

## The Tupper Lake Free Press and Tupper Lake Herald

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# From the Free Press files...

(From the files, Dec. 15-22, 1960)

A news item which has been all too familiar, all too long, made page 1 in the Free Press 55 years ago this week. Electric power went out about 3 p.m. throughout the village on a bitterly cold day. It took the late Nelson Redfield, then electric superintendent, and his crew three hours to locate and repair the damage, hours during which, the Free Press noted, “the temperature plunged well below zero and village officials were swamped with phone calls from frightened and freezing residents”. For once the power company was blameless. The outage resulted from an accident on the Conifer-Piercefield road where Tommy Bedore was operating a mobile crane, picking up logs and loading them in a truck. The boom contacted the

power line and shorted the system, kicking out the Paul Smiths oil switch in the local substation.

The New York Central Railroad was still a going concern then, and an item datelined Syracuse reported that it had petitioned the state Public Service Commission for authority to streamline its freight handling service in the Sabattis, Saranac Inn, Stony Wold, Lake Placid area by establishing a Freight Service Center in Tupper Lake.” The plan was to eliminate freight stations in those communities and substitute daily coverage by telephone contact with consignees from the Tupper office, providing truck delivery on LCL (less-than-car) lots. Both railway passenger and freight services were rapidly nearing termination in the Adirondacks then.

To handle the heavy

increase in mailing during the peak holiday period Postmaster Pat McCarthy announced that window services would be provided from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17-18.

Big Tupper ski center was still under construction 55 years ago and town officials, aiming at a Dec. 26 opening date to catch the heavy holiday trade, were pushing work crews despite sub-zero weather. “Pouring of cement floors is nearing completion and the heating system in the lodge went into operation yesterday.” Big Tupper manager Don Adams reported to the board. “One tower, the top terminal and the counterweight on the chair lift remain to be poured, and parking space is being graded.” The restaurant concession at the lodge had been awarded to Mr. and Mrs. Francis Mayville.

The Dec. 22 issue of the Free Press reported that “although formal dedication of the ski center is still more than a month away, the new ski slopes will host their first paying customers on Monday, Dec. 26. The new 2,800 foot T-bar will begin operating at 9 a.m. and continue with night skiing until 9 p.m. The new night lighting system makes a striking spectacle for Tupper residents, appearing to be suspended in mid-air. A new Tucker Sno-Cat is expected to arrive that day, with equipment for packing the slopes and the seven trails, and an 800-foot rope tow will also be in operation Monday, but the chair lift is not expected to go into service before mid January”

Six-year old Vincent Kavanagh, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Kavanagh, kicked up some excitement that week when a sofa pillow which he placed too close to the fireplace ignited. After a futile attempt to douse the smoldering blaze in the kitchen sink he carried the pillow down cellar and left it there. His parents, hurrying to attend evening

church service: were apprised of trouble by smoke drifting through the house and turned in a fire alarm. “Mr. Kavanagh had located the source and doused the fire with a garden hose before firemen arrived, but not before extensive smoke damage, which will necessitate repainting the kitchen and living room,” the Free Press reported.

A stubborn fire heavily damaged the Amedese Desrosia home at 267 ParkSt. 55 years ago this week, breaking out around an overheated pipe from a wood burning stove. Firemen were called back three times and had to chop through the roof and walls as flames flared up repeatedly.

Hospitalized veterans at Sunmount played a significant role in Christmas activities here then. Starting in 1949 they devoted months of spare time in manual and occupational arts therapy clinics manufacturing toys, woolen mittens, scarves and toques for distribution to children who might otherwise be forgotten by Santa. Metropolitan Post 385, American Legion, of New York City annually underwrote the cost of materials for the Sunmount Christmas project.

Richard Gagnon, 13 1/2 Lakeview Ave., found that the Christmas season could involve not only giving, but taking away. He parked his car in front of the J.J. Newberry Store, leaving the motor running while he made some purchases in Monakey’s Pharmacy, and it was missing minutes later. Local state police had turned up no trace of the vehicle when the Free Press noted the theft nearly a week later.

The village board was arranging for a \$663,000 bond issue to finance Tupper’s new sewage disposal system 55 years ago this week. Currently the board is arranging for a mandated secondary sewage treatment plant and the tab will be considerably higher, in the four to five million dollar range.

## Editorial Kathleen Lefebvre, Rick Skiff were effective town board members who will be missed

The Tupper Lake Town Board next week will have a completely new make-up when two new council members take their seats.

Joining the board in January will be novice board members Tracy Luton and Mary Fontana. The two new town officials are both eager and anxious to learn all they can about town operations and put that knowledge to good use guiding this town, they told us in a recent interview. We look forward to watching them learn and grow.

