

TOWN NEWS

APRIL 4 ELECTION Registered voters will vote April 4 at the Town Hall on JJ between the hours of 7:00 AM – 8:00 PM

Besides candidates for county positions, we will be asked to approve Barbara Grenlie and Don McKay as members of our Town Board. Barbara is unopposed in her bid for re-election and Don is running unopposed for the position vacated by David Dybdahl. Terms for all other positions will expire next year.

We will also be given the opportunity to voice our opinion on a referendum concerning bringing troops home from Iraq. (See separate article inside.)

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The annual Town of Vermont meeting will be held at the town hall, 4017 County Road JJ on Tuesday, April 11, 2006 at 7:30 PM. The primary purpose of this meeting is to report on the past town board activities. Electors may also bring up items of interest or concern to the town. There are specific items that may be brought up, discussed and voted upon under Wisconsin Statutes 60.

BIKE RIDES COMING UP

An announcement was made at the February Town Board meeting that the Horribly Hilly bike ride is scheduled for June 17 and the Blue Mounds Classic is scheduled for July 15.

TOWNSHIP PICNIC

There will be a town picnic this year at Tyrol Basin on Sunday, Sept 10. A task force has been recruited and plans are under way.

VERMONT'S VOICE

Excellent response to survey of town residents

By Warren Gaskill

As a part of the update of its Land Use Plan and to meet the requirements of the state's Smart Growth Law, the Town of Vermont contracted with the Survey Research Service at the University of Wisconsin River Falls to get feedback from town residents about future growth.

Last fall, surveys were mailed to 417 adults paying property taxes in the township, and 288 were completed and returned for a 69 percent response rate. Says the Survey Research Center in its summary: "Given this response rate and the 2000 Census estimate of 927 adults, the estimates in this report are expected to be accurate within plus or minus 4.2 percent with 95 percent confidence. In short, the sample should provide highly accurate statistical results."

The town's Plan Commission is using the survey results and the series of focus group meetings last year to help guide the update of the Land Use Plan. Plan Commission Chair Barb Grenlie said they expect to complete the work by late spring for presentation to the Town Board.

Here are some of the highlights in the report by David Trechter, Shelly Hadley and Denise Parks of the Survey Research Center. The entire executive report is posted on the citizen's website, www.vermonttown.com.

