

# Happy New Year

## LAST WEEK'S WEATHER

	Hi	Lo	Pcp
Tues.	40	22	.56
Wed.	22	11	.7s
Thurs.	20	-13	tr.s
Fri.	4	-11	tr.s
Sat.	30	2	.89r, 2.2s
Sun.	53	30	.11r
Mon.	35	8	0

# Courier Freeman

A PARK NEWSPAPER

Flooding causes concern along St. Regis River. See stories, photos this week.

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## Flooding Threatens County Homes, Property



**ROAD CLOSED** — The Twin Bridges on the Jones Road south of Parishville in the town of Hopkinton were closed for a time Saturday night and Sunday

when the swelled waters of the West Branch of the St. Regis River threatened camps, homes, and bridges. (Ron Robertson photo)



**RAGING RIVER** — The West Branch of the St. Regis River was roaring Saturday as it raced from the dam towards the footbridge across the Parishville gorge.

Floodwaters damaged camps and homes along the river in Hopkinton, Parishville, Stockholm, and Brasher. (Helen Condon photo)

## Proposed Cuts Jeopardize Rehab Work

BY RON ROBERTSON AND JOANNE SKOOG

Community development and urban renewal officials across the country will likely band together to oppose proposed federal budget cuts that threaten to eliminate housing and rehabilitation programs.

Robert Juravich, Potsdam's Community Development director, said Friday the Reagan administration's current proposals for the 1985 federal budget would eliminate the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and Urban Development Action Grant (UDAG) programs.

Both the CDBG and UDAG programs have been used extensively in Potsdam to provide funds for rehabilitation and renovation of buildings, streets, and sidewalks, particularly in the downtown area.

This year several local communities won federal CDBG funding including Canton, Oswegatchie, Norfolk, Ogdensburg, and St. Lawrence County which will use the money to help the smaller towns of Lisbon, Russell, Edwards, Conifer, and Piercefield with water and sewer systems.

St. Lawrence County Planning Director Mary B. Verlaque says there used to be other sources of funding available for public facilities and housing. "But those programs have been radically phased out," she said.

Local communities have received millions of dollars in UDAG and CDBG grants over the past several years, she said.

"I don't know what communities are supposed to do. They can't afford to build water and sewer projects on their own."

"It would be a real blow to St. Lawrence County," she said.

Juravich said the proposed cuts could be "trial balloons" sent up by the administration to gauge public sentiment.

"Decisions of this nature are almost purely political," Juravich said, usually based on "who screams the loudest."

In 1980, the Reagan administration sent up similar trial balloons announcing proposed cuts in housing programs, Juravich said.

After the dust settled, he said, some of the programs had been cut, indicating that the administration will probably eliminate some programs in the 1985-86 budget, depending on which are or are not supported.

What survives this round of cuts, Juravich said, will depend on "who does the best job of protecting their turf."

Verlaque said officials have already been told the funding levels for the 1985 round of CDBG grants will be lower. While communities could previously apply for \$500,000 maximum for single purpose applications, that has been reduced to \$300,000. "But we're not sure if that means there will be more grants or less money available," she said, because the guidelines have not been received yet.

"There is no doubt St. Lawrence County has a serious problem with substandard housing," Scarlett said. "That could become critical with the Fort Drum expansion."

"If there are significant cuts in support for housing for low income people, there could be some very serious repercussions."

The New York State Association of Renewal and Housing Officials Inc. (NYSARHO), Juravich said, has begun circulating letters urging its members to write to their congressmen, senators, and the president in an effort to prevent housing program cuts.

BY MELLEN GONZALEZ AND BETSY BAKER

**PARISHVILLE** — A rain-swollen St. Regis River flooded garages and cellars here Saturday morning, prompting Niagara Mohawk officials to act to lower the water in the pond above the Parishville dam.

Melting snow, heavy rains and chunks of ice from upriver surged down the river, damaging at least one car, flooding store and home cellars and carrying the dock from its winter resting place on the Parishville Beach downriver and over the dam.

Donald Kingston of Potsdam, Ni-Mo's superintendent of regional stations, said that a crew of seven was at the Parishville dam Saturday afternoon to remove one section of stop logs (also called needle beams).

