

LAST WEEK'S WEATHER

	Hi	Lo	Pcp
Tues.	38	27	tr.s
Wed.	32	15	tr.s
Thurs.	30	21	.80s
Fri.	23	10	2.5s
Sat.	13	1	tr.s
Sun.	20	7	.09s
Mon.	23	4	.10s

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A PARK NEWSPAPER

Village may see \$27 tax rate hike. See story this week.

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Hydroelectric Woes Blamed

Tax Rate Could Jump By \$27, Treasurer Says

BY RON ROBERTSON
If revenue sources and services remain the same, Potsdam village taxes could skyrocket by \$27 per \$1,000 of assessed valuation from \$83.56 to some \$110.

This was the bleak picture painted by Village Treasurer Barbara Lenhart in a report she made during Monday night's Board of Trustees meeting.

In preparing for the upcoming 1986-87 budget sessions, Lenhart said the board will have some very tough decisions to make.

In a recent memo to the board, Lenhart said she suggested the trustees ask for a 10 percent across the board cut from each village department.

Of the additional \$317,000 that will have to be made up through the general fund next year, Lenhart said, the 10 percent cut will only make up some \$62,000.

Cuts of that magnitude, said Administrator Robert Burns, would leave the village with what he said would be an austerity budget.

"It would certainly be a difficult

village next year than it's been this year and in preceding years," Burns said.

To minimize what could be a drastic tax increase, Lenhart said, the village "will have to cut back on services we currently enjoy."

"The board, I'm afraid," Lenhart told the trustees, "is going to be faced with some very difficult decisions, which only you can make."

The major cause for the village's predicament, Lenhart said, is an expected shortfall with the hydroelectric plant of some \$168,000, which will have to be made up through general fund revenues.

Of the possible \$27 tax hike, Lenhart said the hydro plant shortfall accounts for some \$15.

"The hydroelectric plant is certainly our major cause of concern and will be for many years," Lenhart said.

According to the rate payment schedule in the contract for the sale of power to Niagara Mohawk, the plant will not be making any money until 1992, she said.

Trustee Jeffrey Belodoff pointed out that the village might be able to reach a legal settlement with the plant's designers that could recoup all or some of the hydro loss.

If that happens, Belodoff said, and the board cuts back a little here and there, the expected increase could be reduced to under \$10.

Lenhart countered, asking if the settlement would come soon enough to help the village out before the next fiscal year begins in June.

Belodoff said that the village has no control over many of the other increases in spending, so trustees should "redouble our efforts to come to some kind of conclusion with the hydro."

Other expected shortfalls, Lenhart said, include the loss of federal revenue sharing funds after October 1986.

Of the \$90,000 of federal revenue sharing the village currently allocates to street lighting, she said, only some \$45,000 will be available for the 1986-87 budget.

The remaining \$45,000 will have to be made up with general fund monies, she said.

While inflation has remained relatively modest in recent years, Lenhart said, it will still account for an estimated 18,000 increase in goods and services for the coming year.

The recently-enacted 20-year retirement system for police officers is also an additional burden on taxpayers, she said.

Another expected salary increase, she said, is the 6 percent salary hike the village is contracted to give its employees.

Lenhart added that if the village can get liability insurance for 1986-87 it will likely cost \$30,000 more than it did for the current year.

The village, she said, could be faced with the even more costly self-insurance option, or possibly go with no liability insurance at all.

In all, she said, the \$985,000 raised by taxes in 1985-86 will have to jump to \$1.3 million to cover the additional general fund spending.

McKendree Named Lieutenant, Juvenile Officer Post Stays

BY RON ROBERTSON
Following many comments from the public supporting a full staff at the Police Department, the Potsdam village board voted Monday night to fill the position vacated by the retirement of Lt. Dale Wells.

Many village residents spoke in favor of retaining the juvenile officer position held by Gene Brundage. Cutting that position had surfaced as a suggestion by Police Chief Clinton Matott as an alternative to cutting what he feels is the more valuable lieutenant post.

In the face of public support for retaining a full police staff, the board voted 3-2 to promote Sgt. Terry McKendree to lieutenant.

Voting against the motion were trustees Hugh Sprague and Charles Turcotte.

After the lieutenant's position was filled, the board voted unanimously to promote Patrolman James Lewis to sergeant to replace McKendree. It is expected that the village will hire a patrolman to replace Lewis.

Sgt. Daniel Manor, speaking on behalf of the Potsdam Police Protective Association, said the police union is opposed to any cuts or changes in the department's structure.

Accompanied by at least 10 of his colleagues, most in uniform, Manor said the savings of any cuts would not be worth the loss of

police protection for the village.

