

# The Tupper Lake Free Press

and Tupper Lake Herald

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## Civil War Enrichment Days this weekend at LP Quinn

### Grounds to open to the public free of charge

The American Civil War has been called "the only war ever fought on American soil by Americans." During that war three million fought on the battlefields and over six hundred and twenty thousand died. Another 50,000 returned home as amputees. The war raged on from 1861 to 1865. Since that time generations of youngsters have lived and grown up in the United States coming to take for granted the rights of equality and justice as put forth by Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address.

While the reality of that war which ended almost 150 years ago, fades

into the pages of history, the reality of the war and that era comes alive from time to time. That, thanks to a group of dedicated volunteers such as the men, women and children of the 118<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment known as the Adirondack Unit, the 11<sup>th</sup> New York, the 55<sup>th</sup> of Virginia, the Canadian Militia of Ottawa and many others who don the blue and gray uniforms as reenactors.

The reenactors numbering anywhere from 60 to 100 people strong will be in Tupper Lake for the Civil War Enrichment Days this weekend, September 12-14.

The reenactors white canvas tents will pepper the fields of LP Quinn School for the weekend long encampment that begins Friday with Civil War education day. On Friday, the education day is strictly for students of Tupper Lake and the surrounding areas and is not open to the public. On Saturday and Sunday the fields surrounding LP Quinn school and the school itself will be open to the general public for two days of historic stations, Civil War museum in the library, numerous settlers, period music demonstrations, clothing, battlefield reenactments including artillery and possibly cavalry all free of charge.

Of special interest to the people of Tupper Lake and to all of the Civil War reenactors, this year is the dedication of the event to the memory of longtime Civil War reenactor Larry Sexton who passed away this year. A reenactor for over 15 years, Larry was joined by his wife Patty and son who traveled with him to events all over the countryside. Patty plans to be in attendance at this year's Tupper Lake Civil War Enrichment Days.

According to event coordinator 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Pete Gilbert of the 55<sup>th</sup> Virginia, a Confederate division, Abe Lincoln may be on hand Friday to meet with the students, and there will be a complete schedule of events planned throughout the weekend.

On Saturday, period music and demonstrations, artillery drills and the mini museum inside the library

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### Special guests for Mary

Mary Wilkinson, age 104, of Church St. Apartments, was recently visited by her home health aide Shelley Brown and her two granddaughters, Abby Brown, daughter of Matt and Melissa Brown of Tupper Lake, and Macauley Brown, daughter of Chris and Di Brown of Norwich. Abby, three, wasn't too impressed by Ms. Wilkinson's age but Macauley, seven, stated "she doesn't even have any wrinkles, Nanny!" Macauley was planning to take her group picture to 'show and tell' when she returned to school this month.

## DOT schedules another meeting on reconstruction of Rtes 3 & 30

Local folks interested in the latest design studies for the reconstruction of Rtes 3 & 30 are invited to a public informational meeting conducted by the state Department of Transportation on Wednesday, October 1, in the community room of the Goff Nelson Library.

The proposed project will restore the roadway's structural integrity and will also include the implementation of various safety, mobility and drainage improvements. The project begins just south of Queen

St., continues north along Rte 30 and splits at the intersection of Rte 30 and Rte 3. To the north, it will terminate just north of Pleasant Ave. and to the east, it will continue along Rte 3&30, ending just east of McLaughlin Ave. The project will improve about 1.1 miles of highway within the village limits.

This will be the second informational session regarding the project.

According to Region 7 Design Engineer Robert Curtis, during the June 25 session, a segment of the

audience and the village asked the DOT designers to reevaluate Lake Street as a feasible alternative.

"In this upcoming meeting, we will be presenting both Lake St. and Rte 3 realignment alternatives," he said.

The proposed project preliminary plans will be available for public review from 5 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. An overview of the project will be presented at 5:30 p.m., after which interested persons will have an opportunity to ask

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The late Larry Sexton enjoying 2005 event here.

## Village leaders say dissolution unwise, little savings

In May of last year the Village of Tupper Lake Consolidation Study Committee released to town and village boards here a preliminary report that found that about \$229,557 in village and town expenses could be saved by the dissolution of the village. Over a year later, the group's chairman, Marvin Madore, now worries there may be no savings to village taxpayers at all.

In a meeting Monday with Free Press Publisher Dan McClelland, Mr. Madore, Mayor Mickey Desmarais, Trustee Marty Hughes and two department heads cited numerous reasons why they believe that dissolving the village is not in the best interest of village taxpayers.

In the consolidation committee's May, 2007 report, the \$229,577 in expense savings would come because the mayor's \$4,000 annual salary (two-thirds of which is paid by the sewer and water and electric departments) would be eliminated. That savings only comes if there is no increase in the town supervisor's current salary of \$16,000.