In this past November’s election, we believe it was the first time that two women were elected to the Tupper Lake Town Board at the same time. We suspect too, though we’re using memory rather than searching the Free Press archives, that this will be the first time in many decades, maybe ever, that our town board will be controlled by women.

Councilmen John Quinn and Mike Dechene will be in the minority, as males on that board.

Supervisor Patricia Littlefield’s new board will also consist of four Republicans and one Democrat- Mr. Quinn, who is currently the deputy supervisor.

The 2015 town board was split two ways: two women and three men; three Republicans and two Democrats.

The missing faces at the board table in 2016 will be Democrat Kathleen Lefebvre and Republican Rick Skiff.

Their many contributions and their guidance will be missed.

Kathleen was first elected as town councilwoman in 2006 and she served nine years in that town office.

For a time she was deputy supervisor.

During her tenure Kathleen has been a good liaison with the local senior citizen community. She has served for a number of years on the town’s Aaron Maddox committee where she’s been a vocal advocate for the continued maintenance of that town-owned one-time church and the needs of the senior citizens’ group which occupies a good share of it.

She also worked with the Mercycare for the Adirondacks’ coalition here that is currently looking at, among many things, ways for seniors to live independently in their homes longer.

Kathleen has served most recently too on the town’s Little Wolf Beach and Campgrounds committee, and has been very attentive to issues there and ways to improved

the well-used facility.

In recent years too she has also been a strong voice for the development of hydroelectricity at the town’s Setting Pole Dam- talking frequently with Developer Dennis Ryan and his plans for the place.

Rick Skiff chose not to seek reelection on the Republican line, preferring to step away from local politics for a time to focus on his career in corrections and his family.

Rick’s job often takes him out of the area on special assignments and it has been difficult for him to make all meetings.

He was appointed by the town board, when Mrs. Littlefield was a freshman supervisor early in 2014 to fill her council spot and Rick ran successfully for the final year of her four-year town board meeting in November 2014.

During town board deliberations Rick has been a strong voice of common sense. His arguments have always been logical.

His many years of involvement in adult community baseball and softball was very helpful a number of times when the town board weighed issues at the village-owned municipal park.

Rick also didn’t shy away from any of the tough decisions before the board these past two years, including on how much the town should be expected to pay for fire protection

The wise counsel routinely offered by both elected leaders will be missed at the town board table this coming year- and I know we speak for many in the community who appreciated the valuable service they offered to the town.

-Dan McClelland

## A hand up, not a hand out

Do you live in housing which is unsafe, overcrowded or unsuitable for your family? Are you looking for better and affordable housing? Would you like a hand up, rather than a hand out and work towards getting into better housing? If so, then a home built by you and Adirondack Habitat for Humanity may be just what you are looking for!!

Habitat for Humanity housing is not free housing. Habitat homes are also not cheaply built. Many local families in our community live in nice, well-built reasonably valued homes that they may not have been able to otherwise afford without assistance from Adirondack Habitat for Humanity. What you need is commitment to some hard work, good credit, good rental history and a steady job. There are minimum and maximum income guidelines. If you make more than our maximum, you can probably afford

conventional financing. If you make less, then it’s probable you wouldn’t be able to afford to keep the house payments, utilities and maintenance current. Currently, Adirondack Habitat is working on rehabilitating a home in Saranac Lake as well as in Tupper Lake.

We at Habitat work with community volunteers to build or rehabilitate homes in the Tri-Lakes area (Tupper Lake, Lake Placid and Saranac Lake). The chosen family partners spend a few hundred hours of sweat equity to qualify for a home. This sweat equity can take the form of working on the house in ways such as painting, carpeting, putting up cupboards or floors, landscaping and other needed labor. Partner families may also accumulate their sweat equity hours by working on other Habitat homes, or on other Habitat projects, such as our program A Brush

With Kindness.

The “A Brush With Kindness” program is where Habitat does small needed household projects for otherwise qualified families. It works in much the same way as a Habitat Home. Habitat (and the family) supplies all of the labor and skills, and pays for the materials, which we then have the family pay for over a period of time. For instance, if you are a family in an otherwise suitable home, within our income guidelines, but your front porch is falling off or dangerous. Habitat would tear down the old porch and help you build a new one, with a zero interest loan for the family to pay back. This way, Habitat is a “hand up, not a hand out”. It also helps to foster pride of ownership when the family has had a part in fixing up their home and have an actual equitable stake in it. If your family, or one you know, has the desire or need for A Brush with

Kindness, please contact us at the information below. We are not only looking for families to partner with us, but also for volunteers to help make the dream of affordable, safe and suitable homes for qualified families. We are also looking for volunteers to help out on our Board of Directors, as well as on our committees. Whatever experience you have would be welcomed by Adirondack Habitat for Humanity. You don’t need to be a contractor or master carpenter to help (although that would be great!). Many people have no building skills but are able to help us with our skilled volunteers we already have. But, we can always use the help of electricians, carpenters, plumbers and any of the building trades. Even those with backgrounds in law, accounting, fundraising, or non-profit management are highly desired. Please contact us at [adkhabitat@yahoo.com](mailto:adkhabitat@yahoo.com).