That action increased the flow of water over the dam by 500 to 1,000 cubic feet per second, Kingston said, thereby lowering the water level in the pond above the dam.

Ni-Mo crews lowered the water level earlier in the day, Kingston said, but continuing heavy rains and temperatures in the high 50s made the flow of water, melted snow and ice chunks so heavy crews "couldn't keep up with it."

There is no more ice coming from upriver, Kingston said, but the rainfall continued Saturday afternoon.

Kingston said he could see no problem downstream, at Allen's Falls and West Stockholm, because the river widens below Allen's Falls, and less water would be going over the downriver dams than was going over at Parishville.

There was two feet of water going over the Allen's Falls dam Saturday afternoon, he said, the same level as in summer.

Upriver, at Blake and Joe Indian, Kingston said that while the ponds are full, he could see no problem there.

Parishville volunteer firefighters were reportedly checking camps in those areas on Saturday.

The removal of the needle beams was good news for the people of Parishville as the flood waters receded, but it spread fears downriver as residents of West Stockholm, Winthrop, Brasher Falls, Helena and Hogsburg wondered how badly their towns would be pounded by the rising water.

Several roads in the towns of Brasher and Stockholm were reportedly closed Saturday night.

Steve Foster, first assistant chief of the West Stockholm Fire Department, said Lincoln Bridge was flooded and the rising waters were just starting to approach the bridge just east of Sanfordville on Rt. 11. He said residents of the West Stockholm Fire District, living along the riverbanks, had been warned of the approaching danger, and firemen were keeping an eye on the water.

New York State Police Trooper Carey Ware said the River Road, a portion of Rt. 11B, and a portion of road between Brasher Falls and Brasher Center had been closed due to flooding. He said it was expected the flood waters would crest at approximately 9 p.m. Saturday.

Other reports indicated that water was lapping at the side of Stockholm Town Supervisor Lincoln Chapman's home. Chapman was reportedly removing belongings from his garage during the emergency.

Further downstream, major problems were expected in Hogsburg. Hogsburg Fire Chief Frank Lacenza said his department had evacuated one resident, Mae Cook, from her home on the Cook Road. The floodwaters had encircled Cook's home, and a local farmer, William Cook, picked her up on his tractor.

By pulling the stop logs, Kingston said Ni-Mo crews are "just trying to stay ahead of it." He indicated that after the stop logs were pulled, crews would see if the water level went down, and "play it by ear" before pulling the other section.

Similar problems usually occur near the end of January when traditionally there has been a thaw, but there has been a "lot of unusual weather this year," Kingston said.

He noted, however, that water levels in the river are lower than they are during spring runoff. With cold weather expected Saturday night, the water levels will probably be way down by Monday, he

said. There were no problems Saturday with Ni-Mo's Racquette River dams, Kingston said.

**Flooding Occurs**

Three Parishville Rescue Squad volunteers, Andy Taylor, Ira Woods and Ken Lindsay, left on a rescue call at 6:15 a.m. Saturday morning, and returned at 7:30 a.m. to see water more than halfway up the outside door of Cliff and Rowena Burdett's house, which is located on the edge of the river.

The Burdetts were reportedly asleep and were awakened by volunteer firemen.

One fireman, Edwin Cool, said he helped push Burdett's car out of the garage and up to street level. When the car doors were opened, water at the level of the seats gushed out.

Mrs. Burdett said the water levels have never been this high in the 34 years she has lived on the river banks.

Volunteer firemen Saturday morning pumped out the basement

of Wilson's General Store in Parishville. According to owner Doug Gilson, there was no damage to items in the basement.

Several homes along the river, including those belonging to Fred Wilhelm, Walt Paul and Francis Condon, had water within four feet of their front doors.

Assemblyman John G.A. O'Neill, who lives five miles upriver on White Hill, had flooding in the basement of his home, where many antiques were stored.

Some two feet of water seeped through the cellar walls and backed up the drains. The O'Neills reportedly had extensive preventive drainage work done last year.

Early afternoon, passersby could see a tremendous wall of brown water rushing over the dam and down into the gorge, which is used as a swimming hole in the summer. Foam from the rushing water came up the river banks to the level of small trees there.