Another small savings of about \$11,000 would come because of the elimination of the village board and the salaries paid to the four trustees.

Other components of the \$229,577 tax saving total would be: the elimination of the village court (eliminate one elected judge and appoint two part-time judges at \$6,000 each with no support staff); having the village clerk assume the duties of town administrator after Sandy Strader's retirement with an increase of \$8,000 paid to the village clerk; two town or village road workers would retire and wouldn't be replaced; the DPW Supervisor would replace Town Highway Superintendent Mark LaVigne after his retirement and would be paid an additional \$6,000 to assume both roles; the town assessor's assistant, after her retirement, would be replaced by a part-time clerk with

assistance from the combined town-village office staff; town tax collector's position eliminated and assumed by town clerk, with assistance from office staff; budget officer position assumed by town administrator at no extra salary.

This July the Tupper Lake Town Board released a 13-point plan to assume the village board's role after dissolution. One of the items in the plan was the hiring of a new town manager "to handle the day to day operations of the town."

The town might expect to pay a new town manager \$80,000 per year or more.

Right away that would trim as much as \$80,000 off the consolidation committee's savings estimate of \$229,577, said Mr. Madore, who currently serves as village trustee. More savings would be trimmed if the new town manager required a secretary, which they most certainly would, he thought.

### NYCOM counsel says dissolution doesn't produce expected savings

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The village currently receives about \$74,000 in aid from New York State.

Mr. Madore produced a report obtained by his study committee from the New York State Department of State on the effect of consolidation and dissolution of villages that showed that state aid would be phased out to zero over a five-year period.

"There's another \$74,000 plus the community as a whole would lose," he noted.

Mayor Desmarais and Trustees Hughes and Madore worry that if the village is dissolved, the local fire department could "grow out of control."

In the town's plan to assume the responsibilities of the village, a newly created fire district would control the

now village owned fire department.

Under state law a fire district is another local taxing entity, governed by a board of fire commissioners, who run for various terms in office.

By law fire districts are permitted to have annual budgets totaling one percent of the total assessment of the town, which here is currently about \$400 million. That translates into a future fire department budget here of as much as \$400,000- almost twice the size of the \$222,000 that is contributed each year by village and town taxpayers here.

According to what the mayor has learned about fire districts from various officials around the state, the fire district elections each December draw a tiny turnout

of voters- sometimes as small as two percent of the electorate. "Every NYCOM (New York Conference of Mayors) official I talk with advises us to stay away from fire districts!"

Mr. Desmarais said many people here are under the impression that if the village is dissolved, the taxes they pay each summer will somehow disappear. "Nothing could be farther from the truth."

He explained that instead of receiving a village tax bill for their village property, taxpayers who were former village residents will see a number of special district charges on their town tax bills in January, totally as much or almost as much as their previous village tax bills. He said there would be special district fee charges for police protection, streetlights, sidewalks- an assortment of things that is now covered by the annual village budget.

He said the tune has changed dramatically about what state bureaucrats and elected officials thought about villages in the past two years. "Two years ago all the talk was about village dissolution. Now when we go to meetings, people are starting to understand how important villages are to their communities because of the services they offer. Now many state leaders are encouraging villages to stay in business and to work closely with their towns to increase efficiencies and save taxpayers money."

"We can certainly see savings without dissolving our village," the mayor asserted.

He said the village hasn't raised taxes in two years because the village was able to eliminate several positions, including one paid fire driver. Considerable overtime expenses have been cut through the prudence of the

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## New faces in the school district

Some of the new faces at the Tupper Lake Central School District this month were guests of honor at a reception Monday night hosted by the local board of education. The annual "meet the new teachers" event preceded the regular monthly board meeting.

Board President Michael Dechene welcomed the newcomers and expressed his hope they would have fun, work hard and enjoy their time in the new school district. He said they have joined an excellent school district that for many years has enjoyed the services of able and dedicated administrators and the robust support of parents and local taxpayers.

Flanked by Superintendent of Schools Seth McGowan and Interim L.P. Quinn Elementary School Principal Carolyn Merrihew, themselves newcomers to their posts this year, were Chris Savage of Tupper Lake, new fifth grade teacher, Sara Bullock of Saranac Lake, a long term substitute teacher in the pre-K program, Alicia Gingerich, a new special education teacher from Lowville, Tupper Lake's Kyle Fuller, a long term substitute teacher in the high school's intervention program, Travis Dupuis of Tupper Lake, a new in-school suspension supervisor, Dan Cook of Potsdam, new 9<sup>th</sup> grade mathematics teacher, Kristin Delehanty, a new first grade teacher and Vermont native who was recently wed to Cary Delehanty of Tupper Lake, Meredith Warwick, new teacher aide at L.P. Quinn and Patti Reynolds of Saranac Lake, the district's new speech pathologist who will work in both local schools. (Dan McClelland photo)