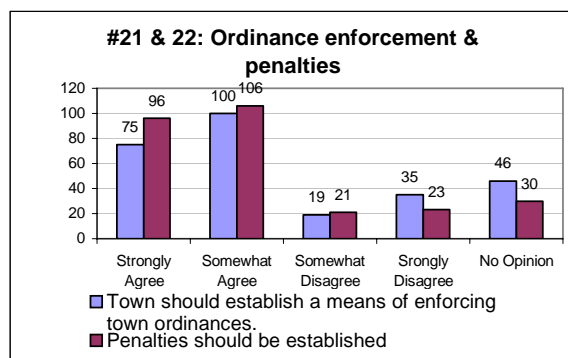
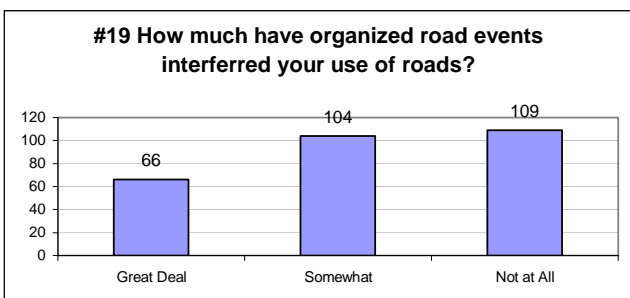
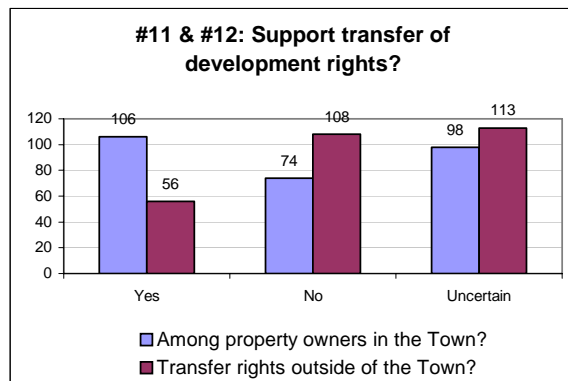
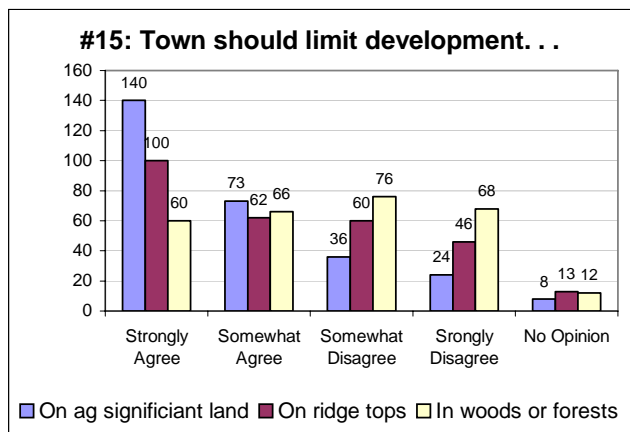
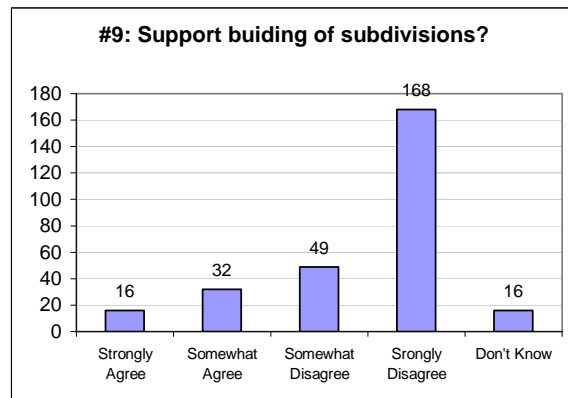
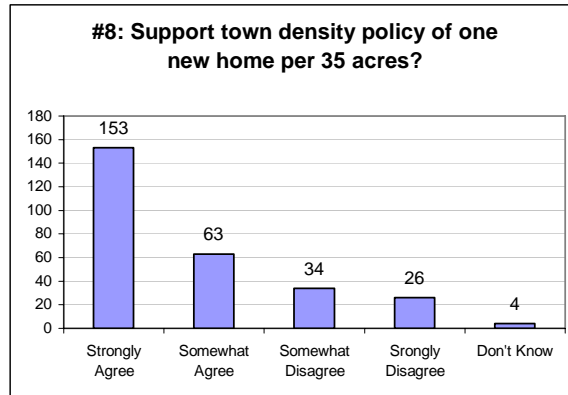
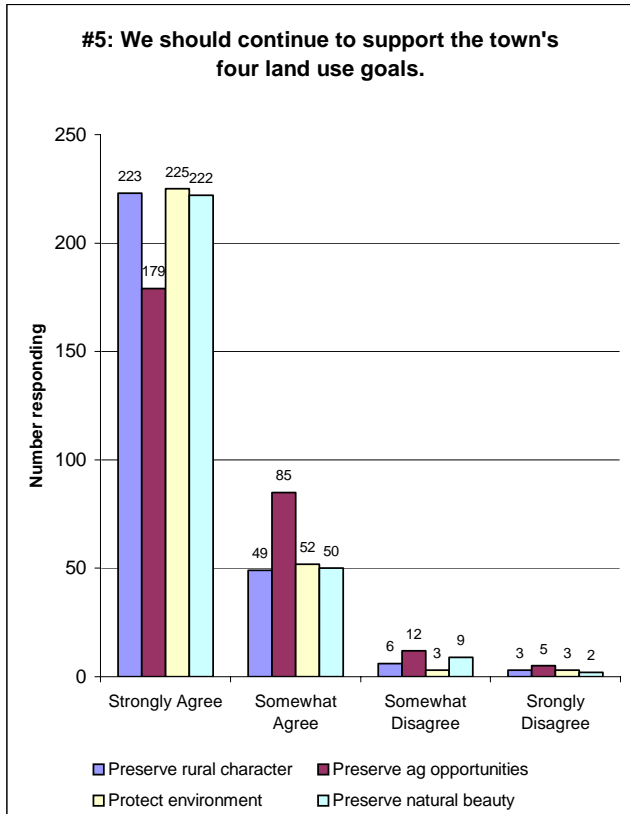
- ✓ Most respondents have lived in the town for many years. Nearly 30 percent work at their residence but nearly 40 percent drive into Madison to their job.
- ✓ Most residents report that the land they own is "open." The second most common response was rural residence. One-third of respondents report that their land was used for farming, either by themselves or by someone outside the family.
- ✓ Respondents expressed strong support for the four goals of the comprehensive plan (maintaining and preserving the rural character of the town, preserving agricultural opportunities, protecting the environment, and protecting and preserving the natural beauty of the town).
- ✓ There is fairly strong sentiment expressed for maintaining the rural nature of the Town by allowing only 1 house per 35 acres and limiting where they can be built (not in clustered developments, not in visible points on ridge tops, not on prime agricultural land).
- ✓ Town property owners may need additional information about transferable development rights since many said they didn't know whether they favored them.
- ✓ Respondents were generally satisfied with the roads in the Town and not greatly inconvenienced by organized road events
- ✓ Commercial development is favored by a majority of respondents only along state highways or as home businesses.
- ✓ Property owners are in favor of regulating where communication towers are developed and enforcing and penalizing ordinance violations
- ✓ Strong majorities favor negotiations with Black Earth and Mount Horeb to agree upon future land uses, urban services and annexations.
- ✓ Town property owners are in favor of using budget resources to fund a newsletter and website
- ✓ Its environmental amenities (natural beauty, rural atmosphere), proximity to Madison, and familial links are the primary reasons people choose to live in Vermont Town.