## Damage Assessment Begins

BY RON ROBERTSON

Flooding that threatened county residences and property over the weekend has begun to subside in most areas and the laborious process of assessing the damage has begun.

According to Patrick VerSchneider, St. Lawrence County's Emergency Services coordinator, the West Branch of the St. Regis River in Parishville, Stockholm, and Brasher has "leveled off," but officials are still worried downstream at Hogsburg.

High waters in the Racquette River downstream from Potsdam also became a problem Sunday, he said.

In the Parishville, area, VerSchneider said, waters reached their peak at about 10 p.m. Saturday and have "gone down somewhat" since then.

That's still the case in those areas, VerSchneider said.

VerSchneider said that the river was "still high in Hogsburg," and the fire department there was on standby Sunday afternoon in case homes had to be evacuated.

On the Racquette River near Potsdam, VerSchneider said, a section of the Hewittville Road was closed for a time because of threatening high waters.

Although Racquette Hydropower Ltd., which operates a hydroelectric dam at Hewittville and has

another under construction a short ways downstream in Unionville, opened up its floodgates and sandbagged along the river, VerSchneider said, flooding there remained a problem as of late Sunday.

VerSchneider reported that all of the approximately 15 families that had to be evacuated throughout the county had returned home Sunday night.

**Damage Assessment**

Now, VerSchneider said, the process of estimating the damage begins.

Some bridges and culverts throughout the county, VerSchneider said, sustained damage, in addition to the as yet undetermined amount of private property damage.

VerSchneider said his office has already been in touch with the New York State Emergency Management Office, which has advised local officials to begin assessing the flood damage in anticipation of aid to pay for cleanup and rehabilitation costs.

Jefferson, Oswego, and Lewis counties, VerSchneider said, all of which also suffered severe damage from floods, have applied for small business loans to rebuild stricken areas.

If the loans are awarded to those counties, VerSchneider said, it is likely that St. Lawrence County will receive similar assistance.

## Hot Pot Causes Fatal Fire

St. Lawrence County fire investigators have determined that an overturned one-quart hot pot was the cause of the fire that claimed the life of 82-year-old Joseph Regan of 76 Main St., Potsdam, early Christmas morning.

The hot pot was on a table next to Regan's bed and apparently overturned and ignited some newspapers lying on the floor. The burning papers then ignited the mattress, according to the report.

Investigators said they found the mattress to be hanging partially off the bed, suggesting Regan attempted to fight the fire or remove the burning mattress when he was overcome by smoke and left the bedroom.

Firefighters found Regan's body in the dining room area of the house.

The cause and origin of the fire was determined by St. Lawrence County fire investigators Timothy Bill and Dennis Durant and by James Mason, fire investigator for the Potsdam Police Department.

Regan died of smoke inhalation and was "alive when the fire broke out," according to Dr. Antonio Valero, who performed the autopsy the day of the fire.

Police originally believed that six apartments in the building were being rented to college students that are home on vacation, but Mason said the investigation indicates the apartments were completely vacant.

Regan, who owned the building, was the only occupant at the time of the fire.

Cold weather and ice hampered investigators' efforts to determine the cause of the early morning blaze.

The fire is believed to have been

burning about a half hour before it was reported at 3:32 a.m. by a passing motorist, Mason said.

Several Potsdam firefighters were treated and released at the Canton-Potsdam Hospital for burns suffered when they entered the burning building to rescue Regan.

Rescuers were able to get Regan out of the building, but he was pronounced dead on arrival at Canton-Potsdam Hospital.

A portable radio being worn by one of the firefighters on the outside of his coat reportedly "melted right off his side," because of the intense heat of the blaze.

## No Nuclear Wastes Slated For Park

The Adirondack Park has been ruled out as a dumping site for high-level nuclear waste.

Adirondack Agency Chairman Herman "Woody" Cole has announced that draft documents released by the United States Department of Energy formal state, for the first time, that the Adirondack Park has been excluded from further consideration as a potential site for the nation's second high-level nuclear waste depository.

A layer of crystalline rock underlies the Adirondack Park and some bordering areas. This unique geological feature is considered by the Department of Energy as an ideal storage site for nuclear waste.