Cutting any of the positions — chief, lieutenant, three sergeants, juvenile officer, patrolman/investigator and the remaining nine patrolmen — "would jeopardize the efficiency of the Police Department," Manor said.

Most of the more than 30 residents at the meeting were concerned about the suggested elimination of the juvenile officer position, which village officials said was never a formal proposal.

Clarise Shatraw of Racquette Acres submitted a petition with some 204 signatures asking that the juvenile officer position remain untouched.

Brundage, she said, has done very good work helping to keep the village's youth out of serious trouble and also helping those who have had brushes with the law.

"A lot of kids are going to lose out," she said, if that position is eliminated.

William Pelotte, Potsdam Town Republican Committee chairman, former town council member and a retired teacher, said that elementary and secondary school students face many pressures that their parents didn't face.

Many, Pelotte said, need the help that Brundage supplies as juvenile officer.

"There's a need in this community for such work," Pelotte said.

Michael Loconti, principal of A.A. Kingston Middle School, said that he has worked closely with Brundage in programs designed to help young people.

If the position were cut, Loconti said, "I feel it would be a tremendous loss in terms of the loss to the youth of our village."

Kermit Ford, 90 Leroy St., said that he was surprised that so few people had turned out against the proposed Police Department cuts.

"When we talk about eliminating positions, especially in the Police Department, I think that's a terrible, terrible mistake," Ford said.

"I know we've got to cut, but I think you've cut all you can with the Police Department," he said.

Ford said he was amazed when he visited the Police Department and learned all the lieutenant's position is responsible for.

Police Chief Matott has said that the lieutenant is responsible for the bulk of the department's investigations.

Trustee Sprague, just before he voted against filling the lieutenant's position, said that his vote

did not reflect any personal ill feelings toward any of the police officers.

Not filling the position, he said, "is the smartest thing this town can possibly do" to save money.

Trustee Turcotte, who also voted against the promotion, conceded that not filling the position might not work, but "we owe it to ourselves and the village to try."

Mayor Paul Claffey, voting for the promotion, said that one of the most important functions of the village is to provide adequate police protection.

Trustees Robert Sullivan and Jeffrey Belodoff did not comment, but voted in favor of the McKendree appointment.

McKendree's and Lewis' appointments were effective immediately.

Hearing Set On Parking Plans

The Potsdam village board voted Monday night to hold a public hearing on parking proposals from the village Planning Board, but decided to hold off on changes to the downtown parking plan that were suggested by Mayor Paul Claffey.

The hearing is set for 7 p.m., prior to the Jan. 20 board meeting.

Claffey had suggested removing parking meters in the lot next to the Clarkson Inn, behind Kriff's Furniture Store, and on the south side of Maple Street. He also suggested that meters not be installed as planned in the Raymond-Depot lot and in the lot behind the row of buildings on the west side of Market Street.

Planning Board Chairman Alfred Rothermel, whose board was largely responsible for the downtown parking plan, urged the trustees not to change the plan until at least October 1986, when many of the parking changes would have been in effect for a year.

Rothermel also pointed out that the plan is not yet fully implemented and should not be changed until it has been completed.

The board will hold a public hearing on restricting parking near Canton-Potsdam Hospital on Cottage Street from the nursing home driveway to Leroy Street, and prohibiting parking or standing on the east side of Beal Street from the Potsdam Laundry driveway to the intersection with Board Street.



FIRST BABY — Kelli Kay Curran, shown above in the arms of her mother, Lori Curran, was the first baby of the new year at Canton-Potsdam Hospital. Also shown is attending physician Dr. John G. Baker. Kelli Kay was born at 1:48 p.m., Jan. 3, and weighed 7 lbs., 1 1/2 oz. She was 20 inches long at birth. Kelli joins her father, Patrick Curran, and a sister, Katie, 7. The family lives at Rt. 1, Massena. (Betsy Baker photo)

Halley's Proves Elusive

Viewing Comet Won't Be Easy, Astronomer Says

BY RON ROBERTSON
Halley's Comet, the solar system's uninvited guest that drops by every 75 years, will be visible for about the next week and a half, disappear behind the sun, and reappear for viewing sometime in March.

Arthur McRobbie, an astronomer and physics professor at Potsdam College, said the famous comet will be visible until about Jan. 15, when it will begin to disappear behind the sun.

Until then, he said, the comet will be visible in the evenings, immediately after twilight.

Looking to the southwest, or a little west of southwest, the observer can easily find "awfully bright" Jupiter. "You can't miss Jupiter," he said.

