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Local & Region

Metro Editor: David Hill | 274-9257 | dwhill@ithacajournal.com



No-parking signs to come down today on Rabbit Run

By Laura Brandt
Special to The Journal

ULYSSES—No-parking signs that have lined Rabbit Run Road since Friday, July 11 are scheduled to come down at 3 p.m. today, said Town of Ulysses Highway Superintendent James Meeker.

The road is a popular site for GrassRoots campers to park their cars days in advance of the festival to be near the front of the line when the festival grounds open for camping Thursday.

The signs, Meeker said, were erected "mainly to curtail the camping and the partying the week before the event starts." Campers were "dragging out tree limbs ... to save (parking) spots for their friends," he said, and were active late into the night, causing problems by not getting off the road.

"There was some talk about posting (no parking signs) on the road for mowing," the shoulder, said Liz Thomas, a member of the Ulysses Town Board. "But it was already mowed."

Ulysses Town Supervisor Douglas Austic said the signs were put up because early-arriving campers were affecting routine maintenance.

Last year, Ulysses had the same problem, Austic added, with campers arriving two to three weeks in advance of the festival, interfering with road maintenance.

The GrassRoots Festival of Music and Dance runs Thursday, July 17 through Sunday, July 20.

BRIEFLY IN TOMPKINS

TRUMANSBURG

White deer eco-touring the subject of Thursday talk

"The White Deer of the Seneca Army Depot — What Fate Awaits Their Future?" a presentation by Dennis Money, will be held at 7:30 p.m. Thursday, July 17 at the Ulysses Philomathic Library in Trumansburg. This presentation will discuss the Seneca White Deer team and its proposal to promote eco-touring. Refreshments will be served.

ITHACA

Seminar will focus on preventing bird extinctions

A luncheon seminar with bird conservation expert Bennett Hennessey will be held from 12:30-1 p.m. Thursday, July 24 at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 152 Safesucker Woods Road. Hennessey will give an update on bird conservation programs in Bolivia and the South American "Preventing Extinctions" program. Admission is free. Call 800-843-BIRD or go to birds.cornell.edu for more information.

GRC/GRN

National quilt exhibit coming to Groton gallery

The 2008 National Small Art Quilt Works Exhibition will take place Friday, July 25 to Sunday, Aug. 31 at the Main Street Gallery, 105 Main St., Groton.

4 burglaries reported over weekend

York St. resident interrupts 2 male suspects Saturday

By Raymond Drumsta
rdrumsta@ithacajournal.com
Journal Staff

ITHACA—Police are investigating four burglaries that occurred across the city over the weekend, including one

that was interrupted by the victim's return.

The burglaries occurred on Floral Avenue, Edgecliff Place, North Cayuga Street and East York Street, Ithaca Police said. All told, the suspect or suspects stole between \$70 and \$80, a black and gray 42-inch flat screen Vizio television, a silver-and-white Xbox 360 with a black controller and a Roland electric drum set worth about \$2,000, they added.

The drum set was taken from a Floral Avenue residence overnight Friday, and the cash was taken from the York Street home at about 11 p.m. Saturday.

The York Street resident had just been dropped off by a friend and was standing on her porch when she saw her dining room lights on and two young males in her house.

One was ransacking the hutch, and she screamed and

ran back down her driveway to find her friend and call the police on the friend's cell phone, she said. Though her friend had already driven away, the males ran out the front door moments later and fled south on North Cayuga Street, she added.

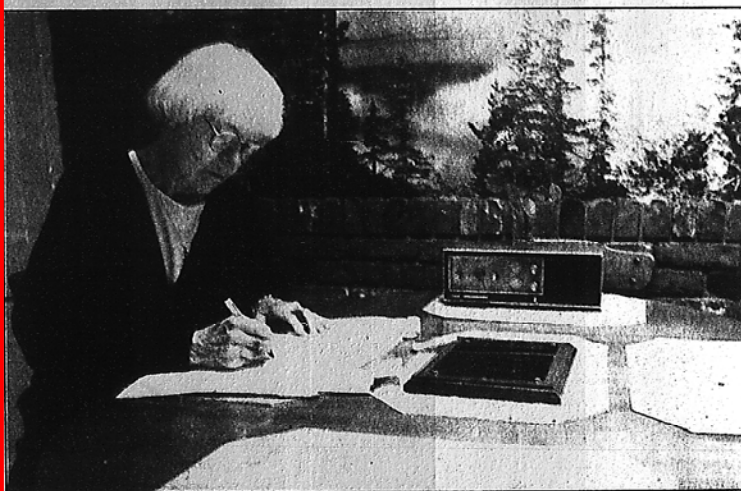
She went back into her home and called the police, who arrived within five minutes, she said. Police said the suspects entered through a

side window.

Within an hour, the Edgecliff Place and North Cayuga Street crimes were reported, police said. The suspects entered the Edgecliff Place residence by an unknown method and took the television and video game controller.

Nothing was taken from the North Cayuga Street residence, where the suspect or suspects entered through a window, police said.