## Letter to the editor

To the editor:

The Family Champions Stockings for Tots program has been successful every year by supplying our less fortunate children with Christmas outfits, pajamas and toys.

This year, someone(s) made a bad choice and stole from our program. Stealing toys, clothing, tooth brushes, pajamas, coloring books, crayons, etc.

Due to someone’s bad choice we had to dip into the funds raised for next years stockings program and a few generous donations by

some special angels; Mr. and Mrs. Donnelly, the Tupper Lake Honor Guard, the VFW, Tupper Lake Family Dental and also some donated toys we were a little behind schedule but with your generous help we were able to get the stockings filled and handed out in time for Christmas.

If you would like to make a donation for next year’s Stocking program or have any questions you can contact Cheryl at 359-3010 or mail to 15 Broad Street, Tupper Lake, NY 12986.

Cheryl Vaillancourt

## Ramblings From an Adirondack Humorist

**They’re Back!**  
**By Matthew J. Glavin**

The Muppet Show is back on television, and I for one couldn’t be happier. In the 1980’s it was one of my favorite television shows. The Muppets were some of the best developed television and movie characters ever.

My problem is that evening television these days is also being taken over by presidential wannabes. You see them everywhere from the news broadcasts to the debate of the week. We even have an under card debate for those declared candidates who couldn’t muster over one percent support in the polls.

Most the presidential contenders could be easily confused with one Muppet character or another. I don’t want to scrutinize the candidates one by one, but the subject is worth exploring.

Not unlike the Muppets, the presidential contenders seems to be somewhat of a boys club.

Nonetheless, Miss Piggy, the loud, insufferable diva who will do anything to get more attention for *moi* is ably represented. I’m not sure if she has more than one email account or not. Janice, on the other hand, is the California girl and member of the Electric Mayhen band. She is also represented but it’s less about her diva-like behavior and more about being Fer sure a laid back and thoughtful person.

Fozzie Bear is a lousy comedian but his passion and unwillingness to stop doing what he loves regardless of his incompetence makes me think of a number of candidates. There is more than on candidate who needs give up on his/her dream and tell the world what we all know. But, like Fozzie, none are willing to do it.

Hergy-bergy-flocken-durk. I’ve never understood a single word the Swedish Chef has said. Ever! Yet,

Continued on page 5

## Moaner collectors need your help

Many readers have told us how enjoyable they find the Moaner Review. Now we need your help. In doing research we have discovered that the Moaner was published beginning April 2, 1943. The copies we have on hand begin on December 1, 1943 and run through December, 1945. We are asking Tupper Lakers and former Tupper Lakers to rummage through attics and old chests looking for the missing issues from April 2, 1943 to December 1, 1943. We will copy them and return them to you. Please be in touch with us through the Tupper Lake Free Press at 359-2166 or email [tfreepress@roadrunner.com](mailto:tfreepress@roadrunner.com) Many thanks.

Jim Kucipeck and Jim Ellis

## NORTH COUNTRY



WOW! A SHEBANG!  
NOW ZEG, LOOK! A DWELLING!  
I BELIEVE THE CREATURE WANTS  
TO PROVIDE US SOME SHELTER! OUR  
SENSORS DID DETECT A LARGE, VOLITILE WEATHER PATTERN  
HEADING THIS WAY. PERHAPS IT MEANS TO PROTECT US HERE!

AGENT NAX, WHILE I RESPECT AND ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR LARGE BRAIN, I HAVE DIFFICULTIES WITH YOUR LOGIC ON THIS MATTER. THIS IS OBVIOUSLY A TRAP. WE CANNOT-

ZEG, WE ARE CRASHED, LOST, DISARMED, ILL EQUIPPED, ALONE AND WITHOUT FOOD. WE ARE IN THE TRAP ALREADY, AND WE WILL SURELY DIE FREEZING IF WE STAY. THINK OF OUR SHIP... WE MUST.

#20

-SO I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO LIVE WITH THIS FUZZY MOOK?

AS YOUR COMMANDER, NO, YOU HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE.

I CAN'T WAIT TO SHOW YOU NEXT GEN!

THIS IS MY NIGHTMARE.

ONLY IN THEORY.