To find Halley's Comet from Jupiter, he said, the observer should hold his or her arm straight out and use a doubled fist as a guide to find the comet.

The comet should be two fist lengths above and to the right of Jupiter, or roughly at the 1 o'clock position, using Jupiter as the center of a clock.

As the week progresses to the time when the comet eventually disappears behind the sun, McRobbie said, the comet will move slightly downward and to the right to roughly a 1:30 to 1:45 position, again using Jupiter as the center of a clock.

During this time, McRobbie said,

the comet is moving clockwise around the sun as the earth is moving counterclockwise around the sun.

By the time the comet is at perihelion, the closest point to the sun it will reach, the earth will be directly opposite the comet.

A worse situation for observing the comet probably couldn't exist, McRobbie said.

When the comet and the earth come back in sight of each other, McRobbie said, the comet will be south of the plane in which the earth orbits the sun.

As a result, the astronomer said, the comet will be very close to the horizon for northern observers.

What this means, he said, is that not only will someone in the northern hemisphere likely have to be on a high, south-facing slope just to see the phenomenon, but the light from the comet could be distorted.

With the comet so low on the horizon, McRobbie said, the observer will have to look at the comet through a very thick layer of atmosphere, which can distort the image.

But since the comet will be "fairly close in March and April," it will be very bright to earth-bound observers.

Almost constant cloud cover has thwarted many of McRobbie's attempts to view Halley's Comet, he said.

There have been times when

most of the sky has been clear except for the region where the comet can be found, he said. Other times, the sky has been cloudy just after twilight, but has cleared by morning.

EMT Proposal Said 'Trial Balloon'

BY RON ROBERTSON
Two top county fire and rescue experts say the state proposal that would require rescue squads to carry an emergency medical technician (EMT) on every run is a trial balloon and is not likely to be passed by the state Legislature.

A hearing on the proposed law, which is a revision of Article 30 of the Public Health Law, will be held at 10 a.m. on Friday in room 103 of Potsdam College's Keilas Hall. The hearing is sponsored by John G.A. O'Neil, St. Lawrence County's assemblyman, and Assemblyman H. Robert Nortz of Lowville.

Earle Mousaw of Hannawa Falls, who is serving as second vice president of the Firemen's Association of the State of New York (FASNY), said the bill was proposed by the State Department in order to get feedback on ways to regulate volunteer ambulance services.

The bill is not being put through the Legislature in order to get a vote on it, Mousaw said, but is being proposed as a way to get feedback.

Patrick VerSchneider, Emergency Services coordinator for St. Lawrence County, said the bill is a trial balloon that's "not in danger of being passed."

Mousaw said the proposal is "for the most part designed around a big city operation" of semi-professional ambulance corps.

The most hotly contested portion of the bill, he said, is the provision that would require ambulances and rescue squads to have at least one EMT on every run.

Rescue squads in rural areas like St. Lawrence County have limited manpower, Mousaw said, and cannot send an EMT with each call.

"Lots of times there's no EMT available," Mousaw said.

If such a law is passed, Mousaw said, many times a rescue squad will not be able to respond to a call because no EMTs are available.

"So you leave the guy laying in the street sort of thing," Mousaw said.

Under the proposal, VerSchneider said, rescue squads would have the option to try to get an exemption that only the state health commissioner can grant.

Rural squads, VerSchneider said, "shouldn't be put in the position of going to the commissioner each year."

Each town or other sanctioning body of a rescue squad should be able to elect its own standards for emergency responses.

"If an area can provide an EMT on every (call), then the standard should be in place," VerSchneider said.

McRobbie jokingly said that he has come to the conclusion that Halley's Comet doesn't want him to see it.

"I think it hates me," he joked.

"There can be no question that we want the best possible service," Mousaw said, but the current proposal "puts undue pressure on an outfit that can never comply."



CHURCH GUTTED — Fire officials blame a defective chimney for a Saturday evening fire which gutted the interior of the Colton Wesleyan Church. The fire reportedly began in the chimney of the structure; the alarm was turned in at about 6:30 p.m.

Saturday Parishioners expect to hold services in the Colton Hopburn Library, Colton, Pierrepont, Hannawa Falls and South Colton fire departments were at the scene; Potsdam was on standby at Hannawa Falls. (Betsy Baker photo)

Nurses Ratify Two-Year Pact

Nurses at Canton-Potsdam Hospital last Thursday ratified a two-year contract that calls for a five percent wage increase this year and an additional five percent in December 1986.

Westerling said the approximately 90 full and part time nurses, who are represented in contract talks by the New York State Nurses Association, ratified the contract "overwhelmingly."

Hospital spokesman Clifford