AN ADVOCATE FOR THE MENTALLY ILL



DAVIS ARCHIBALD / Special to The Journal

Jean Walters tends to some paperwork inside her kitchen last Tuesday morning. Walters is a founding member and former president of the National Alliance of Mental Illness of the Finger Lakes, which is run from her house.

Love and hugs part of support

Ithacan Walters has helped with the mentally ill, families since '85

By Megan Saucke
Special to The Journal

Mental illness can be incredibly difficult to deal with, for both mentally ill people and their family. In the Ithaca area, many people turn to Jean Walters for help.

"When a family learns of mental illness, it's an incredible blow," said Susan Larkin, who met Walters in 2003. "People feel so very alone, and Jean's support makes a huge difference in such a difficult time."

Walters, who has hosted the Finger Lakes branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness in her own home since 1985, started the local division because of mental illness that affected her family. She went

HELPING HANDS

"She really knows when people need a hug. ... It makes all the difference. And it's there for anyone who needs it."

SUSAN LARKIN

Educator for the National Alliance on Mental Illness of the Finger Lakes

to a class in Syracuse in the summer of 1985 and learned a lot about mental illness.

"When it was over, I said to myself, that's something we need in Ithaca," Walters said. "The not-for-profit organization aims to provide support for families and friends of mentally ill people, educate them and the public and advocate for the families and their mentally ill family members."

Part of what the alliance strives for is challenging the negative stigma that is attached to mental illness.

"The things that you hear

about are horrific," Walters said. "When a mentally ill person like Columbine, like Virginia Tech, kills all those people, that's what normal people think happens when a person has a mental illness."

"That's a tremendous stigma for someone who gets that diagnosis to be shackled with," she explained. "That prevents people from going to get help."

The most important service the alliance offers is support and education for those who are close to someone with mental illness. The support groups and family-to-family classes provide a safe, confi-

dential space in which those affected can connect, share their stories and learn how they can help.

"Denial doesn't help, and blaming yourself doesn't help," said Larkin, who has taught the family-to-family class. "Telling people it's a chemical imbalance in the brain, it's an illness, it's no one's fault, but help is available, you're not alone. (Walters has) been strong in that message for 23 years."

Walters also deals with tense situations when others don't know what to say, Larkin added.

"She really knows when people need a hug," she said. "It makes all the difference. And it's there for anyone who needs it."

In fact, "love and warm hugs" has become part of the local organization's bylaws.

"While support, education and advocacy are critical to helping the mentally ill, Jean's example reminds us that love

See SUPPORT Page 2B

Phosphorus limits delay building of Groton water facility

By Linda Stout
lstout@ithacajournal.com
Journal Staff

GROTON—Construction of a water treatment facility for the Village of Groton has been delayed about a year.

The Department of Environmental Conservation ordered the village to start building by June 2008, but unclear rules on phosphorus limits have held up the process, said Public Works Director Ken Thompson.

The village has been working on building plans with engineering firm G.T. Male from the Albany area, but those plans couldn't be finalized until the DEC clarified its required phosphorus limits, which it did at the end of June, Thompson said.

"The original consent order did call for it to be completed this year. We couldn't do the design until we knew the parameters of the various limits," Thompson said.