Some responses are on the next page

VERMONT'S VOICE

Survey Highlights

There are 31 questions on the survey. Here are the responses to a few of them. The complete survey summary and responses can be downloaded on-line at www.vermonttown.com



VERMONT'S VOICE

The Town of Vermont Resolution on the War in Iraq

By David Stanfield

In petitions circulated in the Town of Vermont, the 171 electors who signed the petitions asked the Town Board that an advisory referendum question be referred to a vote of the electors at the spring 2006 election. As stated in the petitions, the Town's Board of Supervisors agreed to place a question on the Spring Election Ballot with the wording:

"Should the following resolution be adopted by the Town of Vermont. Be it resolved that the patriotic way to support our troops is to bring all of the troops home from Iraq, beginning with the immediate return to the United States of the National Guard."

_____ **Yes** _____ **No**

We can disagree or agree with this question but the desires of the grass roots here at home seem particularly important. To answer "yes" to the referendum question, the elector would be agreeing with the three parts of the resolution:

1. The wording "the patriotic way to support our troops" means that those who agree with the resolution consider themselves to be patriotic Americans.
2. For those in agreement with the resolution, the phrase "bring all of the troops home" does not establish a precise timetable, but it does state that no U.S. troops should be left in Iraq, thereby dispelling suspicion that the U.S. has imperial designs on Iraq and/or its oil.
3. A person in agreement with the phrase "beginning with the immediate return to the United States of the National Guard" gives priority to the return of part of our troops, the National Guard, so that it could deal with internal emergencies and disasters.

To answer "no" to this referendum, would mean that the person disagrees with one or more of the three parts of the resolution.

Whatever the outcome of this referendum, our voices can make a difference.

BURN PERMITS

Once the snow is off the ground, permits are required for **controlled** grass/prairie/brush burns as well as burn barrels. Failure to obtain a permit can cause unnecessary alarm to the DNR and local Fire Departments and might even result in a fine.

Permits are issued by Fire Wardens: They are Frank Hinze, 767-3827, Fern Frame, 767-3915 and Shirley Brandt, 767-3030.

Some neighbors have used a controlled burn successfully to improve their land and minimize the presence of unwanted invasive species.



VERMONT'S VOICE

Interested in helping guide the future of the township?

By Warren Gaskill

What will Vermont Township be like to live and work in 10 years from now? In 20 years? In 50 years? What will be the effect of the end of cheap oil, the aging Baby Boomers, the global ag economy, rising property tax pressure, or recently soaring land costs on how land gets used here?

These are some of the many forces that will dictate the fabric of our township. And helping direct traffic amid these and more is the Vermont Plan Commission, the body responsible for sifting through the needs of land sellers and buyers amid the changing dictates of federal, state, county and township land use laws.

The members of the seven-member body – which, according to town ordinances, is to “represent the full gender and geographic” make-up of the Township, including at least two town board members – are appointed by the town chair to overlapping three-year terms. The Commission advises landowners, researches land use requests and makes recommendations to the Town Board.

