life, chances are that it will involve the Town Court. As a life-long resident of Elmira, I am aware of the problems that face our small community. When hearing cases, I can take the time to ensure that the court's decisions and sentences both respect the law and reflect the mores and standards of Town citizens. This, to me, is the greatest difference between the Town Court and upper level courts -- a Town Justice knows the community and must answer to that community every day.

If you have ever driven past the Town Hall at 2:00AM and happened to notice the lights on, chances are that Judge Woodhouse or I have received a call from law enforcement for an arraignment. The job of a Town Justice is a 24 hours a day / 7days a week responsibility. Judge Woodhouse and I are honored to serve as your Town Justices and happy to always answer the call whether on a regularly scheduled court appearance or the early morning hours for an arraignment. I am so pleased to have the opportunity to serve our Town and work to ensure the safety and security of town residents.

Town of Elmira  
1255 West Water Street  
Elmira, New York 14905

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# TOWN TALK

News from the Town of Elmira

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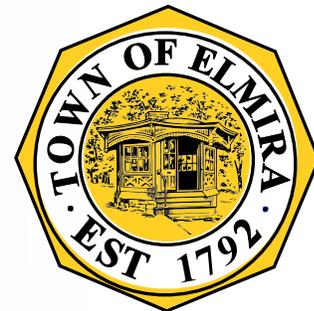
## READ ALL ABOUT IT

### News

Kode Korner  
Stormwater and Illicit Discharges/Illegal Dumping  
Myths & Misunderstandings

### Features

The Best and the Brightest  
West Elmira's Weaver Hotel



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