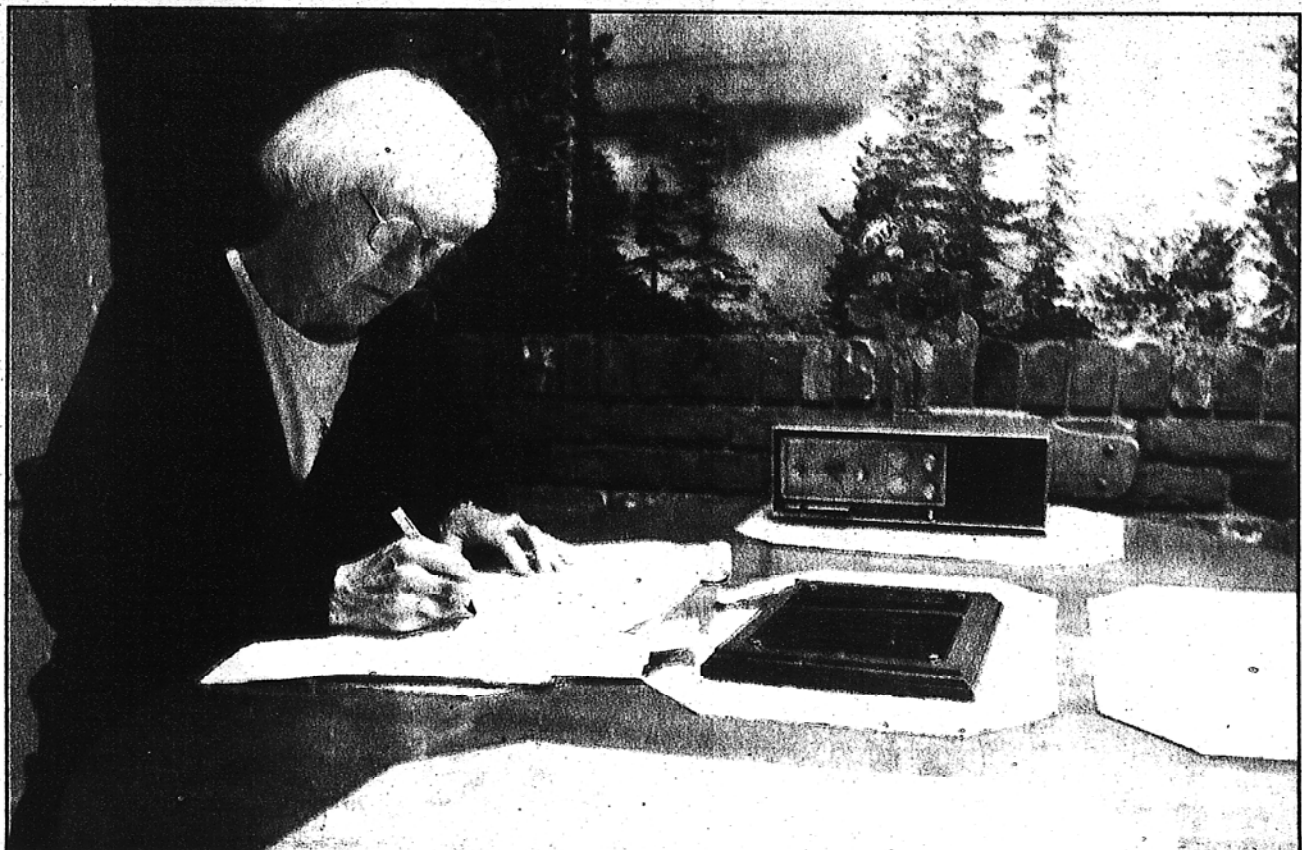
The limits have been lowered to 0.5 parts per million. That amounts to about 2 pounds of phosphorus per day to be released from the plant.

The cost, estimated a year ago at \$2 million, will probably be closer to \$2.5 million because of the more stringent limits, Thompson said.

Phosphorus is a nutrient found in human waste. Other sources of phosphorus in Owasco Lake include agriculture and private septic tanks, Thompson said. Fertilizers and runoff from streets and construction sites contribute, too, according to the DEC. Although Owasco Lake is the smallest of the Finger Lakes, it is fed by the largest watershed — water drains into the lake from three counties.

Excess phosphorus causes algal blooms, low dissolved oxygen levels that harm aquatic life and cloudy water that interferes with swimming and recreation, according to the DEC. High phosphorus levels increase organic matter in the water, which can be problematic for drinking water and can increase the cost of water filtration, according to the DEC.

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See **SUPPORT** Page 2B

se, all with devastating results the past years.
The DEC has discovered Asian

cell and cable phones
2-1-1, the easy access number to dial for information and re-

health services, legal assistance, addiction treatment, employment, transportation, day care and other community services.

Habitat for
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WATER

CONTINUED FROM 1B

The DEC released a statement at the new plant is required to create a 50 percent reduction in phosphorus levels of the first two years and a six- to eight- percent reduction from four years to 2010.

Before 2005, phosphorus lev-

els in the Groton wastewater plant discharge hovered at about 3-4 parts per million (12-16 pounds of discharge per day), according to the DEC.

In 2006, upstream from Groton, the Cayuga County Water Quality Management Agency pursued the state to require the village to treat its wastewater discharge for phosphorus.

That year, the DEC filed a consent order agreement with the Groton wastewater treatment plant, reducing discharges to 1 part per million (4 pounds per day).

Thompson said, "The old permit as I understand it did not have a phosphorus limit in it. ... We've got to design it so it will achieve that reliably. It's not cheap to do it, either."

TOMPKINS COUNTY JAIL CENSUS

Population figures reflect the census for: Monday, July 14, 2008.

- Adult males: 57
- Males under 19: 0
- Males boarded out to other facilities: 3
- Adult females: 7
- Females under 19: 0
- Females boarded out to other facilities: 7
- Total in custody of Tompkins County Sheriff's Office: 74
- Evening meal planned for tonight: Manicotti, broccoli, pretzels, fruit cup.

The Tompkins County Jail has a maximum capacity of 74 inmates.

SUPPORT

CONTINUED FROM 1B

and compassion have a power all their own," part of the by-law reads. "Therefore, at all times this Corporation will encourage love and warm hugs."

In January, Walters received a plaque from the national alliance's New York state planning committee for her "23 years of loving commitment to families with loved ones struggling with serious mental illness."

"We thank you with all our hearts and minds," the engraving says.

Donations and membership fees sustain the alliance, and there are about 75 member families in the Finger Lakes area, Walters estimated.

Support groups and other meetings take place at 104 E. Lewis St., where Walters has lived since 1960. For more information, visit namifingerlakes.org.

Helping Hands profiles the Good Samaritans who help our community's residents. If you have an idea for Helping Hands, send it to helpinghands@ithacajournal.com or call David Hill at 274-9219.

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