Current Plan Commission members include Barb Grenlie, Jim Elleson, Mark Sherven, Don McKay, Marc Robertson, Marian Swoboda and Bruce Ellarson. According to town ordinances, the town chair names the commission chair, and the commission is to select its own vice-chair and secretary.



Town Chair Steve Cowan anticipates appointing up to three members in June of this year. If you are interested in playing a part on this important group, let Steve know with a letter of interest no later than May 1. Plan commission members receive a per meeting payment for their work. Plan Commission Chair Barb Grenlie points out that with the

costs of land increasing and in light of the transfer of development right proposals being considered by the county, it is very important that every landowner pay close attention to what they want to do with their land along with the town's Land Use Plan. This attention is especially required when considering a sale, Grenlie says, and determining how many potential development rights you may or may not have, and which rights go with which piece of property in a sale.

PILEATED WOODPECKERS

By Earl Brandt

Marc Robertson, our Town Clerk, happened to glance out of a window at the town hall during a recent conversation when he suddenly asked, “Are those what I think they are?” And indeed, they were: Pileated Woodpeckers. Not one, but two! Banging away on a tree not more than 15 feet from the building. Like many of us, he had never seen even one, much less two of them.

They are solitary birds who require a large territory in a heavy wooded habitat, so few are seen, even during our annual Christmas bird count. However, 16 were spotted during the last count - a new record.

At 16-19 inches, with a flaming red crest, they are hard to miss. Even if you don't see them you can hear them. After ripping the bark away with their long beaks, they go after their dinner with a vengeance. No tap, tap, tap for them. It's more of a bang, bang, bang and their call is a loud and distinctive kik, kik, kik – (reminds me of some of our neighborhood pot-luck dinners out here at Peculiar Corners).



VERMONT'S VOICE

Grow Joe Grow

By Earl Brandt

This time of year you can tell who the gardeners are by the little brown packages in their mailboxes. They contain seeds – and anxiety – and hope.



Photo by Alicia Murphy

greater Dane County, who can offer them to costumers 24 hours from the time they are harvested. It takes an average of 28 days before imported flowers are available for sale. Valentine roses, for instance come, by ship, from South America. Naturally Joe recommends asking your florist for locally grown flowers.

You can sign up for a “flower-share” by calling Vermont Valley Community Farm at 608-767-3860 or Joe at 608-255-8924 or e-mail farm@vermontvalley.com

Joe Schmitt's envelopes were much, much bigger and arrived a long time ago from 10 different suppliers. Joe is a commercial flower grower, specializing in cut flowers. He started planting his “flats” January 15 and eventually his house will be inundated with 369 plats containing 300 species that will hopefully yield 75,000 plants, not counting those from direct seeding.

He will plant and harvest all of these in carefully timed sequence on less than 2 acres near the corner of F and FF- and Dave and Barb Perkins Vermont Valley CSA (community supported agriculture) vegetable farm. His carefully wrapped bouquets accompany their boxes of produce to members who subscribe for 14 weeks each year. Like the CSA farm's produce, his flowers are organically grown.

Joe is also an artist, choosing and arranging separate flowers to create one entity – a beautiful bouquet. Sometimes he uses special grasses, corn, grains that he grows, and even weeds (think Queen Ann's Lace).

Along with the flowers Joe sends a weekly letter, *Sweet Somethings*, which contains a detailed description and history of each species of flower in the bouquet and musing, mostly related to flowers (but he often strays, delightfully).

In addition to CSA sales, Joe sells fresh cut flowers to florists in Milwaukee, Madison and



Joe's centerpiece bouquet from the 2005 Corn Boil at the Perkins' CSA farm

OPEN BARN

Dr. William and Jackie Sweeney have invited us to an “Open Barn” at Hylee Farm, 3460 Cty Tk JG, on April 8, between 10 AM and 2PM. The Open Barn will feature presentation of riders and drivers in the lesson program and presentation of horses in training. A light meal and beverage will be available. You may even get a peek at some new foals, if they have arrived.

VERMONT'S VOICE

Recap of Town Budget 2005

By Sarah Danz, Town Treasurer

Revenues

The town's total revenue for 2005 was \$311,821. The largest portion of that, \$197,263, came from property taxes. The remaining amount came from Private Forest Crop/Managed Forest Land Tax \$2,627; Dog Licenses \$268; Refunds/Interest/Assessment Searches \$3,571; Site Visits/Driveway Permits/Building Permits/Recreation Permits/Business Permits \$15,675; Equipment Reimbursement \$319; Dane County Bridge Aid \$3,224; Shared Revenue \$15,094; Transportation Aid \$72,526; DNR Payment-in-lieu of Taxes \$382; Managed Forest Yield/Withdrawal \$860; and Exempt Computer Aid \$12.

Expenses

Of the \$197,263 collected through property taxes, \$37,507 was paid to the fire and EMS districts. 2005 operating expenses of \$257,729 were for Patrolman \$60,670; Highway \$102,462; Donations/Newsletter \$2,155; Town Hall \$2,357; and General Government \$90,085. General Government covers the Clerk Wages, Insurance and Retirement; Treasurer Wages; Plan Commission Per Diem; Plan Commission Secretary Wages; Assessor; Board Wages and Per Diem; Building Inspector; Office Supplies; Elections; Insurance; Dues; Publishing; Payroll Liabilities; Telephone and Internet; Education; and Miscellaneous.

Summary

With total revenues of \$311,821 and total expenses of \$295,236, the town has a surplus of \$16,585 for activity in 2005. This surplus, when added to last year's carryover of \$3,181, gave the town a carryover into 2006 of \$19,766. This carryover resulted from less expenditures in Seal Coat and Culvers; Sand and Salt; Gravel and Patch; Highway Supplies; and Highway Extra Labor. However, there were expense categories added for Clerk Benefits that were not budgeted for 2005.

Recipe Favorite

By Lisa Orman

Hamburger Cheese Casserole

2 T butter
1 lb. Ground beef
1 clove garlic, crushed (I like 3!)
1 t. salt
Black pepper to taste
1 t. sugar
2 8-oz. Cans tomato sauce
½ c grated cheddar cheese
1 8-oz. package medium noodles
1 3-oz. Package cream cheese, softened
1 c sour cream
1 c cottage cheese
6 scallions or green onions, chopped



Melt butter in 10-inch skillet. Add beef and sauté until brown, breaking into small pieces. Add garlic, salt, pepper, sugar and tomato sauce. Blend well. Cover and simmer, 15-20 minutes. Cook noodles in boiling, salted water for 10 minutes. Drain.

Blend cream cheese, sour cream and cottage cheese in electric mixer until very smooth. Add scallions. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish well. Place a layer of noodles in the bottom, spread with a third of the cheese mixture, then a third of the meat, and repeat twice. Sprinkle with cheese and bake in a preheated 350° oven, 30-40 minutes. Freezes well, and makes good leftovers.

VERMONT'S VOICE

How to reach us:

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Ann Albert, 3963 Ryan Road, 767-3135; malbert@merr.com

Mission Statement: It is the mission of Vermont's Voice to provide information about our town and articles of interest to the residents of our town in order to promote a sense of community, encourage participation in and understanding of town government, and improve communication among residents. Vermont's Voice is a volunteer, citizen-run publication that encourages and depends on citizen participation in providing information, articles, or suggestions for articles, photos, criticism, and help with mailings. The cost of printing and postage is included in the town budget. Vermont's Voice is not the official voice or viewpoint of the town government.

Look for this issue of the Vermont Voice on the Vermont Web Page! Check it out at <http://www.vermonttown.com>.

Town Officials

Chair Steve Cowan 767-4616, cell 234-2916
Or email: scwetlands@tds.net

Supervisor #1 Bill Hanson 767-5050
Supervisor #2 Dave Dybdahl 767-3674
Supervisor #3 Mark Sherven 437-3732
Supervisor #4 Barb Grenlie 437-5856
Town Clerk Marc Robertson 767-2457

Town Treasurer Sarah Danz 767-6017
Town Patrolman Dave Haugen 767-3313
Building Inspector Call town hall, 767-2457

Plan Commission Members

Chair Barb Grenlie 437-5856
Secretary Marian Swoboda 767-2357
Jim Elleson 767-3553

Marc Robertson 437-3762
Don McKay 437-4071
David Stanfield 767-3449
Mark Sherven 437-3732

Fire Wardens

Frank Hinze 767-3827
Fern Frame 767-3915

Winter 2006

VERMONT'S VOICE

AGRICULTURE GOVERNMENT NATURAL BEAUTY

4670 Cedar Hill Lane
Black Earth, WI 53515

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Black Earth
WI 53515

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